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EVENT CALENDAR

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State Surgeon General visits Sarasota to promote Healthiest Weight Initiative

SARASOTA COUNTY– Today, Oct. 16, Florida’s Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John H. Armstrong visited the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) to promote the Healthiest Weight Florida initiative.

Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, not for profit organizations, businesses, and entire communities to help Florida’s children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. While speaking with DOH-Sarasota staff and local community partners, Dr. Armstrong made a strong appeal regarding the number one public health threat that challenges the Florida’s bright future – weight. Currently, only 35 percent of Floridians are at a healthy weight. One quarter is obese and the rest are overweight.

Underscoring the economic impact of obesity, Dr. Armstrong stated that the costs of care for chronic diseases alone—diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and arthritis—are unsustainable, estimated to be \$34 billion in Florida over the next 17 years. By bending the projected Body Mass Index (BMI) curve of 65.1 percent by just five percent from its current trajectory by 2017, hundreds of thousands of new cases of chronic diseases can be prevented while saving millions in healthcare costs.

The Surgeon General highlighted the *Florida Walks!* interactive challenge to engage county leadership and staff in improved nutrition and increased physical activity. It is sponsored by the Florida Association of Counties in partnership with the Florida Department of Health. Sarasota County Commissioner Christine Robinson has responded to the challenge by mobilizing a team to finish a virtual 2,000 mile trek throughout Florida from Pensacola to Key West.

Dr. Armstrong also commended Sarasota County for its efforts through the Healthy Sarasota County Collaborative to address healthy weight in child care centers, schools, and primary care settings. A common message was adopted to unify the work and engage partners. The message is “**5210 Every Day!**” and references four, simple every day goals: 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, 2 hours of screen time or less, 1 hour of physical activity, and 0 sugary drinks. Twenty-six Sarasota County schools have earned distinction as *HealthierUS Schools*.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.HealthiestWeightFL.com>

<http://healthysarasota.com>

DOH protects, promotes and improves the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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