

**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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATE SURGEON GENERAL TO SPEAK IN MARION COUNTY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK**

Ocala—State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John H. Armstrong will kick off National Public Health Week at a meeting of community leaders April 6 at the Florida Department of Health in Marion County.

Dr. Armstrong will speak to Marion County leaders on the status of health in Florida and Marion County, as well as state initiatives and public health strategies. Dr. Armstrong will also present the 2015 Healthy Weight Community Champion Award to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners.

Other topics that will be covered include an update on the Marion County Hospital District, status of the new Marion County Community Health Assessment, and a new grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help improve community health.

The Florida Department of Health in Marion County is celebrating Public Health Week April 6–10 with informational displays at the Ocala facility. The department works to protect, promote and improve health in many ways:

**Healthiest Weight Initiative:** The No. 1 public health threat to Florida's future is unhealthy weight. Currently, 65 percent of Marion County's adults are considered at an unhealthy weight. Nearly 16 percent of our middle and high school students are overweight and nearly 14 percent are considered obese. Find what you can do to help your family maintain a healthy weight.

**Disease Prevention:** The department's immunizations clinic gave free vaccines to more than 11,000 children and youths last year. The department works to protect the community from infectious diseases through immunization, surveillance, education and outreach. Learn how safe and effective vaccines are, and how you can stop the spread of disease in its tracks.

**Public Health Preparedness:** The department is ready to act when disaster strikes. Hurricane season will soon be upon us, and the department works with the Marion County Emergency Management Division, Marion County Public Schools, the Red Cross and other partners to shelter medically fragile members of the community during disasters. More than 1,400 residents are already registered for Marion County's special needs shelters.

**Environmental Health:** Most Marion County residents get their water from private wells. Most households are served by septic systems. Learn how to ensure your well water is *well*, and find out how to know your septic system is operating properly.

**HIV/AIDS:** Department staff members provide specialty health care for HIV-positive clients and conduct

HIV testing, but prevention is key. The department partners with community organizations to perform testing and provide education on preventing this deadly disease.

**School Health:** Public school nurses are Department of Health employees, serving more than 42,000 Marion County Public School students to help ensure they are healthy, in school and ready to learn.

**Healthy Start:** Healthy Start provides education, case management and other services to improve birth outcomes and decrease infant mortality. Healthy Start provided services to more than 3,700 Marion County women and infants last year.

**WIC:** The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children provides healthy food, as well as breastfeeding education and nutrition counseling, to more than 10,000 families and children each year. In Marion County, the average annual value of WIC foods received by WIC clients is more than \$7 million.

**Dental Care:** Through partnerships with the College of Central Florida, Head Start and others, health department dental clinics serve about 3,000 Marion County children.

For more information about National Public health Week events, call the department at 352-629-0137.

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