

## **A COMMUNITY HEALTH MESSAGE FROM DR. BONNIE J. SORENSEN**

The County Health Rankings have been developed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



The health rankings of every county in the nation were recently revealed. Volusia ranked 35 overall amongst the 67 counties in Florida. Rather average. There were several interesting features of the health rankings. For one, it showed that health of individuals and of our county is more than healthcare. In fact, healthcare only contributes 20% to our health. Behaviors such as eating, smoking, exercising and sexual activity contribute 30% to our health. Socioeconomic conditions such as education, income, employment, crime and family support contribute 40% to our health.

Therefore, place matters. The opportunities available to enable us to live healthy lives matters. Also, the determination of our health is the responsibility of individuals, families, teachers, law enforcement, cities, counties and finally healthcare providers when we become sick.

What do the county rankings mean to Volusia? Our best ranking was for clinical care where Volusia ranked 10 out of 67 counties. Undoubtedly, this is because we have 1,700 doctors, a family practice residency program and a medical school at Halifax Hospital plus three hospital taxing districts, each of whom collects taxes to pay healthcare costs for medically indigent residents.

Our worst ranking was for socioeconomic conditions where we ranked 47 out of 67. Although the health department does not control socioeconomic conditions in Volusia County, I think there is much that the health department can do to support improvement in that area. The Volusia County Health Department prides itself in being a safety net provider for community members who need our public health services.

For more information, please visit [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).