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‘HEALTH GAPS REPORT’ DEMONSTRATES DEPARTMENT FOCUSED ON THE RIGHT PRIORITIES



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Tallahassee, Fla.—Today, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute released a new report identifying health gaps in each state and recommendations for closing those gap. Many of the areas identified in the [Health Gaps Report](#) for Florida are priorities for the Florida Department of Health.

“There are many influences on health – economic, behavioral, social, environmental and clinical,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Good jobs are critical for health. Health is everyone’s business, and we are collaborating with employers, educators, urban planners, and the food industry to reshape the places where we live so that healthy choices become the easy choices.”

Over the past six years, Florida has had the longest life expectancy in its history, better than the national average, and the lowest infant mortality in its history. Florida is a diverse state with needs and opportunities that vary widely from city to city and county to county. Through our county health offices, the department works as an integrated, statewide system to partner with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups and many other stakeholders to achieve better health for all people in Florida.

The Florida Department of Health was the first in the nation to champion the development of a community health improvement plan (CHIP) in each of Florida’s 67 counties. CHIPs facilitate strategic community private-public partnerships to prioritize local health improvement activities and maximize how local resources are utilized for health benefits.

The *Health Gaps Report* supports two of the department’s key areas of focus – promoting healthy weight and decreasing smoking.

The department’s leading 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. Built on the principles of collective impact, Healthiest Weight Florida has mobilized local offices in each of Florida’s 67 counties around core evidence-based projects. Some of those key interventions include complete streets initiatives, worksite wellness programs and increasing the number of Baby-Friendly Hospitals.

Since the launch of Tobacco Free Florida, the department has made significant progress in preventing youth from smoking and helping adults quit. More than 126,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida's 3 Free & Easy Ways to Quit. In 2014, Florida's youth smoking rate reached an all-time low of 4.3 percent and the adult rate remains below the national average.

To learn more about Healthiest Weight Florida visit www.healthiestweightflorida.com

To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida visit <http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/>

To learn more about the *Health Gaps Report* visit www.countyhealthrankings.org

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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