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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MARION COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS

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Ocala, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Marion County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2017 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This study highlights the many community factors that influence health and uses established data, much of which is available from the department at www.FLHealthCHARTS.com.

"People and organizations all across Marion County are working hard to improve community health," said Florida Department of Health in Marion County Health Officer Erin Hess. "The Hospital District is funding grants targeting obesity, smoking, diabetes, mental health and oral health. The Health Alliance consortium is working on community health improvement planning. United Way is addressing social issues that impact health. Measure Up Marion, the Children's Alliance, and many more organizations are working to help improve the health of Marion County's residents."

These rankings are a snapshot of the health of counties across the country and they emphasize that health is not a singular effort but a combined work in progress across all community partners. The department works in collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders to improve the health of all people in Marion County. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In Marion County, the Health Alliance is using data from the updated Community Health Assessment to develop a comprehensive Community Health Improvement Plan that addresses specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department will be part of a partnership with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and help track progress.

"The Marion County Health Alliance is committed to our residents and the community as a whole in having a healthier environment in which we can share healthier lives," said Alliance Executive Director Patrick Gilman. "We believe the RWJ County Health Rankings is a helpful tool that allows communities to make comparisons with others, although we feel strongly that the true value comes from the engagement and collaboration among community partners which is the path to health improvement for our residents and the community."

"Many Marion County residents face challenges leading a healthy lifestyle," said United Way of Marion County President and CEO Scot Quintel. "United Way of Marion County strives to improve the health of residents by addressing social determinants that impact their health. These health rankings are one of the sources of data we use in planning our efforts."

Last week the Florida Department of Health celebrated a one year milestone as the first integrated department of health in the nation to achieve national accreditation through the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#). Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. The seal of accreditation signifies that the Florida Department of Health has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health.

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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