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## INTERIM STATE SURGEON GENERAL MEETS WITH PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS AT SOUTHWEST ALLIANCE CONSORTIUM MEETING



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**Tallahassee, Fla.**—Today Interim State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip attended the Southwest Alliance of County Health Officers Consortium Meeting in Fort Myers, and conversed with health leaders about regional priorities. The meeting also served as a stop in Dr. Philip’s statewide tour to talk with county Health Officers and health department staff.

“Today we discussed the importance of addressing adult oral health and the impact of hunger in certain communities in this part of the state,” said Interim State Surgeon and Secretary of Health Dr. Celeste Philip. “These are issues that are certainly priorities elsewhere and we will explore creative partnerships to address them.”

“We were pleased to have Dr. Philip join us for the consortium meeting,” said Acting Deputy Secretary for County Health Systems Paul Myers. “These meetings contribute to our department’s priorities, and guide how we move forward with decisions at the local level. During our conversation with Dr. Philip, we were able to hear what her vision is for the department, ask questions and provide feedback.”

“Dr. Philip was a welcome addition to our Southwest Alliance consortium today,” said Health Officer for Sarasota County Chuck Henry. “She provided great input during our conversation about improvements for our region, and it was especially helpful for our local health officers to gain a better understanding of the department’s future.”

“We enjoyed very productive conversations about health in our region with Dr. Philip today during her stop in Fort Myers,” said Mary Kay Burns, Health Officer for both Desoto and Highlands Counties. “Community health is the basis for so much of what we do, so to be able to provide a spotlight and emphasis on our local counties was a great opportunity.”

The goal of the 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. This 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.

### **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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