



## FSU women's lacrosse wins inaugural game

SPORTS, 1B

# TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

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## A century of sweetness



Becky McGuffey, 104-years-old, shares her love of dolls and NASCAR during an interview in her home on Jan. 28. See more photos at [tallahassee.com](https://tallahassee.com). ALICIA DEVINE/TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

## Local woman, 104, lives alone with 2,500 dolls and NASCAR collection

Jim Henry Tallahassee Democrat | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

At 104 years old, Becky McGuffey embraces each day on her own terms. • Affectionately known simply as “MaGuffey” to many, she has lived a life stretching across eras, places, and generations – and remembers enough of it to share with a smile, a story, and a swipe of lipstick after every meal. • When asked for the secret behind her longevity – which includes surviving a lightning strike in her backyard more than 50 years ago – the Havana resident winked, looked at her daughters and said with a soft laugh, “Keeping them in line.” • While only about 0.03% of Americans live to be centenarians, McGuffey is remarkable in far more ways than her age.

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## Expected lifespans in Florida hit peak

Numbers rise across country as U.S. recovers from COVID pandemic

Anne Geggis  
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

The number of years Americans born in 2024 can expect to live has hit a new peak — 79 years — with Florida residents doing even better — a life expectancy just shy of 80, according to new federal data.

The statistic released Jan. 30 is considered a key measure of the nation’s wellness — with the new surge in life expectancy reflecting the nation’s recovery from the COVID-19 epidemic and the decline in drug overdoses.

COVID was no longer among the 10 leading causes of death in 2024, after climbing as high as the third-leading cause of death in 2021. Another set of national statistics show that the rates of drug overdose death rate declined by 26.2% between 2023 and 2024.

Life expectancy climbed in both Florida and the nation by 7.2 months in 2024 compared to the measure taken in 2023.

### What factors make life expectancy greater in Florida?

Dr. Larry Bush, a Wellington infectious diseases expert, said it’s likely that Florida currently looks better on paper in life expectancy because of how retiree migration is such a big part of population growth here, as opposed to places like Idaho, which depend on babies being born to populate it.

The mortality rate for children between the ages of 5 and 24 is less than half of those younger than 5, so those deaths would not count to decrease Florida’s life expectancy the way it would in Idaho, statistically speaking.

“It is possible in Florida, you’re selecting out the people who would have died from drug overdoses or from childhood diseases or mortality rates during maternity,” Bush said.

### How did Florida’s life expectancy fluctuate during the COVID pandemic?

Florida was ranked as having the 19th-longest life expectancy in 2020 and that dropped to 27th the next year, as the state’s collective life expectancy lost more than a year, sinking to 76.1 years.

Florida was back to having the 19th-longest life expectancy in 2022, after

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## TSC nursing program placed on probation by state board

Tarah Jean  
Tallahassee Democrat  
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Tallahassee State College’s Associate Degree in Nursing – part of its flagship health care programs – has been placed on probation by the state’s Board of Nursing because of low licensure exam scores.

Following the discipline, the TSC program’s officials appeared before the Florida Board of Nursing at a Feb. 4 meeting to share a plan on how they hope to turn things around – one that includes strengthening student readiness before admission and expanding academic and faculty support.

“I have a commitment to you to share both the good and the difficult news fac-

ing the college, and I want to be transparent with you about an important issue involving our nursing program,” TSC President Jim Murdaugh said in a Feb. 4 email to the college’s Board of Trustees.

“This is deeply upsetting and not acceptable. Preparing students for licensure and successful careers in health care is one of our most important re-

sponsibilities, and we take this matter very seriously.”

Despite the probation, TSC’s Associate Degree in Nursing program remains accredited by The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing Board of Commissioners, according to the accreditation’s website. The

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