

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY HEARTS

Continues in the Mississippi Delta



CREATING HEALTHY HEARTS

IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA

“Neighbors have to help neighbors to combat the health problems that are so prevalent around here.”

— JOHNNIE NEAL —
MAYOR, SIDON, MS

The Mississippi State Department of Health is providing healthcare leadership in Mississippi’s heartland to reduce morbidity, mortality, and related health disparities.

Since 2010, the Mississippi State Department of Health has provided community and clinical initiatives that continue to improve outcomes for residents in Mississippi’s heartland. Partnering with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) Office of Preventive Health established the Mississippi Delta Health Collaborative (The Collaborative) to help lower the risk of heart disease and stroke through health, education, new policy, and environmental and system changes among priority populations in the 18-county Mississippi Delta region.

The Delta is a section of western and northwestern Mississippi, bordered by the Mississippi River, whose residents face many challenges—formidable poverty, low educational attainment, high rates of obesity and related diseases, and other chronic health conditions. There, specific efforts are underway to increase access to routine health screenings and disease self-management education.

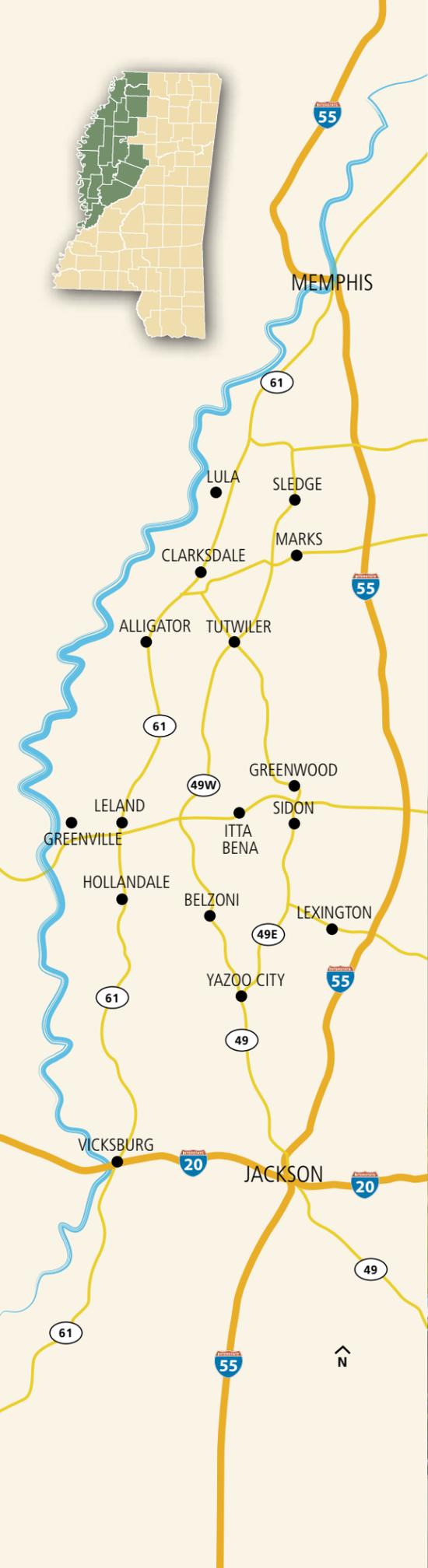
Health is determined in part by access to social and economic opportunities as well as the resources and support available in communities, neighborhoods and homes. Living conditions explain why some people are healthier than others or not as healthy as they could be. Because negative health outcomes of the people living in the Delta region arise from many related factors, improving these often complicated health issues requires a highly collaborative and interconnected approach. MSDH has chosen to involve individuals and groups at every level of the community with a focus on reducing the risk for heart disease and stroke through the ABCS Method*. Progress is being made through initiatives in three program areas: clinical, community, and faith-based.

- By engaging pharmacists and Community Health Workers in the healthcare team, MSDH’s **clinical model** creates a bridge between the patient and medical services that improves self-management of chronic diseases.
- **Community-based** efforts are focused through Mayoral Health Councils, BROTHERS, and the Community Health Worker Housing Initiative. Currently there are 39 active Councils in cities and towns across the Delta developing programs that provide residents with better access to healthier food choices, safe places that encourage physical activity and public spaces that are smoke-free. Barbers Reaching Out To Educate on Routine Screenings (BROTHERS) is an innovative program whereby The Collaborative partners with existing barbershops to provide routine blood pressure screenings and referrals. Public housing residents are being engaged in a collaborative process to improve their health through education, health screenings and environmental change.
- The **faith-based** Delta Alliance for Congregational Health (DACH) supports the mission of its member churches to minister not only to one’s spiritual health, but to their physical health as well. The participating churches minister to their communities with regular cardiovascular health screenings and include community outreach events.

By bringing health screenings to unconventional places, like churches and barbershops, The Collaborative reaches at-risk citizens who might not have access to regular medical care. Peer-to-peer screenings and outreach have led to increased medical referrals and intervention.

*ABCS METHOD—**Aspirin**: Increasing low dose aspirin therapy according to recognized guidelines.

A1c (hemoglobin A1c): Monitoring and controlling blood glucose. **Blood pressure**: Preventing and controlling high blood pressure. **Cholesterol**: Preventing and controlling high LDL cholesterol. **Smoking**: Preventing initiation and increasing cessation of smoking while increasing the percentage of the population protected by smoke-free air laws or regulations.



ASSESSING THE CHALLENGES

The Mississippi Delta is unlike any other region in America. Its unique virtues are inextricably linked to its challenges. Its winding highways pass through important sites representative of a cultural heritage and connect towns filled with great charm and systemic problems. Among these problems is a poverty rate significantly higher than the national average, with nearly 30% of residents in the 18-county Delta region living below the poverty line.

As one of the poorest areas in the United States, the Delta's educational attainment is low and job opportunities are scarce. There are shortages of nurses and doctors, and limited options for healthy foods. The people who live in the Delta experience the highest rates of stroke in Mississippi and share with the state as a whole the highest rates of obesity and cardiovascular disease in the United States. Lingering racial and economic disparities have made progress slow and halting.

Confronting and overcoming these challenges will make the Delta, and by extension the entire state, a healthier place. The work of individual Mississippians is the cornerstone of this effort, but they have not been on their own.

The Mississippi State Department of Health, through the Delta Health Collaborative, has begun to forge a movement by bringing together an array of approaches to improve health outcomes.

Mayoral health councils implement city policies on smoking while churches host congregational health screenings across the region. Schools and churches offer their facilities to the public through shared use agreements. And barbers use their existing community connections to reach people who may not always be aware of their health condition. Together, actions like these can make a real, positive difference in the quality of life for an entire region.

These programs are already having positive effects in the Delta. Statistical data supports the numerous anecdotal accounts of healthcare successes: a routine blood pressure screening that led one patient to diagnosis and treatment for hypertension, a medication assessment that led to a more effective medication therapy plan, and nutrition counseling that resulted in better food choices for patients as well as their children and grandchildren. These small, personal successes are beginning to add up to substantial change.



The Mississippi Delta is among the poorest areas in the United States. The 18-county Delta region has, on average, 31.5% of its residents living below poverty level compared to the state's 21.2%. Fifty percent of the Delta population consists of African-Americans who are vulnerable to existing racial, economic, and health disparities. By comparison, African-Americans are 37% of the total Mississippi population, and only 12.6% of the national population.

Health disparities fostered by the unique history and environment in the Delta carry over to the rest of Mississippi, resulting in the state oftentimes occupying the lowest of the low in national rankings.

CREATING
HEALTH SYSTEMS
THAT WORK TOGETHER

A team approach led by healthcare providers expands patient contact beyond the clinic walls. One-on-one screenings and follow-ups through the Clinical Community Health Worker Initiative equips patients with the knowledge and skills to manage their own conditions.

"I tell them every time your blood sugar is over 180, it puts you at risk—for stroke or kidney damage. I stress that it has to stay normal every day."

— WILLIE MAE HORTON —
CLINICAL COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

PHARMACEUTICAL
WITH GA CAR MICHAEL

Focus Areas

HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

MEDICATION THERAPY
MANAGEMENT
(MTM)

CLINICAL COMMUNITY
HEALTH WORKER INITIATIVE
(CCHWI)



SEEING THE SPECTRUM OF CARE

DR. SAM FILLINGANE, MALLORY HEALTH CLINIC, LEXINGTON, MS

Dr. Sam Fillingane at Mallory Health Clinic in Lexington considers the Clinical Community Health Worker Initiative critical to improving the health of all Mississippi Delta residents.

“It’s set up in such a way that it encourages doctors on the healthcare team to look at a patient’s entire spectrum of care—from labs, prescriptions, social services, physical exercise, and mental health to name a few,” says Dr. Fillingane. “It has caused me to look at my practice in a whole new way.”

The healthcare team, including Community Health Workers, are able to discuss information about each patient. Each is then able to have a much fuller picture of the patient’s life and home environment, which can provide physicians with information that affects diagnosis and treatment.

The Community Health Workers, in turn, communicate with patients to ensure they understand their conditions and the reasons the doctor has made recommendations or prescribed certain medications.

“We’re really the bridge from the doctor to the patient,” says Community Health Worker Arteya McGuire. “I see a lot of patients that don’t fully understand their conditions. We make sure they know what’s going on. It’s very encouraging to see patients losing weight, coming off medicine, lowering blood pressure, and taking charge of their own health.”

One patient has lost over 30 pounds and another patient no longer has to inject insulin because of better self-management and lifestyle changes.

“It’s encouraging the entire spectrum of care. It makes sense for patient care to go beyond what happens in the doctor’s office.”

— DR. SAM FILLINGANE —
PHYSICIAN, MALLORY HEALTH CLINIC



IDENTIFYING MEDICATION CHALLENGES

DR. MEAGAN BROWN, PHARMACIST, GA CARMICHAEL FAMILY HEALTH CENTER, YAZOO CITY, MS

A large percentage of Mississippi Delta residents suffer from chronic diseases, and many don’t fully understand how their medications work to control things like blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol. That’s where Dr. Meagan Brown, pharmacist at the GA Carmichael Family Health Center in Yazoo City, and her team come in. Since 2011, they have worked with the Delta Health Collaborative and the Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program to make sure each patient understands the why, when, and how of each of their medications. “Medications have to be stored and administered properly in order to be effective,” says Dr. Brown.

“I had one patient who started on insulin. After almost a year her blood sugar was still not under control. So I met with her and I had her demonstrate how she gets insulin. What I discovered was that she wasn’t using her machine properly,” remarked Brown. When the patient began giving herself her insulin properly, her numbers finally improved.

According to Dr. Brown, “We identify a lot of medication problems—some are being stored in places that are too hot or too cold. Sometimes patients are not taking them at the right time of day or on an empty stomach. We discuss each patient’s prescribed medication with them. Before our meeting ends, we create a handwritten ‘to-do’ list that helps them understand what to do.”

Of course the MTM team also discusses the importance of diet, exercise and other lifestyle choices that may eliminate the need for certain medications. Patients are often thrilled to know that it’s sometimes possible to discontinue medications if they modify their diets or incorporate more exercise. “We also monitor their numbers and work with their physician if we think there is a need for changing their meds,” adds Dr. Brown.

And the program has been effective.

“We had one patient whose blood glucose level was 13,” said Dr. Brown. “That’s really high. What we discovered was that he didn’t speak much English, and had not understood that diabetes is a chronic illness. Once we got a translator to meet with us, he finally understood that he had to manage his diabetes for the rest of his life.”

After three months, his blood glucose level dropped by almost six points and his blood sugar came down to 7.5. This was a huge improvement, and he felt so much better.



646
MEDICATION
THERAPY MANAGEMENT
PATIENTS SERVED

2,588
CLINICAL CONDITIONS
IDENTIFIED

1,508 INDIVIDUALS REQUIRED INTERVENTION
(43% OF THESE DEMONSTRATED
IMPROVED CLINICAL OUTCOMES
13% SHOWED IMPROVEMENT
IN HEMOGLOBIN A1c VALUES)

So Nice to Help

“One patient was so excited because he felt so much better! He hadn’t realized that controlling his diabetes would improve his quality of life so much. He even sent me a thank-you card. It’s so nice to be able to help someone change their life that way,” says Dr. Meagan Brown.

UNDERSTANDING NECESSITIES

CLINICAL COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER AND PATIENT, MIDNIGHT, MS

Alice Jones of Midnight lives more than 20 miles away from the nearest medical clinic and lacks reliable transportation. Before Community Health Worker Arteya McGuire began visiting Jones, she was not sure why she was taking certain medications. After McGuire's visits, she has a much better understanding of why her medications are necessary.

"Basically we reach people who can't go to a doctor or even to church," says McGuire. "To make sure they are as healthy as possible, we bring the clinic to them. We go out into the community where they are."

"I've been eating better lately, too. I use to like pop, but it don't like me," says Jones, acknowledging that she's had to cut out the sugary drinks she used to enjoy.

And sometimes responsibilities go beyond the routine. When McGuire visited Alice Jones last June, she noticed Jones' air conditioner was not working. That day the heat index had reached 104 degrees. So, in addition to performing her regular medical checks, McGuire also called nearby social service agencies on Jones' behalf and was able to get her a new air conditioning unit within a few days.

14
CLINIC SITES EMBRACING
CLINICAL COMMUNITY
HEALTH WORKER MODEL

1,057
PATIENTS ENROLLED

8,622
PHONE AND IN-HOME
ENCOUNTERS

SIGNIFICANT MEAN CHANGES WERE SEEN
IN DIASTOLIC AND SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE
VALUES AMONG HYPERTENSIVE PATIENTS
ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM



"A lot of them say I motivate them to do right as far as exercise is concerned, so when I visit they can say, 'Look, I've lost weight!'"

— WILLIE MAE HORTON —
CLINICAL COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER



It Means a Lot

"It means a whole lot to me," says Alice Jones, a patient of Community Health Worker Arteya McGuire. "My kids don't live around me, so if I need something, I can call her. My numbers have been a whole lot better since she started coming around."

STAYING WITH THE PROGRAM

CLINICAL COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER VISITING COUPLE'S HOME, WEST, MS

For the past four years, Community Health Worker Willie Mae Horton has visited patients like T.J. and Bonnie Hutchinson in their homes. "I come in and educate them. I do their weight, height, and body mass index (BMI). I make sure they know the warning signs of a stroke," says Horton. "And I always tell them they have to know their numbers! I stay on them about that exercise."

The Hutchinsons are both retired from manufacturing jobs, and are not as active as they once were. Because of Horton's gentle but persistent urging about exercise, T.J. decided to return to mowing his yard with a push mower when his riding mower broke. Since then he's lost a little weight and his blood pressure numbers have improved. "The small changes help," he says.

Horton always tries to be creative by offering fun alternatives to traditional exercise. For example, she encourages people to dance around the house or do stretches on the couch. These suggestions helped Bonnie who prefers to stay out of the heat. Instead, she puts some music on and does "The Twist" for her exercise.



"I hadn't really given it much thought until she came around," says Bonnie. "We have fun around here."

The Hutchinsons are also much more attentive to their diet since Horton has been visiting. "We really think about portions now," says T.J.

"I also talk about the importance of drinking water," says Horton. "The body can't function right when it doesn't get enough water."

CREATING
COMMUNITIES
THAT WORK TOGETHER

*“We have an exercise room
at the multipurpose building
where seniors gather for lunch.
We do educational programs
there and lead exercise classes.”*

— CLINT COBBINS —
MAYOR, LEXINGTON, MS

Building communities that promote the journey toward good health is an essential component of The Collaborative. We do this by encouraging local government to create healthy spaces through policy and infrastructure changes. We also embrace the private sector, specifically small businesses like barbershops.

Focus Areas

B.R.O.T.H.E.R.S.
BARBERS REACHING OUT
TO HELP EDUCATE
ON ROUTINE SCREENINGS

MAYORAL HEALTH COUNCILS



BUILDING A NETWORK THAT GROWS

FRESH IDEAS, ITTA BENA, MS | GLORIFIED STYLES AND CUTS, HOLLANDALE, MS
MASTER CUTTERS, GREENVILLE, MS | DREAM TEAM, GREENWOOD, MS

High blood pressure problems and the health complications that result from it affect a large number of Mississippi Delta residents, particularly African-American men. The BROTHERS (Barbers Reaching Out To Help Educate on Routine Screenings) program, started in 2012, aims to change that by reaching out to them in innovative ways.

“All men, not just African-American men, hate going to the doctor,” says BROTHERS barber Joyce Hunter-Knox with Master Cutters in Greenville. “But where is the meeting place where all men are? The Barbershop!” she adds.

Barbershops are traditionally places where men gather to talk sports, politics, and just to shoot the breeze as they get their haircuts and shaves. With the BROTHERS program, licensed barbers are now also able to conduct routine blood pressure screenings. Through the program, participating barbers are trained through University of Mississippi Medical Center Community Health Advocate program to perform blood pressure checks.

Another client visiting Master Cutters that day commented, “I’ve had my blood pressure screened more in the past 6 months than in my whole life before that.” His numbers are good today, but have been rising, and he’s making lifestyle changes to make sure it stays in check.

Over in Greenwood at the Dream Team Barbershop, one of the barbers volunteered to have his pressure checked at the beginning of the program. “I got screened and it was real high,” says Clevira Williams. “At the very same time, I found out my brother was in the hospital. He had just had a stroke at age 50. I’m only 41, so now I’m getting a handle on my high blood pressure before that happens to me.”

“Ninety-eight percent of my clients want me to have their pressure checked.”

— JOHNNY MOORE —
OWNER, GLORIFIED STYLES AND CUTS



27
PARTICIPATING BARBERSHOPS

17
BARBERSHOPS ARE
NOW SMOKE-FREE

3,400
INDIVIDUAL BLOOD PRESSURE
SCREENINGS PERFORMED

REVEALING

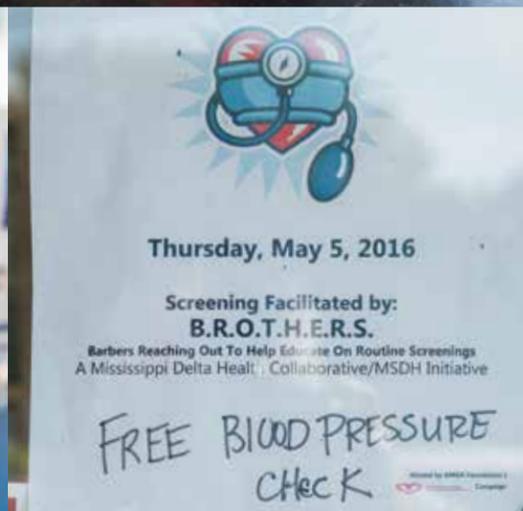
520 INDIVIDUALS WERE HYPERTENSIVE

1,320 INDIVIDUALS WERE PRE-HYPERTENSIVE

813 INDIVIDUALS WERE REFERRED

TO A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER

FOR FOLLOW-UP





We Do It Everyday

Since barber Joyce Hunter-Knox has been participating in the BROTHERS program, she has completed as many as 200 screenings in just a week's time. "We do it every day we're open," she says. And her efforts have paid off. One client, a Greenville policeman, said the routine check likely saved his life. When first checked, "it was 197 over 90-something," Joyce says. "He knew he had to go directly to the doctor, which he did." After months of watching his diet and exercising, he now describes his numbers as perfect.

40
COMPREHENSIVE SMOKE-FREE ORDINANCES
 SERVING **170,266** PEOPLE

9
COMPLETE STREETS
 SERVING **22,058** PEOPLE

CONTINUING TO MAKE HEALTHY STRIDES

MAYORAL HEALTH COUNCIL, ALLIGATOR, MS

Alligator is a small community that's very family oriented. "Our residents have very deep roots here," says Alderwoman Mechelle Wallace, who recalls the need to reach and inspire people. "You can't first provoke them into defensiveness. If you've been raised in a world that is a certain way, you grow up believing that the way things are is the best it can be. It's a culture that says 'this is as good as it gets,'" laments Wallace.

Wanting to harness the energy of Alligator's people and help them push on in a positive direction is where the idea of their town motto came from. The words "passionately pursuing a healthier community" were carefully chosen to prompt action without alienating the very people it is meant to represent.

For more than five years, shared-use agreements have enabled Alligator to offer and build upon safe places for informal activities like pick-up soccer or touch football. The spaces are maintained by the city and free for residents to use.

Alligator's Mayoral Health Council has supported efforts to provide healthier alternatives at concession stands and at any public events that offer food.

"We offer fresh fruit and vegetables whenever we can," says Wallace.

The council supports the local youth football team, the Falcons, to make sure the 7- to 12-year old players always have enough water or sports drinks to stay hydrated during practices and games. "We also encourage them to drink more water even off the field," adds Wallace.

They are active participants in the Let's Move initiative and are making the town exercise-friendly through the Complete Streets program.

Wallace is gratified that only a handful of people have made such a big difference in improving the health of their 203 residents in such a short period of time. "That such a small community can make these improvements with a very limited budget is just tremendous," says Wallace.





I'm Proud of the Partnership

The City of Vicksburg, population 23,500, under the leadership of the Mayoral Health Council, recently completed upgrades to the Walking Trail at City Park. The non-profit group My Brother's Keeper (MBK) was a major partner in the improvements. "We want to promote the use of public parks," said Mayor George Flaggs. "I'm very proud of the Vicksburg and MBK partnership, so it's refreshing for a non-profit to help us." This is just one example of how public and non-profit partnerships help build health-friendly cities. The quarter mile gravel path was resurfaced with smooth pavement which provides a better and safer trail for walkers and joggers. Groups like Shape Up Vicksburg host free walking events and wellness checks at the trail. To complement the newly paved trail, the park includes a municipal swimming pool, ball fields, and a playground.

25
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
SHARED-USE AGREEMENTS
SERVING **148,843** PEOPLE

9
LAND-USE AGREEMENTS
SERVING **17,937** PEOPLE



LEVERAGING STRENGTHS

MAYORAL HEALTH COUNCIL, HOLLANDALE, MS

The first thing you notice when you walk into Hollandale City Hall is the sign proclaiming the city to be smoke-free. With a population of about 3,700, Hollandale banned smoking in public buildings in 2009. They also constructed a walking trail with a playground at one end to encourage its citizens to get out and exercise.

Mayor Charles Morrow is proud of the public trail which made use of an old railroad bed and is conveniently located adjacent to downtown.

Mayor Morrow hopes to leverage the strength of the Mayoral Health Council to increase the availability of fresh produce to residents. "The fried and processed foods that are readily available here are really killing us," he says. "We've got to have access to healthier foods."

Just about a block from City Hall, Barber Johnny Moore at Glorified Styles and Cuts monitors his clients' blood pressure through the BROTHERS program.

Having two Delta Health Collaborative programs in such close proximity undoubtedly increases public awareness of opportunities for better health.



"We really need a public walking trail instead of walking in the streets. It would be a big plus for us."

— JOHNNIE NEAL —
MAYOR, SIDON, MS

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

MAYORAL HEALTH COUNCIL, SIDON, MS

Sidon is a small community south of Greenwood that is home to about 600 residents. With Mayor Johnnie Neal leading the city since 2009, this little town has made big strides toward better health for everyone.

"The first thing we did with the Mayoral Health Council was to become a smoke-free town. That was in 2014," says Mayor Neal. "All of our public buildings are now smoke-free and that's worked out very well."

But that was only the beginning for this dedicated group.

"We started the Farmer's Market this year," says Neal. "We don't have a supermarket in town. We have to go all the way to Greenwood for fresh vegetables. So some of us got together and decided to do gardens in our own backyards. Then we shared our produce at the Farmer's Market."

Mayor Neal commented that she personally hadn't had a garden in years, but that changed this past summer. From her garden, she was able to harvest fresh vegetables as well as some small cantaloupes, which she shared with neighbors via the Farmer's Market.

While the Farmer's Market had a limited schedule its first summer, the council hopes to expand it next year.

Residents also now get together for informal evening walks around the block, but Mayor Neal says they hope to create a walking trail that will encourage even more participation.

Other health initiatives by the Mayor include educational outreach on subjects like recognizing the warning signs of diabetes, a disease that plagues many Sidon residents.

12
CORNER/CONVENIENT
STORES OFFERING FRESH FRUITS
AND VEGETABLES
SERVING **51,711** PEOPLE

12
CERTIFIED EBT
FARMERS MARKETS
SERVING **78,332** PEOPLE



CREATING
CONGREGATIONS
THAT WORK TOGETHER

“You can do so much more to serve God if you’re healthy yourself. It’s hard to give to others if you’re sick, so we try to help all our members and students to take care of themselves.”

— CALVIN HARRIS —
PASTOR, ABBA RHEMA WORD MINISTRY

Churches are unique institutions that already nurture the spiritual health of their members. Through the Delta Alliance for Congregational Health, we encourage them to go a step further to promote physical health as well. Through DACH, they offer wellness programs to church members as well as non-members throughout the community.

Focus Area

DELTA ALLIANCE FOR
CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH
(DACH)

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

SAMUEL CHAPEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, GREENWOOD, MS



At smoke-free Samuel Chapel Baptist Church in Leflore County, the Delta Alliance for Congregational Health program began with a community garden in 2013 and it grew from there. Pastor Willie Johnson and member Teresa McCain wanted to incorporate a health and wellness educational component to their program.

“The awareness of different symptoms and signs of a stroke or diabetes is really crucial,” says Teresa McCain. Although McCain did not have a medical background, she decided to pursue training as a phlebotomist so she could do blood checks during the church’s quarterly wellness days. “We didn’t have anyone who could do the blood sticks, and it’s important to know those numbers, so I got certified to do it.”

Pastor Willie Johnson also notes that getting news about a health concern can be a daunting and frightening experience if a person is alone in a doctor’s office. “When they find out while they are in a community setting, they have a support system already in place,” he adds. “Basically we reach out to people who normally won’t go to a doctor or don’t have the resources to pay for healthcare. We go to where people are.”

“You Can’t Serve the Lord If You’re Sick”

A large part of the Samuel Chapel Missionary Baptist Church health and wellness program involves going into housing complexes to make sure the people who need health monitoring are being served. Pastor Johnson sees the health outreach as a natural extension of the church’s ministry. “According to the scriptures, He said ‘I would that you prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers,’” Johnson notes. “You can’t serve the Lord if you’re sick. We want to be in the service of the Lord. We believe you can’t do the Lord’s work unless you take care of your physical health.”

77

CHURCHES HAVE PARTNERED WITH MSDH SINCE 2009

73

CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH NURSES AND ADVOCATES HAVE BEEN TRAINED

5,641

INDIVIDUAL ABCS HEALTH SCREENINGS PERFORMED

3,154 INDIVIDUAL BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS PERFORMED, REVEALING **1,593** INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (**170** OF THESE DISPLAYED UNDIAGNOSED HYPERTENSION AND **1,223** WERE PRE-HYPERTENSIVE) **523** WERE REFERRED TO A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER FOR FOLLOW-UP



CELEBRATING BODY AND SPIRIT

NEW GREEN GROVE CHURCH OF FAITH, GREENWOOD, MS

Over 100 people took advantage of New Green Grove Church of Faith’s 6th Annual Comprehensive Health and Wellness Day. The festive atmosphere allowed people to have their numbers checked in a friendly, non-clinical setting for many of the illnesses that affect Mississippi Delta residents. The health screening stations included blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol, height, weight and body mass index (BMI).

The church’s wellness day offers free checks that are not always included in wellness days: speech and hearing tests, breast exams, and diabetic foot exams to name just a few.

Dr. Raymond Girnys, a Greenwood physician, is on site performing free breast exams for women and men, a service he has offered at the church’s past wellness days.

“I’ve seen several that I recommended a follow-up, but fortunately, none that actually had breast cancer,” said Girnys. “These free screenings are very important since we’re reaching people who might not normally come in for an exam.”

Like other churches that participate in the Delta Alliance for Congregational Health program, New Green Grove sees their participation as an essential part of their ministry.

Member David Wilson sums it up by saying, “You have to take care of your body to be a strong Christian. And bad health can really challenge your faith.”

Wilson has visited every screening station offered, and his numbers are good. “Looks like I just need to watch what I eat a little more closely. I could stand to lose a few pounds.”

“If you love humanity, you’ll do real service like this in your community,” adds Wilson.



35
CHURCHES ADOPTED
SMOKE-FREE AIR POLICIES
FOR CHURCH GROUNDS

38
CHURCHES PROVIDE ACCESS
TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

45
CHURCHES ADOPTED
POLICIES FOR HEALTHIER
FOOD CHOICES
AT CHURCH FUNCTIONS

CHEERING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES THROUGH SHARING

TRIUMPHANT BAPTIST CHURCH, VICKSBURG, MS

Under a shared-use agreement with the city of Vicksburg, Triumphant Baptist Church opens its gymnasium, weight room and playground to area residents free of charge. On a typical weekday afternoon, about 35 area children and teens are gathered at the gym for a game of basketball.

While the older kids get serious on the court, younger siblings cheer them on or enjoy the playground just outside the gym doors. Church member Victor Gilliam coaches the basketball team.

“We have a lot of people who come here on a regular basis. Not just church members, but a lot of kids from the surrounding neighborhood,” says Gilliam. “They’re able to walk here after school. This is a safe place where they can get exercise to help them stay healthy.”

The church also promotes healthy lifestyle changes and integrates health-related themes in sermons.



EDUCATING BY THE NUMBERS

ABBA RHEMA WORD MINISTRY, GREENVILLE, MS

Abba Rhema Word Ministry houses a church, a school, and various evening educational programs for adults in the community.

As an important part of their educational ministry, Pastor Calvin Harris and Assistant Pastor Vanessa Harris consider their most important role to educate young students about healthy choices. “We want to implement health education at a young age,” says Vanessa.

“Remember that high blood pressure is called the ‘Silent Killer,’” Vanessa tells her teenaged students. “It can sneak up on you or your parents, so you have to check it regularly.”

They often feature the brochures that are provided to them about topics like diabetes and cholesterol. Vanessa opens her class using one of many brochures on health topics.

“You’ve got to know your numbers,” she admonishes students. “It’s important that you know what your numbers mean when you get your blood pressure taken.” She hopes this important message resonates with these young students as they grow into adulthood.

“We’ve got to reach these kids early before they begin to develop bad habits that lead to health issues later in life,” she adds. “We talk about portions, about making good choices, about avoiding things like donuts and sugary drinks.”

Pastor Harris shares, “We also have a food pantry and we try our best to provide healthy choices here.”

And while the Mississippi Delta heat makes it difficult to walk during the summer, the couple often leads their students on exercise walks near the school when the weather permits.

“We’ve got to reach these kids early before they begin to develop bad habits that lead to health issues later in life.”

— VANESSA HARRIS —
ASSISTANT PASTOR
ABBA RHEMA WORD MINISTRY

LOOKING FORWARD TO A
HEALTHIER DELTA

The Delta Health Collaborative’s comprehensive approach to healthcare draws upon the meaningful community relationships and institutions that already make the Mississippi Delta unique.

Every time a local barber identifies someone with high blood pressure, every time a church holds a wellness fair, every time a clinical community health worker encourages her clients to get up and move, and every time someone doesn’t light up a cigarette in public spaces, the Delta becomes a healthier place.

Its residents are taking the lessons of healthy living to heart. Parents are teaching children and children are teaching parents that small changes can make big differences. Replacing sugary drinks with water, eating more vegetables, growing a backyard garden, mowing the lawn with a push mower, or just taking that one extra step a day are all examples of small choices that add up to better health.

Because of the innovative health initiatives now underway in the Delta, a new story is unfolding in the nation’s most challenged region. Continued funding of these programs builds a stronger Mississippi. From larger cities such as Vicksburg to small towns like Alligator, each healthy step taken is one towards improved health and prosperity not only for our state, but for the entire country.

Thanks To All Those Involved

**PARTNERS
IN THE DELTA**

Abundant Living Community Organization
American Heart Association
Delta Alliance for Congregational Health
Delta Strategic Compact
Jackson State University
Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce
Mississippi Municipal League
Mississippi State University
Mississippi Tobacco Free Coalitions
University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy
University of Southern Mississippi

**HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER PARTNERS**

Aaron E. Henry Community Health Center
Delta Health Center
Dr. Arenia C. Mallory Community Health Center
GA Carmichael Family Health Center
Greenwood Comprehensive Clinic
Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center
Lucas Family Medical
Mission Primary Clinic
North Sunflower Medical Center
Tutwiler Medical Clinic

**BROTHERS*
INITIATIVE**

Alice Styles & Barbershops
All Pro Cuts
Backstreet
Beyond Faded Barbershop
Bucket’s Barber/Salon
Choppa Styles
Clavin’s Classic Cuts
Clean Cuts
CMC Barbershop
D-Tight Barbershop
Diamond Cutz
Dream Team Barbershops
E & J Barbershops
Elite Cuts & Styles
Fresh Ideas
Glorified Styles and Cuts
House of Progress Barbershops
Humphrey’s Barbershops
Kut Lab Barbershops
Master Cutters
Nell’s Barbershops
People’s Barbershops
Platinum Plus Barbershops
Ronnie’s Barbershops
S & S Barbershops
Shear Expressions
Styles & Cuts
The Cut
Toney’s

*BARBERS REACHING OUT TO HELP EDUCATE ON ROUTINE SCREENING

**MAYORAL HEALTH
COUNCIL MUNICIPALITIES:**

Alligator
Anguilla
Arcola
Batesville
Bentonla*
Beulah
Cary
Charleston
Coahoma
Coldwater
Como
Courtland
Crenshaw—Panola County
Crenshaw—Quitman County
Crowder
Cruger
Duncan
Durant
Eden*
Falcon
Friars Point
Glendora
Goodman
Greenville
Greenwood
Gunnison
Hollandale
Indianola
Inverness
Isola
Itta Bena
Jonestown
Lambert
Leland

Lexington
Louise
Lyons
Marks
Mayersville
Metcalfe
Moorehead
Mound Bayou
Olive Branch*
Pace
Pickens
Pope
Renova
Rollingfork
Rosedale
Ruleville
Sardis
Senatobia
Shaw
Shelby
Sidon
Sledge
Sumner
Southaven*
Sunflower
Tchula
Tutwiler
Vaiden
Vicksburg
Winstonville
Webb
Yazoo City

*TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ONLY

**DELTA ALLIANCE FOR
CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH:**

Abba Rhema Word Ministries
Antioch MBC
Bell Grove MBC
Belmont MBC
Breath of Life MBC
Chapel Hill MBC
Chosen Generations Ministries
Community Chapel Assembly
Family Life Assembly of God
First Seventh Day Adventist
First United Baptist
Fountain of Life COGIC
Greater Mt. Zion COGIC
Greater St. Paul
Greater St. Peter
Hammond Hill
Hammond Hill Baptist Congress
Hands of God
Holy Temple Ministries
Hopewell MBC
In His Presence Ministry
Jerusalem MBC
Jesus Way Ministries
Jones Chapel #2 Missionary Baptist Church
Lampton Street Church of Christ
Liberty Missionary Baptist Church
Life Changing Ministries COGIC
Locust Grove MBC
McKinley Chapel
Mount Pleasant
Mt. Calvary MBC
Nathans Ministries
New Antioch
New Green Grove Church of Faith
New Jerusalem
New Jerusalem MBC
New Life
New Zion MBC
Newer New Hope
Oak Grove MBC
Pilgrim Rest MBC
Pleasant Hope
Pope Chapel A.M.E.
Providence MBC
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Salem MBC
Saint’s Rest COGIC
Samuel Chapel MBC
Samuel Chapel United Methodist Church
Seek Well Baptist Church
Shiloh S.D.A. Church
St. James MBC
St. Mark
St. Peter MBC
Triumphant MBC
Tunica 10 Point
Upon This Rock Ministry
Valley Queen Baptist Church
Vessels of Mercy Ministries
Walk of Faith
Word of Life International Ministry

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MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

*Office of Preventive Health
Delta Health Collaborative
601.206.1559*

HEALTHYMS.COM

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