

Improving Health in Mississippi



On February 28, 2018, the **Mississippi Urban Research Center (MURC)** hosted a forum on improving public health in Mississippi. The Forum's objectives were to examine challenges and barriers, and explore opportunities for improving public health outcomes in Mississippi. The backdrop for the forum was a study by Dr. Jin Zhang, evaluation specialist at MURC, and a pilot survey of a convenient sample of Jackson's residents. Dr. Sheila Davis, a licensed nurse practitioner, a retired professor of nursing from the University of Southern Mississippi, and a former member of the Institute of Medicine's Panel on the Uninsured, moderated the panel of healthcare professionals: Dr. Mario Azevedo (Dean, JSU College of Liberal Arts), Mrs. Ella Jackson (Executive Director, Abundant Living Community Organization), Ms. Falasha Reed (Head Nurse, G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center), Dr. Mohammad Shahbazi (Interim Dean, JSU School of Public Health), and Ms. Janice Sherman (CEO, Mississippi Primary Health Care Association). The forum offered insight and solutions to help decrease the high rates for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and other health conditions. Also, challenges to improving health conditions, the need for more proactive government interventions to ensure access to healthy foods and preventive care, and the use of alternative medical care (e.g. use of community health workers to provide regular and basic check-ups in underserved communities) were discussed. The event was covered by local TV news outlets, including MS News Now.