

SCGOVHEALTHNEWS

Sarasota County Health and Human Services | Florida Department of Health scgov.net | 941.861.5000
| [Access TV](#)

July 7, 2008

Contact: Dianne Shipley 941-861-2852; Dianne_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us

Project Contact: Kari Ellingstad, 941-861-2867; Kari_Ellingstad@doh.state.fl.us

Groups target priorities to enhance community's quality of life

Over 150 community leaders met at a Community Health Interactive to identify ways to make Sarasota County a healthier place to live, work and play. Now action forums will focus on designing pedestrian friendly communities, increasing farmers' markets, promoting health and wellness in schools, expanding transportation options and increasing mental health services across the county.

"When organizations collaborate, they are more likely to have a positive impact on community needs. Non-profit agencies, funding organizations, hospitals, health care agencies, and local government have common goals to improve health in our community," said Kari Ellingstad, MPH, research coordinator with the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP). As budgets are being reduced, leaders are committed to work together to maintain service levels and improve community health.

Grants were recently awarded to projects promoting collaborations to create a healthier Sarasota County. [Click here](#) to learn about some of the projects that received funding including the pizza garden and the healthcare access expo. The grant program as well as this Community Health Interactive was supported through funding from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice.

Other organizations supporting the effort include The Community Alliance of Sarasota County, the Sarasota County Health Department, The Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) Sarasota County Wellness Coalition, Sarasota Memorial Hospital, SCOPE, the South County Family YMCA and the University of South Florida College of Public Health.

CHIP is a community-led effort to improve the health of Sarasota County residents. The Partnership also works with Charlotte and DeSoto counties to foster change in health systems across the region. CHIP is funded by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the Sarasota County Health Department, Sarasota County Government, Doctors Hospital, DeSoto County Health Department, DeSoto Memorial Hospital, Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System, Venice Regional Medical Center, Peace River Regional Medical Center, Fawcett Memorial Hospital, and Englewood Community Hospital and Charlotte Regional Medical Center.

For more information, call Kari Ellingstad, MPH, at 941-861-2867 or visit the CHIP Web site at www.CHIP4health.org.

Seven “Action Forums” – Meeting Schedule

Make communities more pedestrian-friendly and increase walkability

Wednesday, July 16

8:30 a.m. to noon

School Board of Sarasota County

1960 Landings Blvd., Room 221 (blue awning), Sarasota 34231

Schedule: 8:30 a.m. - Presentation: "Smart Growth & Walkability"

10:30 a.m. - Action planning process

Educate the community about existing health resources

Monday, August 18

9 to 11 a.m.

Institute for Advanced Medicine

5880 Rand Blvd., Sarasota (classroom) 34238

Promote health and wellness in schools

Monday, September 15

9 to 11 a.m.

Institute for Advanced Medicine

5880 Rand Blvd., Sarasota (classroom) 34238

Increase farmers' markets and local foods

Monday, October 20

9 to 11 a.m.

Institute for Advanced Medicine

5880 Rand Blvd., Sarasota (classroom) 34238

Organize wellness activities in communities

Monday, November 17

9 to 11 a.m.

Institute for Advanced Medicine

5880 Rand Blvd., Sarasota (classroom) 34238

Expand transportation services

Monday, January 21

9 to 11 a.m.

Institute for Advanced Medicine

5880 Rand Blvd., Sarasota (classroom) 34238

Expand mental health services

To Be Announced

Contact Pam Meunier for details. [Click to email.](#)