

Mission:

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



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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DOH-Duval releases “Place Matters” report on Health Equity in Duval County

JACKSONVILLE, FL – The Florida Department of Health in Duval County (DOH-Duval) has released an updated comprehensive report of its research on health equity in Jacksonville entitled “Place Matters.” The report highlights high risk factor locations and their disparities as major chronic and public health problems in Duval County.

The report features data revealing local health disparities including: Duval County residents have a shorter life expectancy than other Floridians and the U.S. residents in general. Generally, females live longer than males and life expectancy varies by race with Whites living longer than other groups. Within Duval County’s health zones (HZ), the urban core (HZ1) has the shortest life expectancy regardless of race or gender. The disparity is greatest for males with a 10-year difference between HZ1 and HZ3. Although inequities exist, they are based on social conditions and not biological destiny. Although HZ1 struggles with many health problems, other areas demonstrate a need for interventions to address health concerns like mental health and injuries in HZ6 (beaches), cancer deaths in HZ4, teen pregnancy in HZ4, and sexually transmitted diseases in 15-19 year olds throughout the county, along with a low level of condom use for those youth engaging in sex, especially in HZ3. Although most indicators have shown improvement since the 2008 Place Matters report, for the county and for each HZ, babies who are born prematurely at low birth weights and infant mortality continue to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable residents.

“We believe that the public must be made aware of the many health disparities that offer opportunities for healthier outcomes in our community,” said DOH-Duval Director Kelli Wells, MD. “Our goal is to facilitate a conversation eventually resulting in policies that improve social conditions and public health concerns.”

Jacksonville is one of many communities working to build strategic alliances that examine how social conditions and policies around housing, crime, the environment, transportation and economics closely factor into health and wellbeing. Data from the report offers Jacksonville the opportunity to work together as a community to gain a better understanding of the root causes of poor health, and to examine and learn from other innovative, community-based approaches to improving health and social conditions.

Studies show that strategies to improve the quality of life of individuals, as a community, have an impact on health, and are considered to be health policy. The Place Matters report provides an opportunity for community stakeholders and policymakers to learn more about how racism, crime, poverty, stress, education, housing and transportation policies can make us sick.

To access the Place Matters report, visit www.dchd.net.

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