

March 26, 2014



Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County addresses County Health Ranking *2014 Report reinforces benefits of community collaborations*

SARASOTA COUNTY - The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) recognizes the value of measuring health outcomes using a variety of data tools. Today, Sarasota County Health and Human Services officials acknowledged the 2014 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool, released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

This study is the fifth in a series of annual reports that highlights the many community factors that influence health and measures progress using established data sources, many of which are available from the DOH-Sarasota at www.floridacharts.com.

These rankings, which address physical environments; social and economic factors; health behaviors, and access to clinical care, are a snapshot of the health of counties across the nation. The report reinforces the benefit of community collaborations since health and well-being is not the result of one single effort but rather the dynamic achieved through the collective and ongoing efforts of many community partners.

Sarasota County's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The DOH-Sarasota has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and collaborates regularly to track progress.

"We recognize that there are always new opportunities to expand the scope of collaborations to foster healthy environments and healthy lifestyles," said DOH-Sarasota Administrator Chuck Henry, who also serves as the director for Sarasota County Health and Human Services.

Through collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders, the DOH-Sarasota works to improve the health of all people in county.

"Sarasota County is committed to our citizens' well-being, and we're fortunate to have so many resources within the county that offer a variety of recreational choices for our community members," said Sarasota County Administrator Tom Harmer. "The County Health Ranking further demonstrates our goal of promoting quality of life for our residents and visitors."

"Under the umbrella of the 'Healthy Sarasota County' branding, we see great promise in addressing a range of chronic diseases that drive employee health care costs through workplace wellness initiatives," said Tidewell Hospice Wellness Consultant Jessi Neitzel.

According to local health officials, Healthy Sarasota County Workplaces is the county's only community-based and community-driven workplace wellness program. Wellness and health professionals from Sarasota County's largest public employers: Sarasota Memorial Health Care System, Sarasota County Government, Sarasota County Schools, Tidewell Hospice, and the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, participated in its development.



"Through youth-focused efforts such as Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), there is strong support from local decision makers to educate community members on the dangers of candy-flavored tobacco products that are designed to appeal to youth," said Tobacco Free Partnership of Sarasota County Chair Shirley Brown, who also serves on the Sarasota County School Board. "Sarasota County Government and all of the local municipalities have passed resolutions urging against the sale and marketing of these products."

DOH-Sarasota is part of the department's network of local health departments that work to protect, promote and improve the health of all people through integrated state, county and community efforts.

For statewide updates, follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit www.floridahealth.gov.

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.
View the complete policy at www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx.

MEDIA NOTES:

For more information about the county health rankings, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org.

DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:

Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; Dianne.Shipley@flhealth.gov

Website: www.sarasotahealth.org