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Center for Population Studies Releases State Health and Hunger Atlas

Map addresses food insecurity and poor health outcomes around Mississippi

JUNE 13, 2017 BY EDWIN SMITH



OXFORD, Miss. – **The University of Mississippi Center for Population Studies** has developed an extensive reference guide to poverty, hunger and chronic health problems in the state, the Mississippi Health and Hunger Atlas.

Modeled after the Missouri Hunger Atlas, the resource is the first iteration of its kind in Mississippi and in the South. This atlas

addresses high rates of food insecurity and poor health outcomes, two important issues in the state.

“Alarming, while national food insecurity trends are declining, Mississippi’s rates are rising,” said Anne Cafer, assistant professor of sociology and anthropology and co-coordinator of the atlas project.

“For the last 15 years, Mississippi has consistently ranked among the top two states with the highest food insecurity rate. Mississippi also consistently ranks poorly for a number of demographic, economic and health statistics when compared to national thresholds.”

This project is also headed by John Green, professor of sociology and anthropology and director of the Center for Population Studies, and Rachel Haggard, an Ole Miss graduate student from San Diego.

Cafer worked on the Missouri Hunger Atlas, which has proven useful to an array of community organizers and legislators. Wanting to bring the concept to Mississippi, she quickly found support from community and university stakeholders.

With the help of Green and Haggard, the Mississippi Health and Hunger Atlas was initiated and completed in less than four months.

“The atlas seeks to shed light on county-level variations for a variety of these demographic, health and hunger indicators,” Green said. “Examining these indicators at a county level, patterns, normally overshadowed by standard macro, national, level analysis begin to emerge.

“This atlas is intended to offer a tool for improving assessment of need and performance to promote improved practices and decision-making related to hunger and health in Mississippi.”

The developers have five goals for the atlas:

- Raise awareness regarding the extent and depth of food insecurity and health disparities and needs in Mississippi
- Spread knowledge of what public and private programs are doing to reach vulnerable populations
- Reveal geographic patterns in the state
- Provide need and performance measures that can be updated on a regular basis
- Aid public and private stakeholders to assess their performance and provide a means for improving better resource delivery to the Mississippians they serve

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University Celebrates Women’s History Month

OXFORD, Miss. – Panel discussions, a film and lectures are among several events scheduled as the Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies and the Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement at the University of Mississippi observe Women’s History Month. “Women’s History Month is a useful reminder of how essential women are to

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Longest Scholarship Targets Transfer Students

OXFORD, Miss. – William D. Longest, who taught biology at the University of Mississippi for more than two decades, has established a scholarship endowment to help offset tuition expenses for students who transfer to UM from a community college. Provost Noel Wilkin said gifts like Longest’s are essential to the university’s growth. “We are extremely

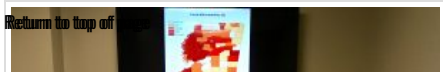
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"In this atlas, health and hunger indicators are mapped and used to assess need – such as food security rates, obesity rate, etc. – and

The Moon? By Neil Greenfieldboyer
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