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INTERIM STATE SURGEON GENERAL MEETS WITH WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA PUBLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE



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Tallahassee, Fla.—Today, Interim State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip attended the West Central Florida Public Health Alliance Meeting in Tampa. The meeting is one of a collection of regional assemblies for local health leaders to stay updated on county agendas and also serves as the second stop on the Interim Surgeon General's state tour to gather feedback on public health priorities in each of Florida's 67 counties. The nine counties represented in this alliance are Citrus, Sumter, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Hillsborough, Manatee and Hardee.

"I want to thank everyone who presented updates for counties in the West Central region during today's alliance meeting," said Interim State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip. "It was wonderful to see colleagues that I have worked with in the past and hear their ideas on how to better support them as local public health leaders to improve health in our state. Topics we will explore as a result of this meeting include mentoring opportunities for new health officers and greater involvement of local staff in our continued efforts around maintaining accreditation standards."

"We appreciate Dr. Philip's participation in today's meeting and her eagerness to learn more about new opportunities for our county health departments at the local level," said Paul Myers, administrator of the Department of Health in Alachua County and current delegated authority for Deputy Secretary for County Health Systems. "Our regional meetings are vital to coordinating health efforts, and we were delighted that she was able to come spotlight this event."

"So much of public health happens at the county level," said Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County Dr. Douglas Holt. "Dr. Philip's visit today was a great opportunity to talk with health officers about updates and focus on the local needs of nine Tampa Bay counties. We're grateful for such beneficial dialogue with state leadership."

While in Tampa, Dr. Philip also visited the department's public health laboratory – one of three in the state. Dr. Philip toured the lab and met with staff who are currently conducting Zika testing among many other important analyses.

The goal of the tour is to identify opportunities to improve and collaborate on for the new State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). The department is currently leading a multi-agency statewide effort to develop Florida's SHIP for 2017-2020. This SHIP will provide the blueprint for effective, targeted and integrated action to improve the health of Floridians. Together with community partners, the department is currently gathering input to identify key health-related concerns

facing the state and conducting a thorough analysis of factors that will help pinpoint the most important health issues for Florida.

Dr. Philip will wrap up her tour in mid-May and will share highlights along the way on the department's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) platforms using hashtag #FLHealthSHIP.

About the Florida Department of Health

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