

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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Contact: Craig Ackerman
352-629-0137, ext. 2052
Craig.Ackerman@FLHealth.gov

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MARION COUNTY
ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS**

OCALA—The Florida Department of Health in Marion County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the sixth annual 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.floridacharts.com.

"Rankings provide a broad view of health status in Marion County compared to other Florida counties," said Mike Napier, interim health officer for the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. "These results should provide focus on particular issues as the community partners begin a new community health assessment for Marion."

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, 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. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In Marion County, the Community Health Improvement Plan is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and collaborates regularly to track progress. Several partners have joined forces to conduct a new community health assessment, which will lead to an updated community health improvement plan. The Marion County Hospital District is leading the effort with the Florida Department of Health Marion County, The Centers, Ocala Health Systems, Munroe Regional Health Center and Heart of Florida Health Center as partners.

"Marion County remains committed to supporting our residents as they pursue healthy lifestyles," said Marion County Commissioner Earl Arnett. "We continue to work to ensure our community is a place where residents can live active and healthy lives."

"The city is pleased to do its part in creating healthy opportunities for our citizens," said Ocala City Council President Jay Musleh. "We are proud of the parks, recreational facilities and open spaces in which our residents may enjoy a healthy lifestyle."

"Of all the many issues facing our county, the most important is the health of our citizens," said Jon Kurtz, Marion County Hospital District executive director. "We have outstanding hospitals, doctors and

Florida Department of Health
Marion County
1801 SE 32nd Avenue, PO Box 2408 • Ocala, Florida 34478
PHONE: 352/629-0137 • FAX 352/694-1613

Marion.FloridaHealth.gov
TWITTER: HealthyFLA
FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth
YOUTUBE: fldoh
FLICKR: HealthyFla
PINTEREST: HealthyFla

medical staffs in our community. Unfortunately our medical outcomes compared to other communities in Florida are poor due to a shortage of primary care doctors and a lack of access to medical care. The Marion County Hospital District is committed to take a long-term view to help improve health care outcomes for all of us.”

“Community leaders are concerned about the health of our citizens and there are a number of ongoing initiatives to address the issue,” said Dr. Mike Jordan, executive director of the Marion County Children’s Alliance. “At the same time we realize there are no easy solutions and only a sustained effort will bring about positive results.”

“We are pleased to partner with the health department to help provide greater access to care for the community,” said Kerrie Jones Clark, Heart of Florida Health Center CEO. “We are seeing patients in seven facilities all across Marion County, including three health department locations. We will continue to collaborate with the department, and together we will seek opportunities to continuously improve access to health care in Marion County.”

Health improvement efforts are underway in the community. To improve access to dental care for underserved children, the department partnered with Marion County Head Start to open a children’s dental clinic at the school. To address injury deaths in the county, the Safe Kids Marion County coalition partners have worked to reduce deaths by providing swimming lessons, car seats and safe sleeping tools to children and families.

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