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MARION COUNTY RANKS 52ND IN FLORIDA IN RWJF HEALTH RANKINGS



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OCALA, Fla.—Marion County ranked 52nd out of Florida’s 67 counties for overall health outcomes in the newly released 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. RWJF determined this ranking based on Marion’s scores across a variety of areas: Marion ranked 59th in length of life, 41st in quality of life, 33rd in health behaviors, 18th in clinical care, 51st in social and economic factors, and 43rd in physical environment. An annual project from RWJF, this study highlights the many community factors that influence health and uses established data, such as information from www.FLHealthCHARTS.com.

“Data such as the County Health Rankings serve to remind us of the many different factors, both clinical and social, that influence the health of a community,” said Department of Health in Marion County Health Officer Mark Lander. “The investment into improving community health requires input and action from multiple partners and we are fortunate in Marion County to have leadership committed to the people they serve, in both the governmental and private sectors.”

The department is working in collaboration with local government, nonprofit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders to improve the health of all people in Marion County. One initiative is its partnership with more than 20 Marion County organizations to develop a Community Improvement Plan that addresses high-priority issues affecting health of the community. While some of these issues can be considered conventional health factors, many are related to social behaviors that on the surface may not appear to have a clinical relationship, but in reality impact the ability of residents to achieve their best health.

The United Way of Marion County is one the many partners working to develop the Community Improvement Plan.

“United Way of Marion County is proud to be a partner with the key organizations in our community that address the health of our citizens,” said President and CEO of the United Way of Marion County Scot Quintel. “By working together, we can magnify our individual abilities to affect change and address the needs identified in the county health rankings.”

Marion County Hospital District Executive Director Curt Bromund noted the steps the Hospital District has taken to address health issues over the past year.

“The 2019 health rankings were negatively impacted by factors that reduced our citizens’ life expectancy,” Bromund said. “These factors included increased incidents of suicides and overdose deaths, and the Marion County Hospital District is making a significant investment in outpatient substance abuse treatment and mental health counseling. We anticipate spending \$1.5 million in substance abuse and mental health projects this year, and we are working with Representative McClain on legislation that will provide an additional \$1M to Marion County for detox, inpatient and step-down treatments.”

To explore more health indicators in your county, visit www.FLHealthCHARTS.com.

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