

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: DOH Communications
(850) 245-4111

**DR. CATHERINE HOWARD NAMED COORDINATOR
OF HEALTHIEST WEIGHT INITIATIVE**

TALLAHASSEE - The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is pleased to announce Dr. Catherine Howard, Ph.D., as coordinator for the department's Healthiest Weight initiative. The initiative 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 physical active.

"Weight challenge is the number one public health threat to Florida's bright future. Currently, only 35% of adults are at a healthy weight, and on this track, six out of 10 babies born today will be obese before they graduate from high school," stated Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "Dr. Howard has the experience and drive necessary to move this critical initiative forward for Florida families."

Dr. Howard joined DOH in 2007 as a health educator for the Obesity Prevention Program. In that role, she managed the statewide HOPE Project, which offered free bilingual nutrition and fitness health evaluations and programs. She also staffed the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and developed the Governor's Fitness Challenge for elementary and middle schools across the state.

In addition, Howard has worked as program specialist for the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program where she worked to implement and evaluate population-based interventions to prevent type two diabetes. She also served as a state advisor and consultant with the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) and project director for the NDEP's diabetes prevention program *Red Road to Health*, which was developed for American Indian/Alaskan Native populations. Howard has served as Deputy Director for the Governor's Task Force on Autism Spectrum Disorders and is a master trainer for the Emory University Diabetes Training and Technical Assistance Center's *Diabetes Today: Planning for Coalition Action*.

Howard earned her doctorate in Public Health with a specialization in Epidemiology from Walden University in Minnesota. She is an adjunct faculty member for the Masters in Public Health Program and Department of Geography at Florida State University.

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Florida Department of Health

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