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## Report gives picture of the health of community

By **DEBORAH CIRCELLI**

Staff writer

More people continue to seek help for food while drug arrests rise and more infants are dying, according to a local report that looks at the health and welfare of the community. The Community Agenda Snapshot released this week shows the community is still suffering in certain areas, but is making improvements in others. This is the third annual report compiled by One Voice for Volusia, and a committee of leaders from various agencies, governments and the school systems of Volusia and Flagler counties.

### LOSING GROUND

· **VOLUSIA FOOD STAMPS:** More people are struggling to put food on the table. In 2007, the rate of food-stamp applications in Volusia County was 138 per 1,000 residents, up from 93 per 1,000 in 2006. There was a decrease in Flagler County, from a rate of 62 in 2006 to 34 in 2007.

· **DRUG ARRESTS:** Slightly more adults and juveniles are being arrested on drug charges than in previous years. In Volusia, the rate of arrests for illegal drugs per 1,000 people was 12.7 in 2006 compared to 12 in 2005 and 9 in 2002. In Flagler County, the rate was 4.9 in 2006 compared to 4.6 in 2005 and 3.9 in 2002.

· **INFANT DEATHS:** Infants are dying at a higher rate than in the past. During 2004 to 2006, the rate of infants who died per 1,000 live births was 6.3 in Volusia compared to 5.7 during 2003-2005. In Flagler County, the rate was 5.4 during the period of 2004-2006 and 4.9 from 2003-2005.

### What's Hurting?

Hard economic times, according to Reggie Williams, local administrator for the state Department of Children & Families, and substance abuse, as agencies such as Stewart-Marchman Center report more calls for help with prescription drug abuse, including painkillers. Infant deaths are largely attributed to unsafe sleep, according to Dixie Morgese, local Healthy Start Coalition executive director. "It's preventable," she said.

### GAINING GROUND

· **YOUTH SMOKING:** Fewer middle and high school students are smoking cigarettes. In 2006, 10 percent of Volusia students reported smoking a cigarette in the 30 days prior to being surveyed compared to 13 percent two years earlier. In Flagler County, 15 percent reported smoking a cigarette in the 30 days prior to the survey compared to 17 percent in 2004.

· **TEEN DELINQUENCY:** Juvenile referrals for delinquent crimes have decreased. In Volusia County in 2006-07, the referral rate to the state Department of Juvenile Justice was 70 children per 1,000 compared to 75 the prior year and 81 in 2002-03. In Flagler County, the rate was 52 compared to 63 in 2005-06 and 88 in 2002-03.

· **EMPLOYMENT OF THE DISABLED:** More people with disabilities are employed. In 2006, 40 percent of disabled people were employed in Volusia compared to 35 percent a year earlier. In Flagler, 38 percent of disabled people were employed compared to 25 percent in 2005.

### What's Helping?

Health departments have focused more attention on tobacco prevention. Also, more awareness added to the increase in employment for the disabled, according to Jim King, executive director of The ARC of Volusia.

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