

**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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## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Florida Blue Foundation Awards Florida Department of Health in Indian River the Sapphire Award

**Indian River County** – Celebrating the 10-year anniversary of its Sapphire Awards, Florida Blue Foundation recognized the Florida Department of Health in Indian River (DOH-Indian River) as one of five finalists for the 2015 awards. The Sapphire Awards honor outstanding individuals, programs and nonprofit organizations in community health care, or health care related fields, whose work is distinguished by leadership, innovation and achievements in community health. The winners were announced at the 2015 Sapphire Awards and Symposium during a luncheon ceremony April 23 in Weston, FL.

DOH-Indian River was a winner in the organizational category and was awarded \$100,000 for their work in the Gifford community utilizing the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE EH) and at the Gifford Health Center Pediatric Clinic. Because the practice of building better communities is so important to DOH-Indian River, the department has chosen to dedicate the award funds to furthering the goal of improving the health of our community. A video will be available on the Florida Blue website illustrating the key partnerships with the Indian River County Sheriff's Office (IRCSO), the Gifford community, government, and local nonprofits.

Miranda Hawker, Administrator at DOH-Indian River, accepted the award and attributes the recognition to the solid partnerships that exist with the IRCSO and our community saying, "This award not only recognizes the health department, but our comprehensive community effort to make a meaningful change in the health of a community. Together, we are so much stronger than our individual efforts."

Finalists were selected from among 164 nominees. An independent panel of experts with state and national expertise in community health best practices made the final decision on the winners.

Since 2005, Florida Blue Foundation has presented 55 Sapphire Awards, totaling more than \$3.1 million, to seven individuals and 48 programs and organizations from across Florida.

"These honorees represent those who have made significant, positive impact on health-related outcomes for Florida's at-risk people and communities," said Susan Towler, vice president, Florida Blue Foundation.

For more information and to register for the 2015 Sapphire Awards and Symposium, visit [www.floridabluefoundation.com](http://www.floridabluefoundation.com).

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