The Mississippi Health Summit is an invitation-only meeting of top health-related professionals and public officials in the state of Mississippi. This year’s event will promote evidence-based health policy and literacy as they relate to effective wellness promotion and prevention strategies.

The goal of the Mississippi Health Summit is not simply to discuss the state’s health issues and opportunities, but to form a plan to further improve health care and the health outcomes for our citizens. The ideas and comments emerging from these discussions will be compiled and distributed to each attendee shortly after the Summit.

This event has been made possible by the following sponsors:

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Keynote Speaker

Arthur G. Cosby, Ph.D.

Dr. Arthur G. Cosby is a William L. Giles Distinguished Professor at Mississippi State University. He serves as Director and Research Fellow at the University’s Social Science Research Center (SSRC) and as professor of sociology. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from Mississippi State University and has held prior faculty positions at Louisiana State University and Texas A & M University. He has numerous publications and conference presentations in the area of “public sociology.” His research applies social science knowledge to such real-world problems as health, poverty, career development, racial disparities, tobacco control, families/children and policy studies. From 1981 to 1987, Dr. Cosby was the Thomas L. Bailey Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work. In 2003, he was the founding Director of the Mississippi Health Policy Research Center, and in 2000, he served as the Executive Director of the Rural Health, Safety, and Security Institute.

His research program has been supported by numerous agencies and foundations, including the American Cancer Society, The Bower Foundation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Economic Research Service, the Ministero dell Istruzione, dell Universita della Ricerca, Italy, the National Aeronautic and Space Administration, the National Institute of Education, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Office of Rural Health Policy (HRSA), the Phil Hardin Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, as well as numerous state agencies.

Dr. Cosby’s current research focuses on a number of approaches to investigating the social climate for the improvement of health and well-being in America. These include such topics as the social and cultural dimensions of pain, healthy and unhealthy places in America and geographic and racial disparities. In 2005, he was first editor of About Children: An Authoritative Resource on the State of Childhood Today which was released by the American Academy of Pediatrics on its 75th anniversary.

Panel 1: How Wellness and Prevention Strategies Could Improve Mississippi’s Health

Murray L. Harber, B.S.

Murray is a wellness coordinator for the Motivating Mississippi – Keys to Living Healthy wellness program powered by WebMD. He has been in the worksite health promotion industry for over 15 years, where he has managed programs for the University of Minnesota, Ford Motor Company, Park Nicollet Health Services, and several other large employers.

Murray serves on the C.D.C.’s Expert Panel on Obesity Prevention in the Workplace and helped to create the C.D.C.’s LeanWorks® Obesity prevention program for worksites. He also serves as the co-chair for the Mississippi Worksite Wellness Group as well as Vice President for Professional Development for the Mississippi Chapter of the American Society of Training and Development. In 2011, he was appointed the chair of the Mississippi Governor’s Commission on Physical Fitness and Sports. Murray also serves as a magazine columnist and frequent radio and television guest for health and wellness. He received a Bachelors of Science in Education with a major of Exercise Physiology from the University of Tennessee.
Jerome Kolbo, Ph.D.

Dr. Jerome Kolbo currently serves as a professor at The University of Southern Mississippi in the School of Social Work. Dr. Kolbo has more than 25 years in the social work profession. Working in partnership with colleagues across the College of Health and from other institutions across the state, his research has been focused on better understanding and serving various at-risk populations. He has authored or co-authored over 40 publications in his professional career, as well as served as the principal investigator or co-principal investigator on over 40 different research projects related to social issues, including health and wellness in children among others.

Dr. Kolbo has a great deal of experience as a presenter at state, national, and international conferences. Dr. Kolbo obtained a bachelors’ degree in Christian Ministry and Social Work from The University of Mary, a master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Denver, and a doctoral degree in Social Work from the University of Minnesota.

Theresa Carithers, Ph.D.

Dr. Theresa Carithers serves as associate dean for the School of Applied Sciences at The University of Mississippi as well as a professor in the Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management. Before arriving at The University of Mississippi, Dr. Carithers was an instructor in the Division of Medical Genetics and the nutrition education coordinator at The University of Mississippi Medical Center, among other prior positions as both an educator and practitioner.

Dr. Carithers has an abundance of experience in professional leadership on the state and national level with nutrition, having served as a consultant on several projects including the Antares Project at the Harvard Schools of Business and Public Health. She has co-written 14 peer reviewed publications, is in progress with 5 others, and has completed a host of other publication activities related to nutrition and health. Dr. Carithers obtained a bachelors degree in institutional foods from Mississippi College, a master’s degree in health care administration from Mississippi College, and a doctorate in preventative medicine with a concentration in epidemiology from The University of Mississippi Medical Center, including doctoral coursework from The Johns Hopkins University.

Panel 2: Mississippi’s Current Plan for Health Care

Wesley Clay, M.S.

Wes Clay currently holds the position of health policy advisor for Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant. In that capacity, he works closely with state agencies, the Legislature, local governments and private entities in assisting with the mission of improving health care in Mississippi.

Prior to coming to Governor Bryant’s office, Wes spent four years as a member of United States Senator Roger Wicker’s staff in his Washington, D.C. office. Most recently, he served as legislative assistant for Senator Wicker. His policy portfolio included health care, education, and postal. Wes received his bachelor’s degree with an emphasis in pre-medicine and chemistry and a master’s degree in higher education administration, both at The University of Mississippi.
Toby Barker, M.S.

Toby Barker currently serves Mississippi as a State Representative for District 102. In the State House of Representatives, Representative Barker serves on multiple committees, including vice chair of the Public Health and Human Services Committee. Representative Barker is an economic developer by trade, and also works as a contract worker and account manager at Rare Design, a marketing, design and advertising agency in Hattiesburg, MS.

Before being elected to the legislature, he served as director of The University of Southern Mississippi’s Business Assistance Center. Representative Barker attended The University of Southern Mississippi, earning his bachelor’s degree in communications and masters degree in economic development.

Aaron Sisk, J.D.

Mr. Aaron Sisk has served as a senior staff attorney for the Mississippi Department of Insurance since November of 2006. Originally from Madison, MS, Mr. Sisk received his Juris Doctorate from The University of Mississippi School of Law and became an active member of the Mississippi Bar. Prior to that, Mr. Sisk completed his undergraduate education at Mississippi State University, earning a bachelor’s degree in sociology with a certificate in criminal justice. Mr. Sisk serves as the director of the Mississippi Insurance Department’s Life and Health Actuarial Division. In this role, he works closely with Department actuaries and industry representatives to assure compliance with Mississippi and Federal statutes and regulations. The Life & Health Division also leads the Department’s efforts to implement and enforce all insurance reforms associated with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, including the development of the Mississippi Health Benefit Exchange.

Lunch Speaker

Lucius Lampton, M.D.

Dr. Lucius “Luke” Lampton currently practices family medicine at the Walthall Clinic in Tylertown, MS and at the Magnolia Clinic in Magnolia, MS. He also serves as a clinical associate professor at Tulane Medical School in family medicine and as a part of the clinical faculty for The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s School of Medicine.

Among his numerous present and past medical leadership roles, he currently serves as the chairman of the Mississippi State Board of Health. He is the past-president of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians and has served as vice president, secretary, and on its Board of Trustees. He is also the chief editor of the Journal of the Mississippi State Medical Association and serves on the Editorial Board of the Southern Medical Journal. Dr. Lampton graduated from The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s School of Medicine in 1993. In 1996, he completed a residency in Family Medicine at The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s School of Medicine.
Panel 3: Proven Strategies for Successful Health Implementation

Michael L. Jones, R.N., M.S.N., M.B.A

Michael Jones is the chief community health officer for The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s Office of External Affairs. In this role, Mr. Jones is responsible with linking the medical center with various community-based partners to improve the health status of Mississippians. Specifically, he heads up the Mississippi Healthy Linkages Initiative, which is collaboration between The University of Mississippi Medical Center, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the 21 Federally Qualified Health Centers in the state of Mississippi.

Mr. Jones also directs The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s Community Health Advocate program, which is designed to partner with the faith-based community and other partners to train lay people to assist individuals in their communities to adopt healthy lifestyles. In addition to his duties at The University of Mississippi Medical Center, Mr. Jones also serves on various committees including the leadership board for the Mississippi chapter of the American Diabetes Association, the state Community Health Worker work group, the Mississippi Health Insurance Exchange “Educated Health Care Consumers” subcommittee, and various other community-based and state committees. Mr. Jones received his formal nursing education at Meridian Community College and The University of Mississippi Medical Center’s School of Nursing. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in family nursing through Hampton University.

Leslie L. Griffin, Ed.D.

Dr. Leslie Griffin serves as the dean of the College of Education at Delta State University. She first began her tenure with Delta State University as an adjunct faculty member in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction and served the University in several capacities including as assistant professor of elementary education, coordinator of undergraduate studies, and as chair of the division of teacher education.

Dr. Griffin has authored several publications related to teacher education and student learning, and has worked directly and indirectly with several grant-funded programs for the advancement of education in Mississippi. She also serves as the chair of the Healthy Campus / Community Initiative at Delta State University. Dr. Griffin received a bachelor’s degree in education and masters of education from Delta State University, and a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from The University of Mississippi.

Michael O. Minor, Ed.D.

Dr. Michael O. Minor is a local, regional, and national champion of faith-based health and wellness mobilization. He currently serves as the undershepherd of the Oak Hill Baptist Church in Hernando, Mississippi, and is the National Director for the Health and Human Services Partnership of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated.

As a community organizer for 20 years, Dr. Minor has worked on community empowerment, non-profit business development, and faith-based initiatives issues. He also provides advisory services for several local, regional, and national faith-based health and wellness initiatives. In recent months, Dr. Minor has received White House invitations to attend several events celebrating the success of Let’s Move including the December 2011 national convening and the second year anniversary celebration in Orlando. Additionally, in his local and state denominational leadership positions, he has championed the initiation of health and wellness ministries in houses of worship at the local, state, regional, and, national levels. Dr. Minor obtained a bachelor’s degree in economics from Harvard University, masters’ degrees in business administration and real estate development from The University of Memphis, and a doctoral degree in higher and adult education with a special emphasis on adult learners.
Notes

All returned notes from the Mississippi Health Summit will be constructed into a report and distributed to all attendees. These notes will also assist in crafting a plan for Mississippi health policy.