

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

UMMC SCHOOL OF NURSING WINS \$450,000 GRANT TO PROVIDE MULTIDISCIPLINARY HEALTH-CARE SERVICES TO SCHOOLS IN THE DELTA

For more information contact Matt Westerfield at 601-984-1104 or mwesterfield@umc.edu.

JACKSON, Miss. – Students in the Sharkey/Issaquena-County area will begin a new school year next month with access to primary and oral health care provided by a multidisciplinary mobile clinic run by the University of Mississippi Medical Center's School of Nursing. The services will be made possible by a \$450,000 grant that has enabled the nursing school to expand its Mercy Delta Express project.

Since 2001, the MDE project has offered limited services and health fairs in the Mississippi Delta with the use of a bus donated to the School of Nursing by the Sisters of Mercy charity organization. The grant, awarded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, will allow the bus to be used as a fourth school-based clinic. The nursing school currently manages three health clinics at Johnson and Brown Elementary schools and Rowan Middle School in Jackson.

Dr. Lisa Haynie, professor of nursing and director of the MDE project, said it will be a long-term project.

"When school starts, we will begin at the Head Start in Mayersville where there is no health-care provider at all," she said. "Then every week we'll visit the elementary school and high school in Rolling Fork and the middle school in Anguilla. We'll be able to follow these kids through the electronic health record from beginning of school all the way through high school."

One of the poorest regions in the nation, the Mississippi Delta has been named a health-professional shortage area by the Mississippi State Department of Health. The area has higher rates of heart disease and diabetes than the rest of the state. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence of heart disease in the Delta is 83.5 percent higher than the rest of the nation.

The grant money will pay for supplies and staff for the clinic. Apart from Haynie, who will spend at least one day a week in the Delta, the mobile clinic will be staffed by a full-time nurse practitioner, a registered nurse, a health educator and an outreach liaison. Dr. Ollie Hardaway, a dentist who runs a clinic at Cary Christian Center in Sharkey County, will serve as a preceptor for UMMC dental students.

"The neat thing about this is we're also going to be a clinical site for students as well," Haynie said, explaining that the clinic will provide a rural training ground for medical school students and residents, dental students and nursing students.

"We're all coming together to meet the service mission of the Medical Center," she said. "And with the health disparities and access-to-care issues in the Delta, this is the perfect way to train our students because we can go to these kids."

If the project is successful, Haynie said it can be sustained indefinitely beyond the 18-month grant. She said the project was made possible by support from the faculty, dean

of the School of Nursing Dr. Kim Hoover, and Dr. James Keeton, vice chancellor for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine.

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The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. University of Mississippi Health Care represents the clinical programs of the Medical Center and includes University Hospitals and Health System and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's citizens. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at <http://info.umc.edu/>.