

**2016-2017**

# DeSoto County Florida

## Health Assessment Executive Summary



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HEALTH PLANNING COUNCIL  
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## Executive Summary

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## Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

### Population Demographics

- DeSoto County has a population of just fewer than 35,000. The county has a far lower population density than the Florida average; about 55 persons per square mile compared to a state average of 357 persons per square mile.
- The average age for DeSoto County is fairly similar to that of the state. Approximately 32 percent of the population in DeSoto is under the age of 25 and approximately 18 percent are 65 or older.
- 57.2 percent of the residents of DeSoto County are male while 42.8 percent are female; statewide the percentages are approximately 51 percent female and 49 percent male.
- 16.6 percent of the population of DeSoto County is non-white compared to a statewide population comprised of 21.5 percent non-whites.
- About 33.5 percent of the residents of DeSoto County identify as Hispanic; this is higher than the state average of 24.4 percent. The Hispanic population in DeSoto County increased by about 32 percent from 2004-2016.

### Socioeconomic Indicators

- The average annual wage has improved; it rose from \$31,936 in 2011 to \$34,459 in 2015.
- The unemployment rate jumped from 4.4 percent in 2000 to 9.9 percent in 2011; it fell back to 6.7 percent in 2014. That is higher than the state rate of 6.1 percent.
- The percent of people living below the poverty level in DeSoto County is significantly higher than the state rate (30.5 percent county vs. 16.7 percent state).
- In 2014, 84.5 percent of the population of DeSoto County was below 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.
- The median household income for DeSoto County has risen seventy-two percent since 1990.
- Fewer DeSoto residents have received a High School Diploma than the state average (70.6% county vs. 86.5% state). A much lower percentage of people in DeSoto County who are aged 25 and older have received a Bachelor's degree than the percentage of residents of Florida who have done the same (9.9% county vs. 26.8% state).
- Among working adults in DeSoto County the most common area of employment are: agriculture, education, health services, retail, construction and public administration.

## Health Status

### Health Ranking

- County Health Rankings and Roadmaps had DeSoto County currently ranked the 35<sup>th</sup> healthiest out of 67 counties. DeSoto County is ranked 61<sup>st</sup> healthiest for Health Factors.

### Leading Causes of Death

- The death rate for DeSoto County is fairly consistent with the state average (678.3 per 100,000 DeSoto vs. 680.8 State), with both rates decreasing over the past 20 years.
- The most frequent cause of death for people in DeSoto County are heart disease and cancer. Death rates for heart disease are only slightly higher than the death rate for cancer (156.6 per 100,000 for heart disease vs. 156.5 for cancer).
- Among the types of cancer, lung cancer causes the highest number of deaths in DeSoto County.

- The death rate for blacks in DeSoto County is quite a bit higher than that of whites; this also holds true for the state of Florida as a whole (852.9 per 100,000 DeSoto vs. 733.9 per 100,000 State). However, the rate of death from cancer and heart disease is quite a bit higher for blacks than for whites. Cancer and heart disease were the leading causes of death for both whites and blacks.

### Communicable Disease

- DeSoto County ranks similar to or below the state rate for most sexually transmitted diseases and most vaccine preventable disease.
- Chlamydia is the most prevalent sexually transmitted disease in DeSoto County with an average of 125 cases per year between 2012 and 2014. That works out to a rate per 100,000 of 361.5 which is lower than the state average of 417.8.
- Pertussis or whooping cough has an average of one case per year in DeSoto County.
- An Average number of 3 people per year were diagnosed with AIDS in DeSoto County between 2012 and 2014. The rate per 100,000 in DeSoto County is 8.7 compared to a rate of 14.8 for the state as a whole.
- The rate of diagnosis for bacterial sexually transmitted diseases for teens ages 15-19 in Desoto County is higher on average than it was in the late 1990s, but has not risen significantly in the last few years.

### Maternal and Child Health

- On Average, 374.3 babies were born per year to DeSoto County residents between 2013 and 2015.
- More babies are born to mother under the age of 15 and 19 in DeSoto Count than the Florida average (74.2 per 1,000 DeSoto vs. 60.5 per 1,000 State).
- The percent of infants born with a low birth weight is slightly lower than the state average.

### Hospitalizations

- Bacterial pneumonia, congestive heart failure, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (this category includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema) are the most common preventable causes of hospitalizations for DeSoto County residents.
- Hypertension is the number one cause of hospitalizations for a chronic condition, and has remained fairly consistent over the last several years.

### Emergency Room Visits by DeSoto County Residents

- DeSoto County Residents made 14,142 visits to hospitals in 2014 that did not result in an inpatient admission. The vast majority of visits were made to the DeSoto Memorial Hospital, the only hospital in DeSoto County.
- Medicaid was the most common payer source for emergency room visits (41.5%), while only 15.7 percent were paid for by private insurance.

### Health Resources

- As of 2015, almost 25,000 out of every 100,000 people, or one quarter of the population, in DeSoto County were enrolled in Medicaid. The rate in DeSoto County is consistently about five percent higher than the state rate.
- In 2014 the percentage of uninsured adults in DeSoto County has been consistently higher than that of the state, however DeSoto County showed a sharp decline in the number of uninsured adults age 18-64 in 2014.

### Physicians and Facilities

- As of 2015, there were seventeen licensed physicians in DeSoto County. The rate per 100,000 is much lower rate than the state average of about 49.4 DeSoto vs. 249.0 State).
- The number of DeSoto County Health Department employees per every 100,000 residents is higher than the state average (177.9 DeSoto vs. 48.6 State).

- The Department of Health in DeSoto County spent \$4,511,899 dollars in 2015; which is almost triple the state's average. It is typical for rural counties to have a significantly higher rate of expenditure than the state average.

### Federal Health Professional Shortage Designations

- DeSoto County's Low income/Migrant Farmworker Populations have been designated as Medically Underserved Populations. Any population with a score of 62 or lower on the Index of Medical Underservice is considered medically underserved. DeSoto's Low income/Migrant Farmworker Populations scored at 48.90.
- DeSoto County scored an eleven for primary care for the Low income/Migrant Farmworker Populations (with twenty-six indicating the greatest level of need).
- DeSoto County also scored a seventeen for dental care for the low income and migrant farmworker population meaning it is designated as a shortage area.
- DeSoto was also designated as a geographic high needs area for mental health services, scoring a fifteen out of twenty-six (with twenty-six indicating the greatest level of need).

### Social and Mental Health

- The suicide rate for DeSoto County has been quite variable over the last twenty years. The most recent rate is a little higher than the state average (16.6 for DeSoto County compared to 14.1 for the state). *Please note that these rates are based on a small number of cases and a few cases can cause a seemingly large fluctuation.* There have been two (2) suicides by people under 18 in the last fifteen years.
- DeSoto County is in the worst quartile of the state for burglary and domestic violence offenses. It is below the state average for larceny, robbery and motor vehicle theft.
- Some crimes in DeSoto County have shown a strong decline in recent years. For example robberies in DeSoto County have declined by sixty-one percent (61%) since 2008. Similarly, burglaries in DeSoto County have declined by almost forty-one percent (41%) since 2007.

### Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS)

- Alcohol use in the past 30 days was 26.8 percent for DeSoto County students, which was higher than the state average of 20.5 percent.
- The percentage of students reporting cigarette use over the past 30 days was higher in DeSoto County than the Florida average (5.7% DeSoto vs. 4.9% State).
- Past-30-day marijuana use for DeSoto County students was slightly higher than for the state as a whole (14.3% DeSoto vs. 12.4% State).

### Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS)

#### County Highlights

The BRFSS report for DeSoto County for 2013 highlighted the following areas of strength and challenges for the county based on indicators that were significantly different from the state as a whole.

#### Strengths

- Low percentage of adults who currently have asthma
- High percentage of adult current smokers who tried to quit smoking at least once in the past year

#### Challenges

- High percentage of adults who are overweight or obese
- Low percentage of adults who received a flu shot in the past year
- Low percentage of adults with diabetes who ever had diabetes self-management education

## Healthy People 2020 Objectives

Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. Below is DeSoto County's data with relation to selected objectives (comparing 2010 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey data with 2013 data).

<b>DeSoto County needs improvement in the following areas</b>	
Adults who are limited in any way in any usual activities because of arthritis or chronic joint symptoms.	Adults with diagnosed hypertension.
Adults 50 years of age and older who received a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy in the past five years.	Adults age 65 and over who received a flu shot in the past year.
Women 40 years of age and older who received a mammogram in the past year.	Adults who have ever received a pneumonia vaccination.
Women 18 years of age and older who had a clinical breast exam in the past year.	Adults age 65 and over who have ever received a pneumonia vaccination.
Adults with diabetes who had an annual foot exam.	Adults who have a healthy weight (BMI from 18.5 to 24.9).
Adults with diabetes who had an annual eye exam.	Adults who are obese.
Adults with diabetes who had two A1C tests in the past year.	Adults who engage in heavy or binge drinking.
Adults with diabetes who ever had diabetes self-management education.	

<b>DeSoto County has shown progress in the following areas</b>	
Women 18 years of age and older who received a Pap test in the past year.	Adults with diabetes who self-monitor blood glucose at least once a day on average.
Adults less than 65 years of age who have ever been tested for HIV.	Adult current smokers who tried to quit smoking at least once in the past year.

## Community Input

95 surveys were completed on paper and online over a two month period in 2016.

- When asked, "How would you rate the general health of DeSoto County residents?" 3 percent of survey respondents said Excellent, 15 percent said Good, 63 percent said Fair, and 19 percent said Poor. When asked, "How would you rate the quality of healthcare in DeSoto County?" 4 percent said Excellent, 29 percent said Good, 44 percent said Fair, and 22 percent said Poor.
- Respondents were also asked their opinions on healthcare difficulties for specific populations in DeSoto County. Of the specific population groups listed, those who are uninsured and have low income levels were selected the most (54 responses). Next were elderly/senior citizens (30 responses).
- Respondents were asked to select what they felt to be the three most important health concerns for residents of DeSoto County. Access to specialty doctors topped the list, with 34 responses. Second highest on the list was obesity, with 28 responses, followed by cancer (27 responses) and not enough doctors (26 responses).
- Respondents were then asked to select the three most important risky behaviors in DeSoto County. Drug and alcohol abuse and being overweight were listed most frequently, each with 55 responses.

## Interviews with Community Leaders

The Health Planning Council of Southwest Florida (HPC) conducted thirteen key informant interviews in 2016.

### General Perceptions

- The majority of the respondents noted that the health of the county was **not good to fairly bad**.
- While limited resources were cited as an obstacle, several respondents felt that **things are improving**.

## Pressing Healthcare Needs

- The most areas mentioned most often were: access to specialty care, diabetes, preventative care and lack of nutrition. The lack of affordable health insurance was also mentioned.
- Access to primary care, particularly for the uninsured and underinsured was identified as a pressing need as well.
- **Nutrition** was a prime concern for many of the interviewees, as they feel it is directly related to other issues, such as diabetes, obesity, and hypertension.
- The need for more **mental health services** was also identified.

## Issues Affecting Specific Groups

- Interviewees mentioned a **lack of education for parents** most frequently when asked about the most important health issue relating to children.
- It was widely noted that there is a problem with **teen pregnancy and STDs**
- When it comes to adults, **diabetes and exercise** were the most pressing concerns.
- The number one concern mentioned for the elderly was **transportation** to access services.
- When discussing the uninsured in DeSoto County, the most common healthcare issue was **access to affordable care and insurance options**.

## Types of Residents with Difficulty Accessing Healthcare

- Interviewees were asked about types of residents who have particular difficulty accessing care. The general consensus is that the **unemployed** and those with **low income** have few options.

## Impressions Regarding Services

- The overall feeling was that **primary care is available** for the most part, but can be difficult for low/no-income populations to access.
- Majority of the respondents felt dental care is available. About half the leaders stated that the **available dental services were very good** and there were several local dentists.
- Nearly all the participants stated that there are specialty care services available in the county but all **providers come from out of county** with only 1 or 2 clinic days.
- **Mental health care was listed as a need** in the county by half of the interviewees.
- The vast majority of leaders believe that the **emergency care at DeSoto Memorial Hospital is good** and adequate.
- Hospital care in general (non-emergency) was thought by most interviewees to be very good, and **has improved**.
- Of those with an opinion on it, the area's **hospice care received universally positive reviews**.
- **Pediatric** care was felt by a few respondents to be good, but **lacking enough providers**.
- **Specialty care** is the service most often requiring residents to be referred **outside the county**.
- Particular neighborhoods mentioned as having difficulty accessing services were Brownville, RV Parks and South of 17. **Transportation** is seen as a major barrier to care for all of these areas.

## Insurance Impact

- Majority of respondents felt the Affordable Care Act has had a great impact on DeSoto County. **Many now have insurance and can seek care**.