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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN OKALOOSA COUNTY CELEBRATES NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK – THE FLORIDA WAY



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Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. – This week is National Public Health Week, and the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) is giving Floridians an inside look at some of the careers behind public health and the dedicated professionals who do them. Each day, the department will highlight a different area of public health including epidemiology, emergency preparedness and response, environmental health and public health nursing.

“Every day, DOH-Okaloosa’s public health professionals actively work to protect, promote, and improve the health of all Okaloosa County residents and visitors,” stated Dr. Karen A. Chapman, Director of DOH-Okaloosa. “National Public Health Week is a great time for us to highlight some of the ways the health department monitors and addresses health concerns and disparities in our local communities.”

Last year, the department was the first state in the nation to receive national accreditation as an integrated department of health through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Accreditation by PHAB signifies that the department, including the state health office and all 67 county health departments, is meeting national standards for ensuring essential public health services are provided in the community.

For the next two years, the department will focus on several key areas to improve health in our state including increasing childhood vaccination rates, achieving health equity in all communities, developing a high quality trauma service, reducing HIV infection rates, reducing infant mortality rates, decreasing inhaled nicotine use and decreasing licensure processing time for health care professionals.

Some highlights of the work that was done by DOH-Okaloosa’s public health professionals in 2016 include:

- 9,584 vaccines were given to children to protect against dangerous diseases
- 19 schools and youth organizations received healthy lifestyle education
- 201 students were members of SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) at seven schools
- Over 500 public pools were inspected for disease-causing bacteria
- 2,289 sealants were placed on the teeth of 626 children
- 16 agreements with locations to provide vaccines or medicine to the public during a health emergency
- 5,543 clients enrolled to receive WIC benefits and assistance.
- 738 cases of infectious diseases were reported and investigated

- 368.75 hours volunteered by members of the Okaloosa-Walton Medical Reserve Corps
- 1,033 animal bites were investigated for possible rabies exposure
- 2,996 clients received family planning services
- 536 septic systems were inspected and approved

Use #ThankAPublicHealthPro on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to recognize a public health professional in your area during National Public Health Week.

For more information about National Public Health Week, please visit www.nphw.org. For more information about the different programs and services offered at DOH-Okaloosa, please visit www.HealthyOkaloosa.com or call 850-833-9240.

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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