

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

MEDIA RELEASE

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DOH-PINELLAS AWARDED FEDERAL GRANT TO COMBAT CHRONIC DISEASES

New program will help create healthier communities in the U.S.

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) was awarded a federal grant of \$2.6 million over three years to combat chronic diseases in communities throughout Pinellas County.

Areas that have more than 30 percent of residents with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level and more than a quarter of adults older than 25 without a high school education will be the main focus as well as areas that are also located in or near “food deserts” with low access to healthy, affordable food stores.

The [Partnerships to Improve Community Health \(PICH\)](#) awards are part of a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initiative to support public health efforts to reduce chronic diseases, promote healthier lifestyles, reduce health disparities and control health care spending.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will administer the grants, which will run for three years, subject to availability of funds. Overall, HHS awarded \$50.3 million in new grant awards to 39 local health agencies. PICH is the newest generation in CDC’s long history of community efforts to create and strengthen healthy environments that make it easier for people to make healthy choices and take charge of their health.

Governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations will work through multi-sector community coalitions to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke, improve nutrition, increase physical activity, and improve access to programs for preventing and managing chronic diseases. Projects will serve large cities and urban counties, small cities and counties, and American Indian tribes.”

“The cost of managing chronic diseases in Pinellas is growing,” said Claude M. Dharamraj, MD, MPH, FAAP, DOH-Pinellas’ Director. “In this country, chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of death, disability and health care costs, accounting for 70 percent of deaths among Americans each year and more than 80 percent of the \$2.7 trillion our nation spends annually on medical care.”

Specifically, DOH-Pinellas will be working with the community on policies that support healthy food access and opportunities for safe physical activity. The goals are to decrease the percentage of sedentary adults from 22.4 percent to 20 percent and the percentage of adults who have difficulty accessing healthy foods from 26.4 percent to 23 percent by the end of the grant period in 2017. For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com.

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