

March 15, 2018

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN OKALOOSA COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS



A #18 Ranking Helps Identify Opportunities for Improvement to Make Okaloosa a Healthier Place to Live, Learn, Work and Play

Contact: Kathy Newby; Kathy.Newby@flhealth.gov; 850-344-0580

Okaloosa County, Fla.— Health Rankings published by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation which study community factors that are influencing health, ranks Okaloosa County number 18 of 67 counties in Florida. The opportunity exists for Okaloosa to move up in the rankings by decreasing the number of premature deaths in our communities.

“In 2011, Okaloosa ranked 9th and now we are a mid-ranking county at 18, which isn’t bad – but we can do so much better,” exclaimed Dr. Karen Chapman, Director, DOH-Okaloosa. This study, along with the five-year Community Health Assessment, is what motivates members of the communities of Okaloosa to focus on decreasing infant mortality, smoking, injury deaths and teen births, as well as decreasing alcohol and drug abuse.

The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and acknowledges the 2018 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care, much of which is available from the department at www.FLHealthCHARTS.com.

DOH-Okaloosa 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 Okaloosa County. In Okaloosa County, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. Six new CHIP groups plan to tackle a variety of public health concerns over the next five years including preventing injuries, decreasing drug use, improving infant mortality, strengthening families, promoting healthy lifestyles and developing mental health and substance abuse solutions.

Ardelle Bush, Executive Director, Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties: “We began working together with our community partners in 2016 and developed a ‘Recipe for a Healthy Baby.’” The recipe included 4 simple ingredients: breastfeed your baby, safe sleep for baby, never shake a baby and quit (nicotine) for baby. Members of this group are as committed

today as we were in 2016, and now have presentations, print materials and most importantly, we have a Safe Sleep Nursery modeling a safe sleep environment that travels throughout the county to promote safe sleep and prevent suffocation, the primary cause for an infant's death. The Safe Sleep recipe is as easy as ABC: Alone, baby on its Back and in a Crib, never sleep with your baby. We are getting the message out and this group continues to work tirelessly to have an impact, as it is truly a labor of love."

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

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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