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## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN WALTON COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS



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**DeFuniak Springs** – The Florida Department of Health in Walton County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2016 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](http://www.floridacharts.com).

“With the combined efforts of our community partners we are excited to see an improvement in our 2016 County Health Rankings. Working together to make Walton County a healthier place to live is critical” said Holly Holt, DOH Walton Administrator/Health Officer. “We all have a stake in creating a healthier Walton; no single person or agency can overcome the health challenges we face. Working together, we can make Walton County a healthier place to live, learn, work and play”.

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

In Walton County, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) 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.

“As the coordinator of a community coalition that focuses on drug use prevention, participating in WCHIP helps us build momentum for our initiatives to keep kids away from drugs” said Bryan C. Callahan, Walton County Prevention Coalition Co Chair/Coordinator. “Being a part of the WCHIP provides our coalition with the opportunity to help improve the health of Walton County”.

“We are honored to work together with the Department of Health and area agencies to continually raise the bar for health outcomes in our region,” said Roger Hall, president of Sacred Heart Hospital on the Emerald Coast. “Everyone must take an active role in their health. Embrace wellness and nutrition initiatives, and visit your primary care provider routinely”.

Last week, the Florida Department of Health became 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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