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DEPARTMENT REFLECTS ON 2015 PUBLIC HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS



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Tallahassee, Fla.—With 2015 coming to a close, the Florida Department of Health is reflecting on the achievement of statewide public health milestones during the year. On behalf of Florida’s children, adults, and families, the department is driven to help Florida become the healthiest state in the nation.

“With over 15,000 public health professionals, 67 county health offices, and numerous community partners, Florida Health has made tremendous strides in moving health forward in 2015,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “We anticipate continuing progress in 2016 through community engagement for healthy choices every day.”

In 2015, Florida Health:

- Highlighted Health in All Places, with State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong putting the spotlight on healthy choices available in 18 counties from the Emerald to the Sun Coasts;
- Held the first ever statewide competition for Fast, Fresh from Florida Challenge at the [World Food Championship](#) in Kissimmee.
- Recognized 40 years of the [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children](#) (WIC), which serves 450,000 mothers, babies and preschoolers each year;
- Achieved the lowest infant mortality rate in its history, now at the national average, and remained above the national average in life expectancy at 79.2 years;
- Helped 137,000 Floridians successfully quit smoking thanks to [Tobacco Free Florida’s](#) 3 Free and Easy Ways to Quit. Florida now has more former smokers than smokers;
- With First Lady Ann Scott, celebrated [50 Years of Newborn Screening](#) that has opened futures for more than 7 million babies across Florida;
- Through [Healthiest Weight Florida](#), promoted 617 state and local partnerships that help communities shape environments for healthier eating and active living;
- Thanks to Governor Rick Scott and the Florida Legislature, awarded \$23 million in research grants to 26 projects to find cures and innovative management strategies for patients with cancer, tobacco-related disease and Alzheimer’s disease;

- Licensed 97,212 health care professionals through the [Division of Medical Quality Assurance](#);
- Established the framework for compassionate use of low-THC cannabis and approved [five dispensing organizations](#) to provide access to low-THC cannabis products for children with severe epilepsy and patients with advanced cancer; and
- Ensured that over 64,000 children with serious and chronic medical conditions received quality care through the accredited Children's Medical Services Managed Care Plan.

For health and safety tips for the New Year and to keep up with Florida Health in 2016, visit www.floridahealth.gov.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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