

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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## **FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN COLLIER COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS**

**COLLIER** – The Florida Department of Health in Collier County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the sixth annual County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This study highlights the many community factors that influence health and uses established data, much of which is available from the department at [www.floridacharts.com](http://www.floridacharts.com).

“We are thrilled to maintain the rank of the second healthiest place in Florida to live, learn, work and play,” states Stephanie Vick, MS, BSN, RN, administrator of the Department of Health in Collier County. “Our continued high ranking is a direct result of the whole community working together, from continued collaboration and commitment of our community leaders, to the hard work and healthy choices of each individual in our community.”

These rankings are a snapshot of the health of counties across the country and they emphasize that health is not a singular effort but a combined work in progress across all community partners. The department works in collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders to improve the health of all people in Collier County. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In Collier County, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and collaborates regularly to track progress. Obesity continues to be one of the most significant public health issues affecting our community. Addressing this concern, plans are in place to improve nutrition and physical activity in early care and education, promote breastfeeding support, and increase personal accountability for health-related behaviors and outcomes. The new Blue Zones Project in Collier County will greatly expand upon the obesity work plan, as well as numerous other community health improvement focus areas.

“We are excited that Collier County is on the path to becoming a Blue Zone. While our county health ranking is high, we have many opportunities to improve upon the health of our residents, especially concerning obesity. Blue Zones creates an opportunity to help our community live longer and better lives,” said Stephanie Vick. “We look forward to helping make the healthy choice be the easy choice in our community.”

Brought to Collier County as a part of an innovative partnership between NCH Healthcare System and Blue Zones Project by Healthways, the Blue Zones Project is a community well-

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being improvement initiative that encourages changes to surroundings and built-environment that lead to healthier options.

“Collier County has once again been recognized as among the healthiest counties in Florida. Collaboration among all citizens and caregivers in southwest Florida helps everyone live longer, happier and healthier lives. Our community has definite plans to keep our six years of recognition continuing as we embrace and implement the tenets of other successful Blue Zone Communities where more people live well longer,” says Allen Weiss, MD, CEO and president, NCH Healthcare System.

Collier County Public School Superintendent, Kamila Patton, PhD, states “Collier County’s outstanding ranking is a testament to the high standards to which all county residents adhere. CCPS looks forward to continuing to further enhance efforts to improve the health of our students and maintain Collier County’s high ranking.”

As evidenced by the County Health Rankings report, the violent crime rate has dropped in Collier County. Sheriff Kevin Rambosk states, “The Collier County Sheriff’s Office is proud to partner with our community to create the healthy and safe quality of life we all enjoy.”

Working with new mothers to increase initiation, duration and exclusivity of breastfeeding in Collier County, Catherine Timuta, executive director of Healthy Start SWFL, said, “Collier County’s high ranking in the report is a testimony to community partnerships, their leadership and collaboration as well as their dedication to delivering the highest quality services.”

Jaclynn Faffer, PhD, president/CEO of Jewish Family and Community Services says, “I commend the local leadership and community partnerships that have, once again, kept Collier County among the highest ranked counties in our state. As the President/CEO of JFCS of Southwest Florida, the agency that established the first senior center in Collier County in 2014, I know first-hand how important it is to be involved in a community where we all work together to improve the quality of life for our seniors, and the rest of the population that calls Collier County home.”

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