

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

GLOBAL OBESITY SUMMIT IN JACKSON ADDRESSES GROWING EPIDEMIC AT GROUND ZERO

- For a full schedule of events, visit <http://gos.umc.edu/>
- On Twitter, follow our Global Obesity Summit 2010 coverage: @ObesitySummit
- For more information contact Jack Mazurak at (601) 984-1970 or jmazurak@umc.edu.

JACKSON, Miss. – A summit that's both scientific conference and business policy forum aims to place Mississippi on the front lines of fighting obesity and related metabolic diseases such as diabetes.

The Global Obesity Summit 2010, sponsored by the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership, runs Nov. 9-11 at the Jackson Convention Complex.

Obesity and related cardiovascular and metabolic diseases are rapidly becoming our most important health problems as well as major economic challenges to health-care systems throughout the country. Mississippi currently leads the nation in obesity in adults as well as in children.

While several programs exist to address obesity in schools, communities and rural populations, Mississippi currently lacks an aggressive, coordinated strategy to expand obesity research, education, clinical treatment and prevention.

Featuring speeches and panel discussions with internationally renowned scientists from Yale University, the Imperial College London and Vanderbilt University, clinicians – including Dr. Kenneth Cooper of the Cooper Clinic and Cooper Institute in Dallas – national and state leaders – including **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius** – business luminaries and health-care and economic policymakers, the summit will spur discussion and debate among attendees about actions to address obesity in Mississippi and the nation.

The summit also marks the founding of UMMC's **Obesity, Metabolism and Nutrition Center**. Leaders plan to hire and train researchers for the new center who can investigate the mechanics of obesity and metabolic signaling. Already world-recognized in physiology research, UMMC also will continue expanding its investigations into the roles of hormones in obesity.

As is well documented, Mississippi leads the nation in obesity. Heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in the U.S., cancer, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes all are closely associated with obesity. Mississippi is a frontrunner in those diseases as well.

Dr. John Hall, UMMC associate vice chancellor for research and the driving force behind the new center, said Mississippi's high rate of obesity and linked diseases is the reason why the Medical Center should be at the forefront of investigating them.

"We are the place where these diseases have the greatest impact, so we also have the greatest opportunity for the study of these diseases," Hall said.

As a researcher and chairman of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, Hall and scientists in his lab have long investigated the hormone leptin, which is highly involved in regulating appetite and energy burn rate.

Obesity, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases rapidly have become critical health problems in

Mississippi as well as major challenges to the nation's health-care systems. The Centers for Disease Control reported in 2009 that 34.4 percent of adults in Mississippi were obese and 17 percent of children ages 2-19 were obese. Ten years prior, the state's adult obesity rate was less than 30 percent.

"American society has become 'obesogenic,' characterized by environments that promote increased food intake, non-healthy foods and physical inactivity. Policy and environmental change initiatives that make healthy choices in nutrition and physical activity available, affordable and easy will likely prove most effective in combating obesity," the CDC reported.

What's less widely appreciated is how the poor health of our state's workforce passes along hidden costs to businesses.

"The more unhealthy our workforce becomes, the more our costs of health care increase – costs which are already significant," said Duane O'Neill, chamber president and chief executive officer.

"Additionally, businesses lose productivity when employees are repeatedly absent to receive care for preventable diseases."

Reflecting its dual sponsorship by UMMC and the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership, the conference offers two tracks: a scientifically oriented set of panel discussions, lectures and talks, and a track for business, health-care industry, policy and public interest.

Business and community leaders involved with the summit include Blake Wilson, president of the Mississippi Economic Council; Amy Ayers, vice president of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Mississippi; Haley Fisackerly, president and CEO of Entergy Mississippi; Mayo Flint, president of AT&T Mississippi; Dr. Mary Currier, state health officer at the Mississippi Department of Health; and Dr. Jasmine Chapman, CEO of the Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center.

The conference is endorsed by the American Physiological Society, the Inter-American Society of Hypertension, the Council for High Blood Pressure Research of the American Heart Association, and the Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism of the American Heart Association.

Key speakers and events of the Global Obesity Summit 2010 will include:

- **Kathleen Sebelius**, secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will give the keynote address from 8-8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 11. She is a former two-term governor of Kansas and former chairwoman of the Democratic Governors Association. In her role at the DHHS, she oversees nationwide public-health initiatives, including the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Centers for Disease Control, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Defense Administration, the Office of the Inspector General and the Administration on Aging.
- **Dr. Kenneth Cooper**, known as the "Father of Aerobics," often is credited with pioneering preventive medicine. His 1968 book "Aerobics" promoted the exercise form and became a national best seller. He founded Cooper Aerobics, the parent company for a comprehensive group of health-care, lifestyle and wellness companies, including the Cooper Clinic. Those provide health care, preventive care, exercise instruction, weight loss services, counseling and programmatic assistance to individuals, businesses and industries. He also founded the Cooper Institute to promote research and education. Cooper will be the keynote speaker at the summit's banquet at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 10.

- **Karen Miller-Kovach**, chief scientific officer for Weight Watchers International and inventor of the Weight Watchers points system, will speak at 3:15 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 10. Her talk, "Addressing Obesity at Work: The Role of the Business Community," will speak directly to concerns of Mississippi's businesses. She also will join former **U.S. Sen. Trent Lott and Michael Espy**, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, at 10:30 a.m. for a panel discussion on federal policy on Thursday, Nov. 11.
- **Chef Luis Bruno** has served as executive chef to three Mississippi governors, owned a restaurant and written a cookbook and is a self-made spokesman for healthful living. After losing 200 pounds and reversing life-threatening health problems, he was commended in 2010 by the Mississippi Senate as an ambassador for healthy lifestyles. His program, "Cooking for Life with Chef Luis Bruno," airs on Mississippi Public Broadcasting. He is director of culinary development at the Hilton in Jackson, which operates the Huntington Grille, Fitzgerald's Lobby Bar and Wellington's Restaurant. Bruno will demonstrate some of his signature healthy cooking techniques, recipes and tips with a session, "Cooking from the Heart," from noon-1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 10.
- A video presentation by **William Jefferson Clinton**, 42nd president of the United States, will be shown at the banquet on Wednesday, Nov. 10.
- A video presentation by **Haley Barbour**, governor of Mississippi, will be shown at 8:15 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 10.
- **U.S. Sen. Roger F. Wicker** will give a keynote address at the summit's closing reception and dinner, "A Taste of Mississippi," at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 11, at the Mississippi Museum of Art.
- **U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson** will discuss the socioeconomics of obesity at noon on Thursday, Nov. 11.
- **Donna Richardson Joyner**, fitness guru, creator of the Body Gospel fitness program and member of the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, will speak during the lunch lecture beginning at noon on Thursday, Nov. 11.
- **Trent Lott**, former U.S. Senate majority leader, and **Michael Espy**, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, will participate in a panel discussion on federal policy from 10 a.m.-noon on Thursday, Nov. 11.
- **Dr. Dan Jones**, chancellor of the University of Mississippi, will give a keynote address at a breakfast from 8-8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Nov 11.

####

11/5/2010

Please forward this message to colleagues who might be interested. If you wish to be removed from this list or know of a colleague to add, send an e-mail message to:

LAGriffin@pubaffairs.umsmed.edu.

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/>.