

# NEW HEALTH OFFICER SELECTED FOR DIXIE, LEVY AND GILCHRIST COUNTIES



## Contact:

Communications Office

[NewsMedia@flhealth.gov](mailto:NewsMedia@flhealth.gov)

[\(850\) 245-4111](tel:(850)245-4111)

**Tallahassee, Fla.** — The Florida Department of Health (Department) is pleased to announce Natalie McKellips, JD, as the Health Officer for Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist Counties effective November 20, 2020. She brings nearly 20 years of experience in the health field with 13 years in the public service sector.

As the Health Officer for these Counties, McKellips will be responsible for overseeing all operations, including planning, directing, developing and coordinating public health programs and activities. She will also be responsible for making sure that all three Counties continue to address state and local public health priorities and provide population-based partnerships with community stakeholders.

“Ms. McKellips’ unique qualifications and experience in the private and public service sector make her an ideal fit as the Health Officer for Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist Counties,” **said Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez.** “She has the management and administrative expertise in public health we need in these challenging times.”

“Ms. McKellips is an experienced public servant and a tremendous fit for the role of health officer with the Florida Department of Health,” **said Dr. Scott Rivkees, Florida Surgeon General.** “Her leadership, experience and commitment to public health make us confident that she will serve the department and the people of Dixie, Levy and Gilchrist Counties well.”

“The citizens of Dixie County have always enjoyed strong leadership from the Florida Department of Health. Be it in times of hurricanes or other natural disasters, assessing community health needs, or in times like we are currently experiencing with a pandemic, we can always look to DOH to be a strong voice and leader for the residents of our county,” **said David Osteen, County Commissioner District 5.** “We look forward to working with Natalie in the coming years and welcome her to our community.”

The School Board and school system in Levy County have a strong working relationship with the County Health Department. We always look to the Health Department for direction on issues related to student health such as flu outbreaks, assisting with our school health clinics or especially with the current pandemic,” **said Cameron Asbell, Chairman Levy County School Board.** “We look forward to working with Mrs. McKellips in her role as County Health Officer and continuing the strong relationships that have already been established.”

“As the County Administrator I look forward to working with Mrs. McKellips on issues related to public health. Gilchrist County has always had a strong working relationship with the local Department of Health and we regularly work together on issues of public health planning and response,” **said Bobby Crosby, Gilchrist County Administrator.** “We are happy to welcome Natalie to our community and look forward to maintaining the strong team approach to serving the citizens of Gilchrist County.”

McKellips has worked for the Department for the past 12 years serving as Chief Legal Counsel for the North Central Florida Consortium of County Health Departments which includes the Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Marion, Suwannee and Union County Health Departments (CHD). In this role she advised CHD Health Officers and staff on the wide range of public health issues and topics that arise in the daily operation of the health departments.

McKellips began her career in the health care field as an attorney for the State of Florida’s health care boards where she prosecuted disciplinary cases against licensed medical professionals. She then moved to the Florida Engineers Management Corporation (FEMC), where she served as both the Prosecuting Attorney and later as the Executive Director for the Florida Board of Professional Engineers. FEMC, a small, not-for-profit corporation, was created by the Legislature in 1997 to operate the Board office for the Florida Board of Professional Engineers which, at the time, licensed and regulated over 26,000 professional engineers in the state. As a member of FEMC’s inaugural staff, McKellips helped build the corporation into a successful public-private partnership and a model for other state regulatory boards.

McKellips was a volunteer mediator for the Alachua County Court System for many years, assisting parties in the resolution of small claims cases. She also served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Florida College of Law, where she taught courses focusing on the crucial skills of interviewing, counseling, negotiation and mediation. McKellips is a member of the National Association of County and City Health Officials and is enrolled in the Department of Health’s Public Health Executive Leadership Program.

McKellips graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1990. She earned her Juris Doctor degree from Florida State in 1994 and was licensed to practice law that same year.

The Department would like to thank Barbara Locke for 43 years of leadership and service as the Health Officer for Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy Counties and congratulate her on her retirement.

### **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.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).