

Developing Tomorrow's Healthcare Providers

Mississippi State University Extension Service works with youth who are interested in health careers through two major projects, the Rural Medical Scholars Program and the *Mississippi Health Careers Guide* publication. Support for these projects comes from our partnership with the Mississippi Rural Health Corps.

Rural Medical Scholars Highlights

- This six-week summer residential program is aimed at increasing the number of family medical physicians serving rural Mississippi.
- Approximately 30 students each year participate after their junior year in high school.
- Program components include two pre-med college courses, physician "shadowing" experiences, and tours and lectures pertaining to the life of a rural family physician.

Health Career Guide Highlights

The *Mississippi Health Careers Guide* assists students with valuable information about more than 60 health-related careers. More than 2,500 copies have been distributed to high schools, youth counselors, libraries, 4-H groups, and other youth organizations.

More Information

If you would like more information about Mississippi State University Extension programs for Healthy People and Healthy Communities, contact your county Extension office or the following Extension specialists:

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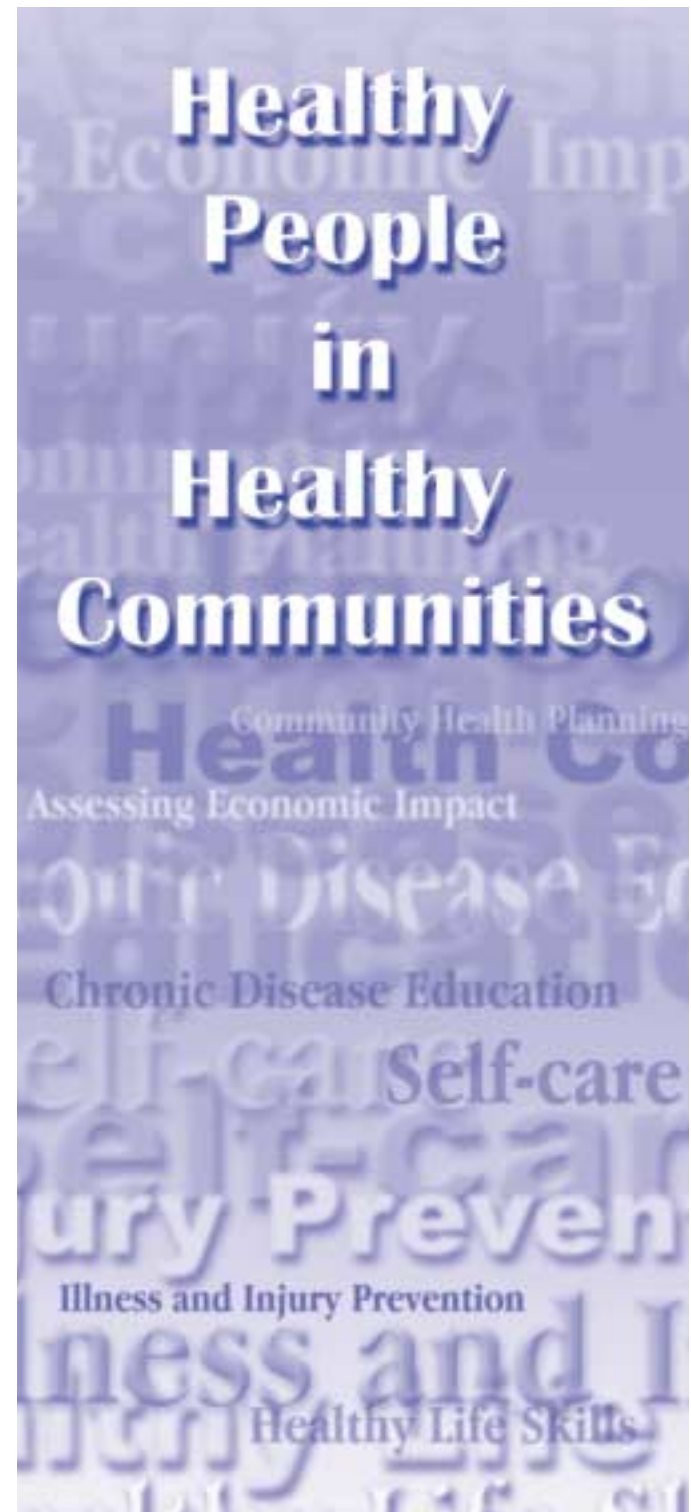


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Healthy People in Healthy Communities

For decades, Mississippi has frequently ranked number one in the nation in rates of cardiovascular disease, disability, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases, and infant mortality. Loss of life and loss of productivity compounded by increasing healthcare costs present a major burden for the state. Consider the following facts:

- In 1998, 19,500 children were born to single women in Mississippi – long term there will be significant social and economic costs; the initial direct costs exceed \$54 million.
- Diabetes costs Mississippians more than \$1.5 billion annually - an amount equal to one-third of the state's total farm product revenue.
- Cardiovascular disease takes the lives of approximately 11,000 Mississippians each year and costs more than \$1 billion – more than 10 times the state's annual funding for the Department of Human Services.
- Almost half of all Mississippi citizens do not have access to a primary-care physician, compared to a national average of 16.3 percent. Lack of disease prevention and early detection adds an estimated \$2.3 billion to annual healthcare costs nationwide.

Health is personal and it is societal – its presence or its absence impacts us all. Mississippi State University Extension Service is working to improve the health of Mississippians and the quality of healthcare in our communities. Programs are initiated by health and community development specialists at Mississippi State University and are delivered through Extension agents in all 82 counties. State and local partners also participate in the development of our health-related programs. The strength of this system allows us to offer current information and assistance to meet specific community needs.

Educating for a Healthier Population

Extension health programs reach at least 60,000 families each year with health-related information and training. Programs address the effective use of healthcare, self-care skills, prevention, and early detection of chronic diseases. Young people learn how to make healthy lifestyle decisions, and adults learn how to deal effectively with emergencies and common health and safety concerns.

Program Highlights

- Fifty-five percent of participants in an Extension youth program made the decision to postpone sexual activity as a result of comprehensive, multiple community strategies promoting youth abstinence.
- More than 1,700 families learned how to organize their health records and how to prevent diseases and injuries. Early disease detection resulted in 200 years of potential life saved and estimated cost savings of \$700,000 compared to the expense associated with delayed care.
- Programs on colds and flu, allergies, minor illnesses and injuries, and recognition of emergencies helped 4,000 Mississippians manage their need for medical care. Potential additional estimated healthcare costs of \$25 per person were avoided.
- More than 16,000 women in 62 counties learned techniques to aid in early breast cancer detection.
- Pilot programs in managing diabetes, hypertension, and asthma helped more than 700 participants take better control of their health problems.
- Approximately 1,100 parents and caregivers learned the benefits of early intellectual stimulation for childhood growth and development.
- Senior citizens improved their knowledge on safe use of medications. One hundred and seventy-five seniors reported better participation in healthcare decisions about their medicines.

Partnering for a Healthier Community

Extension agents and specialists work with numerous local health coalitions as they identify and address community health concerns. Concerns might include a lack of economic and medical resources or a high incidence of a specific injury or disease within the community. Whatever the health issue, Extension encourages collaboration among interested, informed partners as an effective prescription for community vitality.

Partnership Highlights

- The Winston County Extension Partnership for Breast Cancer Control worked for 4 years to achieve the highest rate (51 percent) of mammography utilization in the state.
- A Coahoma County Rural Health Coalition project, a health center in Friars' Point, has provided better healthcare access to underserved rural residents since 1996.
- Under Extension leadership, the Alive Jones County task force has promoted sexual abstinence and other life skills to middle and high school students through comprehensive multiple community strategies.
- Extension provides assistance with "Healthy Living/Holy Dying" seminars through the Hancock County Interagency Council.
- Extension works with the Mississippi Rural Health Association, Rural Health Corps Coalitions, State Office of Rural Health, Mississippi Hospital Association, Mississippi Medical Association and Alliance, Mississippi Access for Rural Health Care, Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, and Delta Partners in Care to improve health in Mississippi.