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Nurses Week: Recognizing Nurses as Crucial to Health Care

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Fort Myers, Fla. — Across Florida, there are thousands of nurses with a passion and commitment to care for others in their greatest times of need. They are the compassionate faces at the bedside and the healing hands that work tirelessly to ensure that each patient, adult or child, receives safe, quality health care.

This week, May 6 through May 12, the Florida Department of Health in Lee County (DOH-Lee) is joining partners across the community to celebrate National Nurses Week and highlight the diverse ways nurses are working to improve health care. Today, there are more than 400,000 nursing professionals in Florida who play a vital role in maintaining the health of Floridians.

“We are tremendously fortunate to have the caliber of nurses we do in Lee County. Nurses are vital to the delivery of quality healthcare in all settings from public health to private healthcare facilities.” says Angela Smith, BS, MHA, Health Officer-Administrator of DOH-Lee

Nursing: The Most Trusted Profession in the Country

Nurses make up a large portion of Florida’s health care workforce. Almost everyone has had an interaction with a nurse, whether it be in a hospital, health clinic, private practice, home care setting or school environment where nurses are often the primary caregivers and patient advocates.

According to [Gallup’s 2018 Honesty and Ethics Survey](#), more than four in five Americans (84%) rate the honesty and ethical standards of nurses as "very high" or "high," earning them the top spot among a diverse list of professions for the 17th consecutive year. With the exception of 2001, when firefighters were on the list after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, nurses have far outpaced all other professions since their addition to the list two decades ago.

Governor DeSantis recently signed two proclamations acknowledging the importance and efforts of Florida’s nurses in [health care](#) and [school settings](#).

School Nurses Vital to Student Health, In and Out of School

DOH-Lee also recognizes Wednesday, May 8 as School Nurse Day- a day to recognize Florida’s more than 1,178 registered professional school nurses for the important work they do on behalf of students. School nurses are an essential component to the health and well-being of students, particularly those with acute and chronic health conditions.

“School Nurses in Lee County make a difference in their student’s lives every day by promoting a healthy, safe and nurturing environment for the diverse group of students that they care for. In the Lee County School District, there are approximately 93,000 students whose success and achievements are directly impacted by approximately forty dedicated school nurses.”, says Pat Freve BSN, RN, Nursing Program Specialist for School Health Division of DOH-Lee.

During the 2017-2018 school year, Florida’s school health nurses served more than 2.8 million students and supervised more than 25 million services to keep Florida’s students safe and healthy while at school. For many of these students, without nursing services, attendance would decrease or students would be unable to attend school.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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