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INTERIM SURGEON GENERAL MEETS WITH LEADERS IN NORTHWEST FLORIDA



Contact:

Communications Office

NewsMedia@flhealth.gov

850-245-4111

Tallahassee, Fla.—Interim State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip visited Defuniak Springs today to meet with health staff from the west region of the Florida panhandle. During one of the last stops on her statewide tour, Dr. Philip continued conversations about specific local and regional priorities.

“Today we talked about efforts already underway to better integrate family planning services with STD services to provide more comprehensive and streamlined care for patients,” said Interim State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip. “It was clear in today’s discussions that in smaller, more rural communities, collaboration with local partners is vital to improve health and many examples were shared today.”

“It was a welcome opportunity to be visited by Dr. Philip today and to spend time focusing on what makes health unique in our region,” said Health Officer for Escambia County Dr. John Lanza. “Meetings with leadership like this are vital as we work together to improve and address health issues at both state and local levels.”

“The meeting with Dr. Philip today went well, and our fellow county health partners and I were happy to ask questions about our regional approach to health,” said Health Officer for Walton County Holly Holt. “We look forward to more conversations about how to best serve individuals in our respective counties.”

The goal of Dr. Philip’s statewide tour is to identify opportunities in Florida’s 67 counties 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. The 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.

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