THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN HIGHLANDS COUNTY
2013 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN
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Foreword

The Highlands County Health Department provides a range of services to the residents of our community – from promoting healthy lifestyles, and protecting the health of our residents through immunizations and disease investigation to serving as the provider of last resort for certain services such as children’s dental care.

The 2013-2015 Strategic Plan outlines our purpose, the priorities for the year and how we will deliver them for the benefit of the public. Importantly, this plan builds on what we have learned and experienced as an agency over the past years.

The recent economic downturn has presented unique challenges to our health department. While the demand for our services is increasing, the revenue streams we rely on have been decreasing. Despite these challenges, we strive to maintain quality, high-level services, live up to the expectations of our community and continue to prepare for a changing landscape. This necessitates that we continually assess the value and impact of services, find new approaches for carrying out our work, identify new resources, strengthen our collaborations and maximize efficiencies.

We recognize that we are not alone in working to assure the health of the public. Public health depends on partnerships, and as a community, Highlands County has demonstrated a commitment to build and maintain a strong public health network. We have many examples of community coalitions that work together to improve health and quality of life for our residents.

I am proud of our dedicated, highly trained and experienced public health workforce who is ready to respond to a range of public health emergencies – having responded repeatedly to hurricanes, as well as to white powder incidents and the H1N1 flu pandemic.

Looking forward, this Strategic Plan represents a challenging work program for the 2013-2015 planning period, one that will deliver tangible benefits, offer the highest quality services to our community, and fulfill our role in the coordination of local public health functions.

Sincerely,
Mary Kay Burns, R.N., B.S.N, M.B.A.
Administrator/Health Officer
Florida Department of Health in Highlands County
Purpose

This strategic plan is intended to be used internally to manage our work and resources and present our purpose and commitments to external customers and stakeholders.

The strategic plan shows how the Highlands County Health Department will use its people and financial resources to deliver a structured program of work to achieve our mission and respond to community needs and expectations.

Our strategic plan aligns with an outcome-oriented public health delivery model which focuses on improving quality of life at the community level. It also aligns with the State Strategic Plan, and National Health Objectives outlined in Healthy People 2020.

This strategic plan is not intended to serve as a policy or discussion document but as a practical, descriptive document designed to be used flexibly by managers to make decisions about resources and changing priorities.
Functions of a Local Health Department

Public health encompasses three core functions: assessment of information on the health of the community, comprehensive public health policy development, and assurance that public health services are provided to the community. Both distinct from and encompassing clinical services, public health’s role is to assure the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives.

How does this happen? Public health serves communities and individuals within them by providing an array of essential services. Adopted in 1994, the Ten Essential Public Health Services provide a common framework for public health and medical professionals, as well as grassroots workers and non-public health civic leaders, so they can work collaboratively towards fulfilling the vital mission of public health -- to promote physical and mental health, and prevent disease, injury, and disability.

At the local level, each community has a unique “public health system” comprised of individuals and public and private entities that are engaged in activities that affect the public’s health. Public health is most successful when communities are working together and partnerships are strong. Local health departments play a pivotal role in assuring the health of communities, and the community should reasonably expect the local health department to fulfill certain functions.
A functional local health department:

- Understands the specific health issues confronting the community, and how physical, behavioral, environmental, social and economic conditions affect them.
- Investigates health problems and health threats.
- Prevents, minimizes and contains adverse health effects from communicable diseases, disease outbreaks from unsafe food and water, chronic diseases, environmental hazards, injuries and risky health behaviors.
- Leads planning and response activities for public health emergencies.
- Collaborates with other local responders and with state and federal agencies to intervene in other emergencies with public health significance (e.g., natural disasters).
- Implements health promotion programs.
- Engages the community to address public health issues.
- Develops partnerships with public and private healthcare providers and institutions, community-based organizations and other government agencies (e.g., housing authority, criminal justice, education) engaged in services that affect health to collectively identify, alleviate and act on the sources of public health problems.
- Coordinates the public health system’s efforts in an intentional, non-competitive and non-duplicative manner.
- Addresses health disparities.
- Serves as an essential resource for local governing bodies and policymakers on up-to-date public health laws and policies.
- Provides science-based, timely and culturally competent health information and health alerts to the media and to the community.
- Provides its expertise to others who treat or address issues of public health significance.
- Ensures compliance with public health laws and ordinances, using enforcement authority when appropriate.
- Employs well-trained staff members who have the necessary resources to implement best practices and evidence-based programs and interventions.
- Facilitates research efforts, when approached by researchers that benefit the community.
- Uses and contributes to the evidence base of public health.
- Strategically plans its services and activities, evaluates performance and outcomes and makes adjustments as needed to continually improve its effectiveness, enhance the community’s health status and meet the community’s expectations.

(National Association of County and City Health Officials, Operational Definition of a Functional Local Health Department and input from Community/Leadership Strategic Planning Meetings August 2013)
Strategic Planning Process

Our health department has a strategic planning process designed to identify the issues/priorities that must be addressed to meet the health department’s mission. (See Diagram 1) This process has been reviewed over the years.

Key participants in the Strategic Planning Process (SPP) include the Administrator, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), staff and community members. (See Appendix A for complete membership) The SPP incorporates many collaborative activities to ensure that feedback is taken into consideration when planning. Staff involvement is achieved at the program level during the process. Staff also gathers and analyzes external and internal information to determine current issues and opportunities to consider during the planning cycle.

We review our Mission, Vision and Values, and align core competencies through a comprehensive analysis. Evaluating the community and organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are important in matching our capabilities and resources to our competitors. Engaging the Senior Leaders and employees in participating in this analysis allows for the identification of internal factors and external factors that affect the strategic direction of the department.

Another source of information is the review of important documents that includes the State Department of Health’s Five-Year Plan/State law and national guidance. In order to better identify and eliminate potential blind spots DCHD conducted an environmental scan process. This environmental scan includes: historical and current situation and perspectives; economic, regulatory, socio-cultural and technological influences; demographics and health statistics; market segments and customers; and employee satisfaction and stakeholder impact.

The analysis phase of Strategic Planning ends when conclusions/theories are drawn about the extensive information that has been accumulated.

The process then dictates that potential long and short-term opportunities be formulated. With current economic and political factors, it is very difficult to project beyond a three year planning cycle. Many of our associated performance indicators and deployment activities may have a shorter-term duration and some are focused on the current fiscal year. These time frames have been set to align with the requirements of the state Department of Health, which requires a focus on the attainment of “Healthy People 2020” health indicators along with current year requirements for budget alignment. (See Table 1 for SPP timeline)

Improvements in the SPP have been made to review and revise the mission, vision and values and reduce strategic priorities.
Figure 1: Strategic Planning Process

**Prioritize and Plan**
- Create FDOH in Highlands County Profile
  - Modify Mission and Vision
  - Identify Key Customer Requirements
- Create FDOH in Highlands County Strategic Plan
  - Conduct Environmental Scan
  - Establish strategic goals, objectives and strategies
- Create Action Plans to accomplish objectives
  - Identify evidence-based interventions
  - Allocate resources to accomplish desired results
  - Begin action cycle to implement and evaluate

**Manage**
- Create performance measurement system
  - Identify and define measures and indicators for each objective
  - Benchmark performance
- Develop regular reporting cycle for performance data
- Collect and analyst performance data
- Share and discuss performance results

**Improve**
- Address Opportunities for Improvement
  - Prioritize areas to be addressed
  - Conduct further analysis to determine causes of performance gaps
  - Identify improvement strategies
  - Begin action cycle to implement and evaluate.
### Table 1: Strategy Development and Implementation Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Plan (Every 3 Years) Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set Direction (State and Local Directives)</td>
<td>January</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Scan</td>
<td>February through April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct SWOT (Program &amp; Agency wide)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validate Mission, Vision, Values, Purpose, Core</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competencies, Challenges/Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validate Key Stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validate Key Customer Requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Strategic Objectives, Indicators, Targets</td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determine Key Activities (Action Plans)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalize Plan</td>
<td>June through July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Execute Plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Programmatic and Agency Business Plan</td>
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#### Annual Programmatic Review

| Mini-scan (What’s new, What’s changed)          | April through May |
| Update Objectives, Indicators, Targets          |       |
| Design Detailed Annual Business Plan            | May through June |
| Implement the Plan                               |       |
| Monthly Business Reviews (Program & Agency)     |       |
As part of an integrated statewide Department of Health, our mission, vision and values align with those promulgated by the state.

**Our Mission**

The mission of FDOH in Highlands County is to protect, promote and improve the health of residents and visitors of Highlands County, Florida through collaborative and integrated state, county and community efforts.

**Our Vision**

The vision of the Florida Department of Health is to be the healthiest state in the nation. We believe that FDOH in Highlands county can contribute to the health of Florida through a community where good health and wellness are priorities for its people, a place where medical and dental services are accessible and affordable and where public and private facilities work together with the community to assure sustainable, cost effective services are available and utilized to continually improve health outcomes for all.

**Our Values**

The Florida Department of Health’s foundational values include I CARE (Innovation, Collaboration, Accountability, Responsiveness and Excellence. Locally, at the FDOH in Highlands County we also supplement these values through following:

**Commitment of Service:** We dedicate ourselves to provide services unconditionally and without partiality

**Empowerment:** We create a culture that encourages people to exercise their judgment and initiative in pursuit of organizational goals

**Integrity:** Our guide for actions— which incorporates our commitment to honesty, fairness, loyalty and trustworthiness - is in the best interests of our customers and employees

**Respect:** We recognize and honor the contributions of one another in our daily activities and create an environment where diversity is appreciated and encouraged.

**Teamwork:** We encourage collaboration to solve problems, make decisions, and achieve goals.
Community Needs and Expectations

FDOH-Highlands solicited feedback from the Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) committee concerning community needs and expectations.

That committee stressed that we be realistic and data driven in our goals, and work in conjunction with the CHIP group in planning for the future.

They envision a healthy Highlands County with the expectation that we have a broad community mission. We should be seen as a stable and trusted source for information referral and for informing and controlling communicable disease, a reliable community partner for disaster response, and a leader in health - by assessing health of population, providing easily accessible health and environmental services to all residents of the county. Our Local Health Departments strive to meet these expectations.

That feedback also shows a community alignment and commitment to our own expectations as leaders in public health. Our community should see its leaders showing values of trust, responsibility, accountability, and integrity. These leaders should be respectful, honest, and fiscally sound. Leaders should be innovative and visionary, placing emphasis on community safety and education, on clear, honest communication, and support a stable family foundation and the strength of the spiritual and religious communities in our county.

The public looks to community leaders, for direction and support for many issues, not just for public health. When asked about the characteristics of strong community leaders, the CHIP committee developed a commendable list. We agree that strong leaders in any field should:

- Participate
- Educate (themselves and others)
- Collaborate and network across programs
- Show consistency in action and messaging
- Empower and Equip each other
- Be patient and Persistent

- Advocate
- Mentor
- Commitment Follow-through
- Communicate
- Be realistic with expectation

Our county is fortunate that we have many resources available to improve community health. We are a small and connected community with a proud legacy. We are historically collaborative across agencies including, among others, the state college, faith-based organizations, the Heartland Rural Health Network and our multiple hospital sites, the local school districts. Our County Government is fiscally responsible, and our stakeholders are willing and committed to make the efforts needed for a culture of continual improvement through engaged county programs.

These are all elements necessary for successful execution of our strategic plans, and highlight the importance of an integrated Health Department in this process.
2013-2015 Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

Key factors utilized in establishing priorities are: State mandated priorities, analysis of countywide statistics that reflect key health status indicators, disease trends, competitive market trends, staff/budget capabilities.

The Strategic Plan has a total of 13 strategic goals under the four strategic priorities and each goal has a set of key strategies and objectives that must be completed in order to meet that goal. Senior Leadership is given the responsibility to develop action plans for each strategic goal which describes process owners, target dates, and status of progress and completion dates. These are the working documents that are updated and maintained which indicate how close we are to completing our strategic goals.

Service to Customer and Community

Goal 1.1 Assure access to healthcare.

Strategy 1.1.1 Increase access to care for Highlands County Community.

Objective 1.1.1 A  By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will become a provider for three additional commercial and/or Federal insurance plans.

Objective 1.1.1 B  By January 1, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will establish a process to create educational scripts and FAQ documents for staff to use to improve patient understanding of access to care issues.

Objective 1.1.1 C  By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will pilot this process with a transportation script to aid clients with transportation needs.

Goal 1.2 Promote an integrated public health system.

Strategy 1.2.1 Implement and link health improvement planning at state and local levels.

Objective 1.2.1 A  By January 31, 2013, FDOH-Highlands will collaborate with school nurses to include in-school dental screenings for second graders in Sebring and Avon Park public elementary schools.

Objective 1.2.1 B  By June 30, 2014, FDOH Highlands will collaborate with other providers to ensure all of Highland County’s 2nd graders are screened.

Strategy 1.2.2 Integrate planning and assessment processes to maximize partnerships and expertise of a community in accomplishing its goals.

Objective 1.2.2 A  By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will establish a procedure to produce all outreach and public education materials bilingually, and at the appropriate reading level.
Goal 1.3 Provide trainings and resources to promote responsiveness to customer feedback.

   **Strategy 1.3.1** Provide excellent customer service when addressing complaints and feedback.

   **Objective 1.3.1 A** By March 1, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will evaluate the customer complaint response protocol and address inefficiencies.
   **Objective 1.3.1 B** By December 31, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will increase the percentage of customer complaints acknowledged by end of next business day from 60% to 80% as measured in the County Performance Snapshot.

**Area 2: Financial and Business Excellence**

Goal 2.1 Improve Efficiency & Effectiveness.

   **Strategy 2.1.1** Use information technology and system to efficiently improve business practices.

   **Objective 2.1.1 A** By August 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands Accreditation Coordinator in conjunction with local Information Technology and Fiscal staff will identify and implement an internal electronic performance management system to provide Administration with monthly review/summary status of goals/strategy/objective progress.

   **Strategy 2.1.2** Implement tools, processes and methods that support accountability and provide transparency in DOH administrative management systems.

   **Objective 2.1.2 A** By June 30, 2014 FDOH-Highlands leadership will develop a standardized eligibility process for cross-training of staff according to DOH guidelines.
   **Objective 2.1.2 B** Beginning January 1, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will critically analyze clinic operations and patient flow for continued efficiency and effectiveness in the primary clinic process.

Goal 2.2 Maximize funding to accomplish the public health mission.

   **Strategy 2.2.1** Research grant opportunities to expand funding opportunities.

   **Objective 2.2.1 A** By December 30, 2013, FDOH-Highlands Accreditation Coordinator in conjunction with FDOH-DeSoto GOC III, will begin reporting grant opportunities to Administration staff monthly.

   **Strategy 2.2.2** Review and update fee policies and fee schedules.

   **Objective 2.2.2 A** By December 31, 2013, FDOH-Highlands will reevaluate fee schedules to maximize revenue.
   **Objective 2.2.2 B** By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will develop collection policies and procedures to encourage clients to be more responsible for their portion of the cost of health care.

   **Strategy 2.2.3** Maximize Medicaid and other third party revenue to help county health departments and Children’s Medical Service providers to retain the infrastructure necessary to meet the public health needs of their community.
Objective 2.2.3 A By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will become a provider for three additional commercial and/or Federal insurance plans.

Goal 2.3 Promote a culture of organizational excellence.
Strategy 2.3.1 Collect, track, and use performance data to inform business decisions and continuously improve.
Objective 2.3.1 A Beginning January 1, 2014, FDOH-Highlands Accreditation Coordinator, with input from appropriate FDOH-Highlands staff will begin the process of evaluation and development of quarterly monitoring and reporting of the fiscal, business, and strategic planning objectives outlined in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and Business/Strategic Plan.

Strategy 2.3.2 Develop, implement and sustain integrated quality improvement processes throughout organizational practice, programs, processes and interventions.
Objective 2.3.2 A By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands Accreditation Coordinator will facilitate 3 planning meetings to address deficiencies in programmatic measures falling in the least favorable quartile as reported in the County Performance and County Snapshot reports.
Objective 2.3.1 B By September 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will develop action and intervention plans to address the items identified in Objective 2.3.2 A.

Goal 2.4 Optimize communications.
Strategy 2.4.1 Develop, implement and improve internal and external communication strategies and plans.
Objective 2.4.1 A By June 30, 2014 FDOH-Highlands will implement a bimonthly communications process, for both internal and external partners, based on input from senior team leaders, for distribution through the Public Information Offices.
Objective 2.4.1 B By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will identify five potential marketing/advertisement techniques/opportunities for exploration.
Objective 2.4.1 C By January 31, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will examine the internal communication process, and develop a method for staff input to identify areas for improvement to increase employee satisfaction.

Area 3: Wellness Promotion and Disease Prevention

Goal 3.1 Prevent and reduce illness, injury and death related to environmental factors.
Strategy 3.1.1 Prevent illness, injury and death related to environmental factors through educational outreach, and county/community collaboration.
Objective 3.1.1 A By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands Accreditation Coordinator in coordination with the FDOH-Highlands Environmental Health Director will report the completion of the Environmental Public Health performance self-assessment.

Goal 3.2 Improve maternal and child health.
Strategy 3.2.1 Reduce infant mortality.
Objective 3.2.1 A By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands coordinate with the Highlands Healthy Start Coalition to will develop an intervention plan to address the three most frequent causes of infant mortality identified in Highlands County as targets for educational outreach.

Goal 3.3 Reduce Chronic Disease morbidity and mortality.

Strategy 3.3.1 Increase proportion of adults and children who are at a healthy weight.

Objective 3.3.1 A By March 31, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will assist in the development of a “Healthiest Weight Tool-kit” through the activities of the local CHIP committee, to maximize long-term cooperative efforts between the CHIP committee and the Health Department.

Goal 3.4 Minimize loss of life, illness and injury from natural or man-made disasters.

Strategy 3.4.1 Ensure that systems and personnel are available to effectively manage all hazards.

Objective 3.4.1 By January 1, 2014, FDOH-Accreditation Coordinator in coordination with FDOH-Highlands Emergency Preparedness Staff will research and report on the feasibility for promotion and development of a Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer organization or to utilize an existing Medical Reserve Crops (MRC) group that is within the Regional Domestic Security Task Force Region 6 to supplement FDOH-Highlands Preparedness plan.

Objective 3.4.2 By June 30 2014, FDOH-Highlands will create and integrate a local Medical Reserve Corps workforce to provide behavioral health services for clients in shelters during disasters, and for staff following the event.

Area 4: Workforce Development

Goal 4.1 Ensure partnerships, systems and processes to support the current and future workforce.

Strategy 4.1.1 Develop, sustain and improve an Agency Workforce Development Plan to ensure continuity of competent and credentialed workforce.

Objective 4.1.1 A By June 30, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will develop and institute a long-range organizational improvement plan in conjunction with our workforce transition plan to improve staff efficiency and employee satisfaction ratings. The plan will address issues such as counseling, additional training and education, restructuring of staff responsibilities and repurposing of physical areas in the health department.

Goal 4.2 Attract, recruit, and retain a competent and credentialed workforce

Strategy 4.2.1 Provide trainings and resources that support and develop current public health employees.

Objective 4.2.1 A By January 1, 2014, FDOH-Highlands will establish and implement quarterly training opportunities such as “Lunch and Learn” to all staff using the Employee Assistance Program and local educators as potential presenters.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND ALLIANCES

Highlands Community Partners & Participants
Tania Brown, Florida Hospital Heartland Division (FHHD);
Kelly Johnson, HRHN; Becky Razaire, TCHS;
Jeff Roth, Children’s Services Council;
Natoy Baker-Robinson, Heartland Rural Health Network (HRHN);
Ingrid Utech, HCHD;
Nancy Zachary, RCMA;
Barbara Moore, Highlands County Health Department;
Aisha Alayande, Drug Free Highlands;
Holly Parker, Healthy Start Coalition;
Robert Palussek, Highlands Regional Medical Center;
Barbara Turner, Department of Health;
Anthony Lopez, BALANCE;
Connie Snyder, Salvation Army;
Rick Ingler, Highlands County Home Owner’s Association;
Suzanne Crews, Parish Nursing;
Jaime Bateman, Florida Hospital Foundation (via Phone Conference);
Gaye Williams, Central Florida Health Care;
Maryann Higgins, Department of Health;
Jackie Rawlings, Tri County Human Services;
Nancy Zachary, RCMA;
Melisa Thibodeau, HRHN;
Peggy Pierce, FHHD Parish Nursing;
Cheryl Weed, Highlands Regional Medical Center;
Karen Lea, Peace River Program Manager;
Natalie Valdivia, Peace River Hardee County Program Coordinator
Next Steps

The Florida Department of Health in Highlands County’s vision is a healthier future for the State of Florida. Over the years, the FDOH in Highlands has worked diligently in contributing to making DeSoto County a better place to live, work and play. This is a vision that involves everyone in our community. The FDOH in Highlands will continue to work with its partners, local and state government and the rest of the stakeholders to make a difference in our community. Our health department will continue to support our workforce and provide the resources needed to help us achieve our mission and fulfill our vision.

Our Strategic Plan is the roadmap that our organization will use to help us get closer to realize our vision. The FDOH in Highlands will monitor its progress and make changes to the plan as deemed necessary based on priority changes or other factors impacting our organization and our community.

In summary, Highlands County will be a place where people can have healthy lifestyles. People will make decisions which affect their health and well-being. The FDOH in Highlands will continue to protect and promote the health of all residents and visitors as stated in our mission.