

**Mission:**

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



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Florida Department of Health, Brevard County Honored for Excellence in Public Health**

***Local Health Department Program is One of 22 Nationwide to Receive  
“Model Practice Award” in 2014***

**Brevard County, Florida** – Florida Department of Health in Brevard County was honored at the 2014 annual conference of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), an organization representing the nation’s 2,800 local health departments, for a program that demonstrates exemplary and replicable qualities in response to a critical local public health need. The *Emergency Department Diversion Dental Program* was one of 22 local health department programs nationwide to receive a NACCHO’s prestigious Model Practice Award.

The Emergency Department Diversion Dental Program provides dental care in the health department for the underserved population who are referred from local hospitals. Dental problems generally begin small, but due to the inability to pay for services, the problems are left untreated until there is no other recourse but the emergency department for immediate assistance. Through the emergency department dental program these individuals receive an appointment to be treated by a dentist who can treat the source of the problem, consequently stopping emergency department visits for dental related issues. Since June 2011 the Emergency Department Diversion Dental Program has provided: 1008 dental examinations, 920 dental x-rays and 889 extractions for a total cost savings to the indigent members of our community \$248,315.

“We are proud to receive this NACCHO’s Model Practice Award for our Dental Program. Florida Department of Health in Brevard County is the only county health department in the United States to have received thirteen Model Practice Program Awards from NACCHO. The award is evidence of our commitment to developing responsive and innovative public health programs that improve the health of local residents,” said Heidar Heshmati, MD, director of Florida Department of Health in Brevard County.

Each innovative project receiving the award was peer-reviewed and selected from a group of 71 applicants. Since 2003, NACCHO’s Model Practice Awards program has honored programs, resources, and tools that demonstrate how local health departments and their community partners can effectively collaborate to address local public health challenges.

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The Emergency Department Diversion Dental Program is now part of an online, searchable database of successful public health practices in areas ranging from immunization and maternal and child health to infectious diseases and emergency preparedness. The NACCHO Model Practice database is publicly accessible, and allows local health departments, public health partners, and other important stakeholders to learn about the good work being done by local health departments across the country. The database also provides an opportunity for users to learn from colleagues' best practices and what resources are needed to implement comparable programs in other jurisdictions that produce results. This award puts Florida Department of Health in Brevard County in special company—a select group of health departments that exemplify a forward thinking, proactive attitude toward protecting and promoting the health of communities across the nation.

For more information about the NACCHO Model Practice Awards and to view a list of other award winners, go to [www.naccho.org](http://www.naccho.org).

**About the National Association of County and City Health Officials**

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation's 2,800 local governmental health departments. These city, county, metropolitan, district and tribal departments work every day to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities.

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