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## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT: FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ADDRESSES FALSE MIAMI HERALD CLAIMS



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**Tallahassee, Fla.**— On Monday, the *Miami Herald* published an inaccurate article stating that the Florida Department of Health has not released adequate data regarding COVID-19 in schools and received a "reprimand" from the Public Health Accreditation Board. These claims are false, and the department welcomes the opportunity to clarify inaccuracies provided by the *Miami Herald* to the public.

### Claim:

*The question would lead to a six-month investigation that concluded the Florida Department of Health should improve how it communicates COVID-19 data and analysis to the public — transparency experts say is crucial for making personal health decisions like whether to send a child back to school.*

### Fact:

As a result of this investigation, the Board concluded that DOH "demonstrated strong capacity related to epidemiology, data management and communications" and found "nothing concerning about the department's data collection or analysis," specifically COVID-19 data and surveillance. The department's accreditation **was not placed on any type of probation or revoked.**

### Claim:

*"If an accredited health department is told by an accreditation board that they need to do something better, then they're going to do that, they're going to pay attention to that, because the next step would be probation or losing accreditation, and that doesn't look good," Toner said.*

### Fact:

The department remains the only fully integrated accredited public health system in the nation and has not faced any sort of probationary status with the Public Health Accreditation Board. The department continues to demonstrate national excellence in public health management, and the accreditation is not in jeopardy.

Further, in response to the investigation, PHAB President Paul Kuehnert stated: "Based on what we have seen with Florida, the professionals at the Department of Health are doing a really excellent job."

The department has been accredited by PHAB for over six years and was the first accredited integrated department of health nationwide. We also received additional accreditation during our response to the COVID-19 pandemic for our Bureau of Vital Statistics.

The department's number one priority is the health of all Floridians, especially children.

To present a story primarily with the perspective of the individual who filed a complaint utilizing news coverage as the complaint's "supporting evidence" shows the inherent bias of the *Miami*

*Herald.* This outlet continues to create controversy and doubt surrounding the state's dedication to public health when Florida remains a national leader in COVID-19 response.

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

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