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Health survey targets 8,000 households in region

A Community Health Survey has been sent to 8,000 randomly selected households in Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto counties. The survey, which includes a question about how the economy is impacting people's health, will be used to determine the health status of residents in the region.

Community health planners are encouraging residents who receive the survey to take time to complete it because the results will provide a concrete way to look at how knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and other factors influence decisions related to health and health care.

The timetable for collecting this information coincides with the [National Public Health Week](#) observance, April 5-11. In keeping with the theme, "A Healthier America, One Community at a Time," health advocates from human services, funding, health care and grassroots organizations will use the survey results along with information from the recently released county health rankings to strengthen existing programs and services throughout the county and region. The last Community Health Survey, conducted in 2006, had a 58 percent response rate. The findings have proven useful to area hospitals and community organizations, including the Community Health Action Teams (CHATs) in their strategic planning efforts. The data also was used to support the need for more health-related services in North Port.

The [Community Health Survey](#) is being administered by the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP), a community-led effort to improve the health of Sarasota County residents. Through a unique partnership, CHIP also works with Charlotte and DeSoto counties to foster change in health systems across the region. The CHIP survey effort has been funded by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, with additional support from the United Way of Charlotte County, Sarasota County Health Department and DeSoto County Health Department. CHIP also receives funding from Sarasota County government, Doctors Hospital, Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System, Venice Regional Medical Center, Peace River Regional Medical Center, DeSoto Memorial Hospital, Charlotte Regional Medical Center, Fawcett Memorial Hospital and Englewood Community Hospital. The [CHATs](#) are a community-led effort to improve the health of Sarasota County residents.

Survey results will be available on the [CHIP Web site](#) in late summer or early fall. Service organizations can request presentations of the results when they are available by calling CHIP director Kari Ellingstad at 941-861-2867. For more information about the role of [public health](#) in promoting healthier communities, visit www.CHIP4health.org.