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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOCUSES ON HEALTH EQUITY DURING NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH

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Tallahassee, Fla. –The Florida Department of Health is joining with partners across the state and the nation to celebrate National Minority Health Month in April. This year's theme is Bridging Health Equity Across Communities and it reflects the department's commitment to ensuring Floridians in all communities have opportunities to achieve healthier outcomes.

"Achieving health equity across all populations in Florida is a critical part of the department's mission," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. Celeste Philip. "Many minority populations in Florida experience poorer health outcomes and are disproportionately affected by illness and disease. Through the Closing the Gap grant program, the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity focuses on reducing racial and ethnic health disparities by supporting community based organizations to implement local programs and policies that prevent disease and improve health outcomes throughout the state."

Florida has achieved lower morbidity and mortality rates across several different diseases, however, gaps continue to exist. All Floridians regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, geographic location and physical and developmental differences should be able to attain the highest level of health. Eliminating gaps between different communities and across all groups in Florida is a priority for the department.

The department's Office of Minority Health and Health Equity (OMHHE) works year round to promote several initiatives that support health equity in Florida including Closing the Gap grant, Florida's Healthy Babies initiative and HIV/AIDS outreach and prevention.

The Closing the Gap Grant program was signed into law in 2000 by the Florida Legislature. These grants are utilized to stimulate the development of community and neighborhood-based organizations to improve health outcomes of racial and ethnic populations and promote disease prevention activities. The priority areas of the program include cancer, heart disease, diabetes, immunizations, HIV/AIDS, maternal and infant mortality, oral health, sickle cell disease and social determinants of health. OMHHE will continue to bridge efforts across Florida to help decrease and eliminate health disparities, accelerate health equity and to build stronger, healthier communities.

The department's county health departments have hosted activities all across Florida to promote health equity and celebrate National Minority Health Month in their communities. Here are some highlights from around the state:

- DOH-Putnam partnered with a local church to host a community health fair to distribute health information and provide clothes, haircuts and lunch to more than 100 attendees.
- DOH-Seminole is strengthening its capacity to address health equity by inviting community partners to join the Minority Health Task Force to raise awareness about social determinants of health that influence negative health outcomes among racial/ethnic, underserved or disparate populations in their community.
- DOH-St. Lucie will host their 11th Annual Health Fair and Symposium at the end of the month to provide health screenings and offer the chance to talk to different doctors to discuss health concerns. They will also distribute information about local health and wellness resources.
- DOH-Clay will be closing out National Minority Health Month by participating in the community-wide “Taste of Clay” event, offering free blood pressure screenings, discussing hypertension and cardiovascular health, tobacco cessation resources and other health information. DOH-Clay’s outreach efforts will be geared toward addressing the health needs of the community’s African American population.

To learn more about projects and resources related to Minority Health Month, click [here](#).

For more information on the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity, click [here](#).

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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