



Heart disease rates have plummeted since Collier County's Blue Zones Project has been implemented.

SHARE:

ECONOMIC BACKBONE - CARDIAC CARE

## Collier County's Blue Zones Project sees rate of heart disease deaths drop

Amy Keller | 1/27/2020

**NEVER MISS A FEATURE: SUBSCRIBE TO FLORIDA TREND**

Since implementing a Blue Zones Project, Collier County has seen the rate of heart disease deaths plummet.

**Buy One. Give One.**

Buy a specially priced full-page ad for your business and give a free full-page ad to a business of your choice.

**Florida Trend**  
FLORIDA'S BUSINESS AUTHORITY

**Digital Access**

**DIRECT DIGITAL ACCESS**  
Add digital to your current subscription, purchase a single digital issue, or start a new subscription to Florida Trend.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
An overview of the features and articles in this month's issue of Florida Trend.

**ACCESS THIS ISSUE »**

SPECIAL OFFER

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

**4 FREE ISSUES**  
PLUS a FREE GIFT

**Florida Trend**  
FLORIDA'S BUSINESS AUTHORITY

Coincidentally or not, 2015 was also the year that local health leaders embarked on a community-wide health improvement initiative known as the Blue Zone Project.

Spearheaded by Alan Weiss, then-president and CEO of NCH Healthcare System in Naples, the initiative is based on the research of Dan Buettner, a National Geographic fellow and award-winning journalist who traveled the world looking for the health secrets of the longest-living people. Buettner distilled his findings into nine evidence-based diet and lifestyle habits he calls the Power 9. They include everything from eating less overall to eating more plant-based foods to moving more. Buettner encourages cities to promote those nine pillars in order to help their residents live longer and healthier lives.

More than 700 organizations are involved in the Blue Zones Project—Southwest Florida, and Executive Director Deb Logan says the effort has reached an estimated 225,000 people to date.

Logan says the group spreads its message via coordinated efforts through numerous outlets, including workplaces, schools, homeowner associations, faith-based organizations, restaurants and grocery stores. An HOA, for instance, might urge a local restaurant to offer plant-based dishes or encourage community residents to form small social support networks, known as "moais," who meet up regularly to take walks or dine at a Blue Zone restaurant. The purpose is two-fold: The moai promotes healthy habits while also building connections that decrease loneliness and isolation.

"Our goal is to build infrastructure within the community ... working with HOAs or workites or schools and helping them adopt best practices that really nudge well-being, nudge those choices that people can make," Logan explains.

On the policy side, the project brings in national experts to talk about how walkability and bikeability can improve a community's overall well-being. Other focus areas include expanding access to fresh fruits and vegetables, such as through farmers markets, and implementing smoke-free zones near playgrounds and on beaches.

Other Florida communities are beginning to look at how Blue Zones initiatives might help them. Last year, the Orlando Economic Partnership's Foundation for Orlando's Future tapped Buettner's Minnesota-based Blue Zones group to do an assessment of Orange County and come up with a plan to tackle problems such as obesity and smoking and improve residents' overall well-being.

In Collier, Logan sees signs that the Blue Zones project is working. Eight years ago, she says, Collier County ranked 73rd in the nation in the Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index, which measures people's perception of their lives as it relates to five factors: Their sense of purpose, social relationships, financial security, relationship to community and physical health. For the past four years, the county has ranked first.

Logan acknowledges that the region has certain advantages, including higher rates of wealth and education — but she believes the Blue Zones project is also making a difference. "When you see the community go from No. 73 to No. 1 for four consecutive years, you know that something is going on."

### Blue Zone Snapshot: Collier County

- » **Population:** 263,753
- » **Median Income:** \$45,478 (10.6% lower than state average)
- » **Rate of Heart Disease Deaths, Age-Adjusted (2018):** 89.3 per 100,000 (39.5% lower than state average)
- » **Rate of Deadly Heart Attacks, Age-Adjusted (2018):** 11.6 per 100,000 (49% lower than state average)
- » **Diagnosed Diabetes in Adults (2016):** 7.8% (33.9% lower than state average)
- » **Other Risk Factors:**
  - » 24.8% Obese (9.5% lower than state average)
  - » 24.5% Sedentary (17.9% lower than state average)
  - » 13.1% Smokers (15.5% lower than state average)
  - » 3.7% Diagnosed Hypertension (83% lower than state average)

### The Power 9

Through his travels and research, Dan Buettner found that individuals who live to be 100 tend to have nine things in common. He urges others to follow these Power 9 rules:

- » **Move Naturally:** You don't have to hit the gym every day but find ways to fit exercise into your everyday life via walking, gardening or even doing housework.
- » **Have a Sense of Purpose:** Having a reason to get out of bed each morning is crucial. People with a sense of purpose report higher rates of well-being and live seven years longer, on average.
- » **Down Shift:** Stress causes chronic inflammation, which leads to disease. Whether it's doing yoga or taking a nap, find a way to slow down and unwind.
- » **80% Rule:** Oversized portions are fattening our waistlines and contributing to disease. To reverse the trend, stop eating when you're about 80% full and eat your biggest meal earlier in the day instead of close to bedtime.
- » **Plant Slant:** Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, and you'll naturally avoid sugar and fat-saturated foods that promote high cholesterol, diabetes and weight gain.
- » **Wine @5:** People in Blue Zones drink regularly and moderately, in the range of one to two glasses of wine per day, with friends or with food.
- » **month live four to 14 years longer, on average.** Regardless of the faith, participants appear to benefit from the bonds of fellowship and spirituality.
- » **Family First:** Those with family members who live nearby are healthier and happier — and those with a committed life partner live about three years longer.
- » **Right Tribe:** Having a support network of friends with a similar healthy mindset will help keep you on track and can also add years to your life.

### Heart Disease Death Rate

The heart disease death rate for adults aged 45 to 64 in Florida declined 26% between 1999 and 2010 but increased 7.5% between 2011 and 2018. Doctors attribute the spike to rising rates of obesity, diabetes, inactivity and other risk factors.

### Heart Attack Symptoms

- » Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, tightness or pain in your chest
- » Discomfort or aching sensation in one or both arms that may spread to neck, jaw or back
- » Cold sweat
- » Nausea/vomiting, heartburn, belly pain or back pain
- » Shortness of breath
- » Dizzy or lightheaded

**Read more in Florida Trend's February issue.**

Select from the following options:

<p><b>EXISTING DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS</b></p> <p>Access Article Now!</p>	<p><b>DIGITAL SINGLE ISSUE</b></p> <p>Get a single DIGITAL copy of this issue</p> <p><b>\$4.95</b></p>	<p><b>PRINT SINGLE ISSUE</b></p> <p>Get a single PRINT copy of this issue</p> <p><b>\$4.95</b> plus \$3 postage &amp; handling</p>
<p><b>PRINT SUBSCRIPTION</b></p> <p>One year in PRINT</p> <p><b>\$14.95</b> plus a FREE gift!</p>	<p><b>DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION</b></p> <p>One year DIGITAL</p> <p><b>\$14.95</b> plus a FREE gift!</p>	<p><b>ALL ACCESS SUBSCRIPTION</b></p> <p>One year Combo PRINT + DIGITAL</p> <p><b>\$24.95</b> plus a FREE gift!</p>

**CURRENT PRINT SUBSCRIBERS**

If you are already a print subscriber, **ADD DIGITAL EDITION ACCESS** to your existing subscription here! (or call our office at 727-892-2643)

\* offer valid for new subscribers only

Tags: Healthcare, Life Sciences, Economic Backbone, Cardiac Care, Feature

...inning ponces the said should be in place "until the middle of May."

» **Florida's online notary law is allowing more business to get done**  
While many businesses have slowed down or been ground to a halt by COVID-19, one that is getting a boost is the digital notary business.

» **Opinion: How retailers and other small businesses can survive coronavirus pandemic**  
Even before the global pandemic, Americans were signing up for online classes, streaming their videos, and ordering their take out food, and just about everything else online.

» **Gulf Power to provide bill relief in May**  
Lower fuel costs are enabling Gulf Power to issue a one-time decrease of approximately 40% for the typical residential customer bill in May.

» **New coffee business in Pasco doesn't pause for coronavirus**  
The calendar wasn't kind to Aroma Joe's. The opening of the chain's first store in the Tampa Bay area came the same day some governments announced restrictions on restaurants.

### Florida Trend Video Pick

The Alonzo Mourning Overtown Youth Center has partnered with Deliver Lean meal delivery to provide Overtown residents with breakfast and lunch during this time of crisis. Workers for both organizations delivered meals to residents alongside Mourning.

### Ballot Box

Do you believe Florida should implement a mandatory stay-at-home/shelter-in-place order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus?

Yes

No

Need more information

Indifferent

[See Results](#)

**Education**  
Targeted news alerts from the editors of Florida Trend.

**Movers & Influencers**  
Showcasing the business leaders that shape Florida.

### Also on FloridaTrend.com

- » Florida's Best Companies to Work For
- » Florida Economic Yearbook
- » 350 Biggest Companies in Florida
- » TopRank Florida lists for download
- » Special offer: Subscribe - get a FREE gift!

### Market Update

DOW	22,327.48	+690.70
NASDAQ	7,774.15	+271.77
S&P 500	2,626.65	+85.18

Enter a stock symbol  >

» Stocks of Florida's Top Public Companies