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



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**Naples, Fla–** The Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier) recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2016 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 elated that Collier County continues to rank as one of the healthiest counties in the state of Florida,” says Stephanie Vick, administrator for the Florida Department of Health in Collier County. “Where we live has a large impact on our health, and these rankings show that wellness is more than just health care. Health promotion, disease prevention and control, and health policy are efforts that are shared among many of our community partners, working with and through the public, and are principal reasons why Collier County is again the second healthiest place in Florida. By taking small steps to improve our lifestyle choices in areas such as healthier eating, increased physical activity, tobacco cessation, safety, and prevention we can together make a big impact on the health of Collier County.”

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.

Stephanie Vick explains, “The County Health Rankings assist us in determining which steps we need to focus on in setting our short and long-term goals. The rankings are also the perfect complement to our Community Health Assessment (CHA), which we are currently compiling data for and beginning to develop. These rankings and the CHA help us identify areas for improvement and opportunities to work with our community partners to boost our community’s health and well-being.”

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. In 2016, a new Community Health Improvement Planning cycle began. Currently, DOH-Collier is in the process of conducting community focus groups to

gather concerns and priorities from our residents. Next, the data will be used to develop a CHA. A CHA describes the health of the community, identifies areas for health improvement, identifies contributing factors that impact health outcomes, and identifies community assets and resources that can be mobilized to improve population health. Later in the year, a new CHIP will be developed based off the findings in the CHA. The CHIP is developed to set priorities, direct the use of resources, and develop and implement projects, programs, and policies.

“Our path to health and wellness begins at an early age and continues throughout our lifetime. Collier County Public Schools prides itself on providing educational opportunities for our children, parents, and the community to move more, eat healthy, and achieve their full academic potential. Our county ranking is proof that our community partnerships are improving the quality of life for all our residents, today and for years to come,” says Kamela Patton, PhD, Collier County Public Schools Superintendent.

Allen Weiss, MD, CEO and president, NCH Healthcare System, states “The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation findings confirm the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index’s recent ranking of Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island as the healthiest and happiest community in the nation. We are blessed to live in such a wonderful place, and NCH is pleased to play a role in ensuring the continuing well-being of our community so that all of us may live longer, happier and healthier lives.”

Collier County Parks and Recreation Director, Barry Williams, says, "If you look outside your window you will find many of the reasons that Collier County is one of the healthiest places in Florida to live and play. Collier County offers all of our residents and visitors activities that can keep us healthy and well, such as our beautiful county parks and beaches. The Parks and Recreation Department is proud to be a part of making our community one of the best places to be."

Last week, the Florida Department of Health became the first integrated department of health in the nation to achieve national accreditation through the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#). Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. The seal of accreditation signifies that the Florida Department of Health has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health.

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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