

**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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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECOGNIZES 125 YEARS OF  
FLORIDA PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Tallahassee** – The Florida Department of Health is recognizing 125 years of public health in Florida. The state Legislature created the State Board of Health on February 20, 1889, in response to yellow fever epidemics in Jacksonville and other port cities. Dr. Joseph Yates Porter from Key West became Florida’s first State Health Officer. Yellow fever in Florida was eradicated in 1905.

Governor Rick Scott said, “For 125 years, Floridians have been serving their communities and working to keep our state healthy. Today’s celebration is a great reminder of the important work that the Department of Health does on behalf of Florida families every day. I am proud to thank Florida’s nearly 17,000 public health professionals today, as we continue toward ensuring that all Floridians can lead healthy and safe lives.”

“Florida’s dramatic growth was made possible through public health efforts that controlled disease and improved environmental health,” said Dr. John Armstrong, State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health. “Just as Dr. Porter and colleagues saved Floridians from yellow fever over a century ago, we are committed to solving the top public health threat to Florida families now: weight challenge.”

The year-long celebration of 125 years of Florida Public Health was launched in Key West on February 3, where Dr. Armstrong joined Dr. Porter’s great-great granddaughter in a ceremonial wreath laying at Dr. Porter’s grave site. Throughout 2014, the Department will offer educational and health information opportunities. A resource featuring “Public Health Heroes” from all 67 counties will be released later this spring. During the week of April 7-11, the Department will further highlight the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as part of National Public Health Week. In September 2014, the Department will unveil a full historical exhibit of Florida Public Health heritage at Florida’s Historic Capitol Museum in Tallahassee.

The Department invites Florida’s residents and visitors to join in recognizing 125 years of protecting, promoting and improving the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. More information is available at [www.FLHealth125.gov](http://www.FLHealth125.gov).

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