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## FLORIDA HEALTH FOCUSES ON ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES DURING NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH



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**Tallahassee, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health is emphasizing health equity—each individual achieving optimal health—during National Minority Health Month. The 2018 Minority Health Month theme is “Partnering for Health Equity,” which provides an opportunity to highlight the partnerships that help reduce disparities in health and health care.

“Certain communities in Florida face greater health challenges than others,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary Dr. Celeste Philip. “The department’s ongoing efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and to eliminate health disparities, would not be possible without the leadership of our county health officers and the cooperation of our valuable partners at the federal, state, local, tribal and territorial levels.”

The conditions in the places where people are born, grow, live, work, play, learn and age have significant impact on the health outcomes of individuals, families and their communities. The department’s Office of Minority Health and Health Equity (OMHHE) continues to bridge efforts across Florida to help decrease and eliminate health disparities, accelerate health equity, and build stronger and healthier communities.

The Closing the Gap Grant program is administered by the OMHHE, and these grants are utilized to stimulate the development of community and neighborhood-based organizations to improve disparate health outcomes of racial and ethnic populations and promote disease prevention activities.

As part of the Closing the Gap Grant program, Hebni Nutrition Consultants, Inc. introduced the “Fresh Stop” mobile farmers’ market bus in Central Florida. “Fresh Stop” was introduced in 2014 with the goal of reducing diabetes risk in areas that are considered food deserts due to a lack of fresh, nutritional and affordable food options. In addition to offering fresh produce, the “Fresh Stop” also provides healthy cooking and wellness lessons. More than half of residents in Eatonville that attended the wellness lessons had lost weight and reduced their risk of diabetes.

To ensure Floridians in all communities have opportunities to achieve healthier outcomes, the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) Steering Committee has chosen health equity as one of eight priority health areas in the SHIP, which will guide strategic health interventions for the next five years.

To learn more about the SHIP, visit the [State Health Improvement Plan](#) website.

For more information about the Office of Minority Health, visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/minority-health/index.html>

### **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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