



**THE PARTNERSHIP
FOR A
HEALTHY MISSISSIPPI**

2015
ANNUAL REPORT





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MISSION STATEMENT



THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY MISSISSIPPI

The mission of The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi is to provide educational information and awareness about the impact of tobacco on Mississippi and to improve the culture of health in Mississippi by applying lessons learned in tobacco prevention to other leading causes of death and disease impacting our State and Nation. Our successes working with public and private organizations from across the state and around the nation have positioned us as a public health leader, which allows us to advance initiatives focused on improving health outcomes in Mississippi.

"Creating and promoting health and wellness in Mississippi"

BOARD LETTER



It is hard to believe that over seventeen years ago The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi was established as Mississippi's first tobacco prevention program. We have been and will continue to be at the forefront of tobacco prevention, education, enforcement and cessation. After a transition period, The Partnership has been poised to continue our health and wellness efforts in hundreds of communities across Mississippi.

Our partnership with the Mississippi State Department of Health Office of Tobacco Control has been one that we have forged into a health machine for reducing Mississippi's smoking rates and changing the culture of behavior in our youth. We have been fortunate to secure grants, donations and sponsorships from public and private entities to begin to see strides being made in our signature health and wellness programs like Just Have a Ball® and Just Have a Ball in the Garden.

More and more Mississippi cities and towns are not only becoming smoke-free (over 100 communities currently have comprehensive smoke-free ordinances), but the leaders in these communities across the state are becoming more health conscious about themselves and their constituent's overall well-being. Locally, across the state, new and innovative policies are being passed and implemented that are breaking the cycle of last place finishes for Mississippi. And this is something that we should all take pride in and shout loud about to our neighbors.

Although we have made tremendous strides over the past several years in reducing smoking rates and implementing other health initiatives, a new health crisis has arisen. The usage rate of other tobacco and nicotine products in the vaping category (e-cigarettes) and dissolvable alternatives (Snus) are at an alarming high and must be addressed. The Partnership has incorporated education about these products to our youth and will continue to do so as we have observed that youth are the key to making positive cultural changes in our state.

As the road to our twentieth year draws near, we will continue to look for innovative ways to implement healthy changes within our state and communities. The Partnership will strive to continue to seamlessly work with our many partners and seek new ones that will fortify our mission and strategy.

I would like to thank our many partners, students, leaders, and teachers who have been with us through the years to make Mississippi a healthier and more attractive state for our citizens and visitors. We look forward to making the next year the best year we have had in tobacco prevention and the overall health and wellness of our great state.

Sincerely,

Mike Moore

Chairman of the Board

Chairman

Mike Moore (Flowood)

Vice Chairman

John McCullouch (Ridgeland)

Secretary

Hursie Davis-Sullivan, MD (Jackson)

Treasurer

George Abraham, II MD (Vicksburg)

BOARD MEMBERS

Additional Members

George Payne (Vanceleave)

Mayor V.O. Smith (Collins)

Jayne Sargent, PhD (Jackson)

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As our seventeenth year comes to a close, we look back with a great sense of accomplishment on the work done by The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi. The kindergarteners who were first introduced to our beloved Terrance the RAT are now attending college. The Partnership has provided tobacco prevention information to over 1.6 million children to provide them with the resources to make healthier futures. As a result of this work, Mississippi's high school smoking rate has gone from 30.3% in 1998 to a historic low of 12.2% in 2014. The middle school rate has gone from 20.6% to 4.7%. Through it all, The Partnership has been there – whether in the classroom, the community, on social media, our health message is there. In addition to the work we do with the youth of our state, we also work directly with the communities in Madison, Yazoo and Holmes counties with one Mississippi Tobacco Free Coalition; as well as Leflore, Carroll and Humphries counties with another coalition.

The Partnership has been on the frontlines in communities all across our state to advocate for local smoke-free ordinances. To date, there are over 100 smoke-free communities (half of these include e-cigarettes) in our state and it all started with the tiny community of Metcalfe, MS, in 2002, which is a major step in only thirteen years. However, the percentage of Mississippi's population covered by these ordinances is only 30%. This is why we must continue to work towards a statewide, smoke-free air law so that all of our citizens are protected from the more than 7,000 deadly chemicals in secondhand smoke.

It is also good to look back on the work we have done in addressing the obesity crisis in our state over the last five years. Taking the valuable lessons learned from our successful tobacco prevention efforts, we have crafted programs and initiatives that are proving successful in obesity prevention as well. Our Just Have a Ball program surpassed the 25,000 mark for sports equipment and education given to school children throughout the state to encourage physical activity. We have worked with school health councils providing assistance to schools to aid them in assessing and addressing health issues at their school. We have worked with farmers and school food service directors to increase the availability of locally grown foods in the schools and improve the knowledge of students on the benefits of healthy eating. We have worked with grocers, community advocates, business leaders and policy makers to combat the lack of access to healthy food too many Mississippians face.

It is good to look back and feel we have made a difference; however, there is much left to do. As we look to the future, we have new challenges in tobacco prevention as we educate children on the dangers of e-cigarettes and other emerging products. The indicators of overall health and wellness in the state continue to be some of the unhealthiest in the nation. There is a long to-do list for all of us in the public health field. Fortunately, The Partnership is not afraid of a challenge and is passionately working to make Mississippi a healthier, better place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Shelson". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Sandra Shelson
Executive Director

REJECT ALL TOBACCO



Since the inception of The Partnership's youth programs in 1999, we have reached over 1.6 million school children across the state with tobacco prevention activities. Our approach to understanding what resonates with a 7 year old will not be the same as with a 15 year old has never waived over the years, but our delivery mechanisms have evolved with technology. Our interactive Terrance the Rat and the Reject All Tobacco program (RAT®) program for grades K-6, has undergone several updates to place Terrance in current situations with current trends so that he always is delivering his "You Better Tell Somebody" message in the current fad or culture identity of today's society. The dance troupe known as the RAT Pack® delivers health messages via tobacco-free songs and dance routines and has also evolved with the times. In fact, an entirely new set of songs and dance routines was introduced this school year!

During the 2014–2015 academic school year, the RAT program reached over 25,000 students with 75 interactive RAT Shows. Furthermore, there were over 2,900 RAT teams throughout the state (over 75,000 students) that are involved in monthly tobacco awareness activities in a classroom setting, after school and faith-based programs.

These educational and hands-on activities are a valuable resource for meeting several standards and time requirements for health education. The Mississippi State Department of Health Office of Tobacco Control and the Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalitions provide these resources and professional services at no cost to teachers:

- Age and grade appropriate classroom activity manuals for grades K-6
- Age and grade appropriate summer camp activity manuals for grades K-6
- Sign-up and end-of-year prizes for youth teams involved in classroom and summer camp programs
- Family resource guide for parents
- Terrance the RAT® and the RAT Pack® Live Show
- Dylan the Smokey Dragon Children's Book
- RAT music CD
- RAT website

The RAT program will kick off again in the 2015–2016 school year, so look for Terrance and the RAT Pack at a school near you.

RAT is funded by the Mississippi State Department of Health.



FREE

Generation FREE is Mississippi's youth-led movement against the tobacco industry! FREE is fueled by teens across the state of Mississippi, and the program allows young people to creatively express themselves through youth activism and advocacy.

The Generation FREE tobacco prevention program has been specifically designed for students in grades 7–12. A vital component of the program is the FREE youth team model through which youth earn incentives by participating in a variety of age-appropriate education, advocacy and activism activities that can be easily integrated into both classroom curricula and afterschool programs.

Generation FREE hosts special events throughout the year including L.E.A.D. (Leadership Engagement and Activism Development) Conferences for grades 9–12, iFLY (Inspiring Future Leaders Youth) Conferences for grades 7–8 as well as the FREEstyle Campaign, which reaches youth through interactive events at sporting events throughout the state. Each conference and/or event is created with input from FREE's 15-member Youth Advisory Board and has proven successful because we frame our messages and activities in a way that resonates with our target audience through voices who are in that specific group.

The 2014–2015 school year was a big success for Generation FREE. The L.E.A.D. conferences reached 1,376 students in grades 9–12 and the iFLY conferences educated nearly 800 students in grades 7–8. Generation FREE took a leap this year by increasing the number of conferences held by 50% to allow Mississippi youth to have access to FREE's tobacco prevention messaging. Over the course of 46 events, the FREEstyle Campaign reached nearly 6,000 youth in 17 counties.

Generation FREE is funded by the Mississippi State Department of Health.



YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD (YAB) MEMBERS

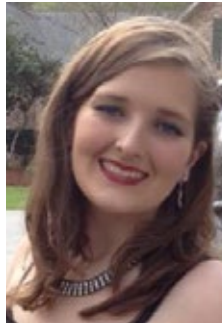
The Generation FREE Youth Advisory Board is comprised of 15 high school students across the state of Mississippi. The purpose of the Youth Advisory Board is to guide Generation FREE along a path that keeps its brand and messaging appealing to Mississippi youth. The board is also responsible for planning and executing all 12 youth conferences for 3,000 Mississippi youth from grades 7-8. For their efforts, each board member can earn up to a \$1,000 dollar scholarship per year of service.



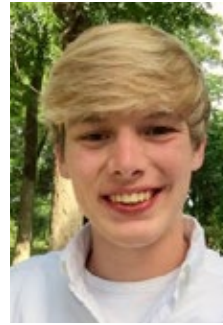
Jamie Abrams
New Summit School



Miesha Bure
Vicksburg HS



Shelby Coleman
Brookhaven Academy



Zachary Dale
Greene County HS



Samantha Dean
West Jones HS



Alexa Glissen
Falkner HS



Quintoria Ingram
Yazoo County HS



Michael James
Vicksburg HS



Alexandria Jones
Mantachie HS



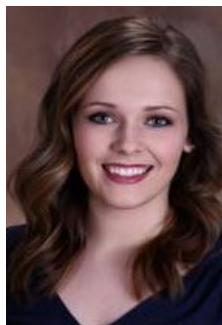
Bryce Moore
Gulfport HS



Jessica Richardson
Puckett Attendance Center



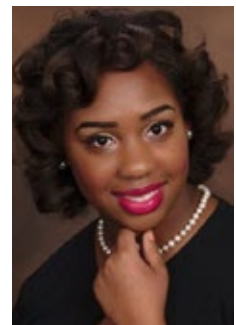
Gabrielle Simpson
Mantachie HS



Jamie Sproles
Brookhaven HS



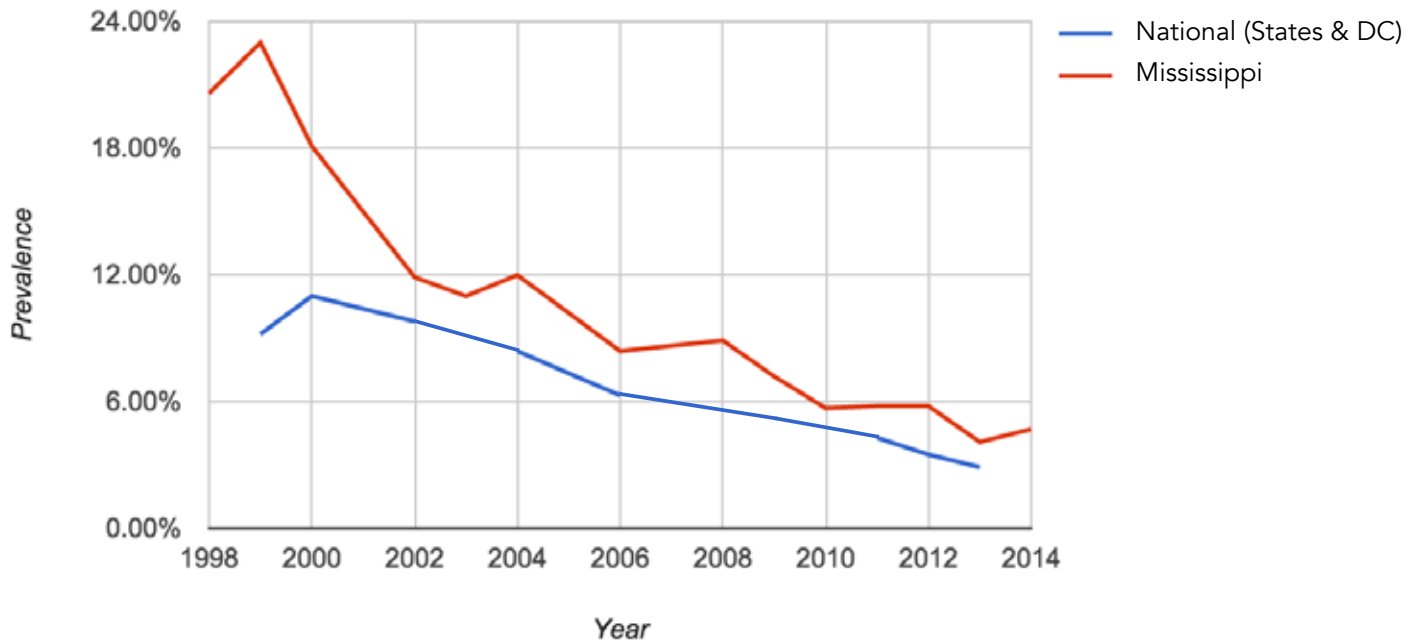
Pablo Williams
Jim Hill HS



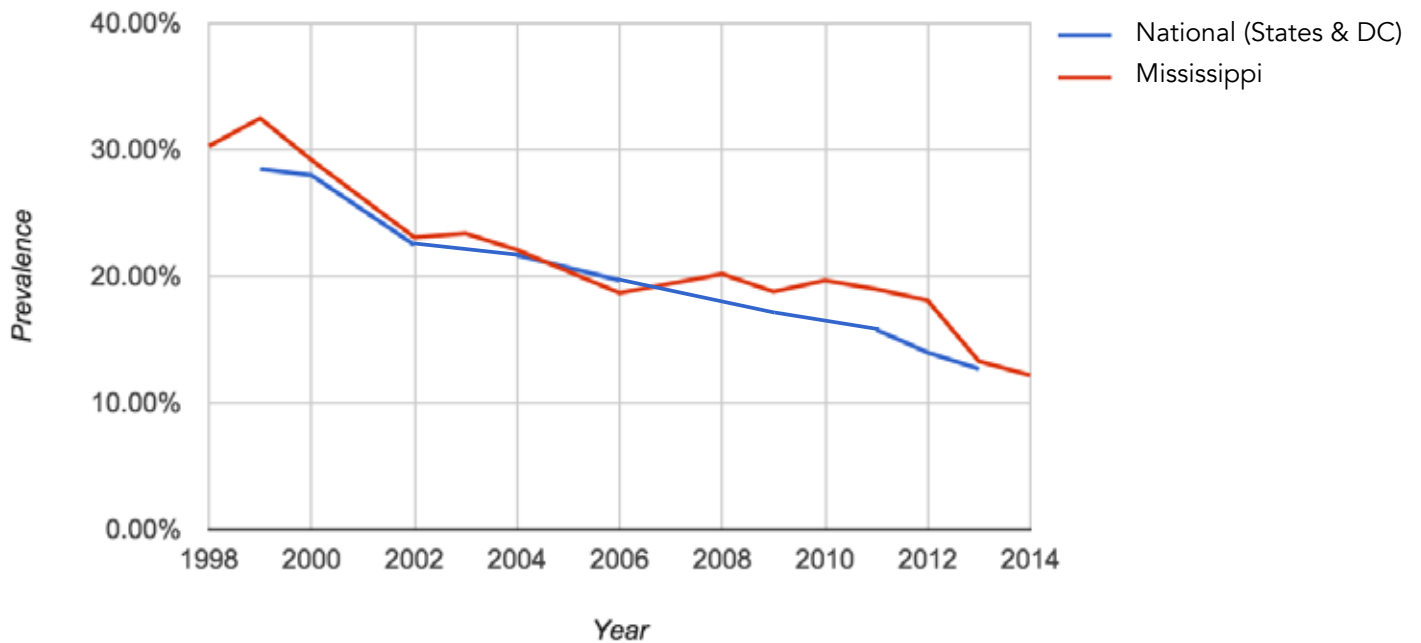
Victoria Williams
Jim Hill HS

CURRENT YOUTH SMOKING RATES

Middle School Current Smoking NYTS vs. MS YTS



High School Current Smoking - NYTS vs. MS YTS



MISSISSIPPI TOBACCO-FREE COALITIONS



Throughout Mississippi's 82 Counties, Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalitions work to reduce tobacco-related diseases and death by educating all Mississippians about the dangers of tobacco and secondhand smoke, and by promoting cessation services. The Coalitions provide assistance to Mississippi communities in working towards comprehensive smokefree ordinances. The Partnership serves as the Fiscal agent for the Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalition of Madison, Yazoo and Holmes Counties and Leflore, Humphreys and Carroll Counties.

The 2014–2015 grant year was a huge success for both coalitions. The coalitions have a strong membership with over 215 members from various sectors of the community that assist in promoting their goals and mission. In a public health effort to educate Mississippians about the dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke, the coalition worked closely with coalition members and other public health advocates to pass four comprehensive smoke free ordinances in Sidon, Isola, Lexington and Pickens. These efforts helped Mississippi lead the nation in passing comprehensive policies in 2014–2015. Currently, there are over 100 smoke free cities that protect 30% of citizens in Mississippi from exposure to secondhand smoke. The comprehensive smokefree air policies protect individuals in all public places, including workplaces.

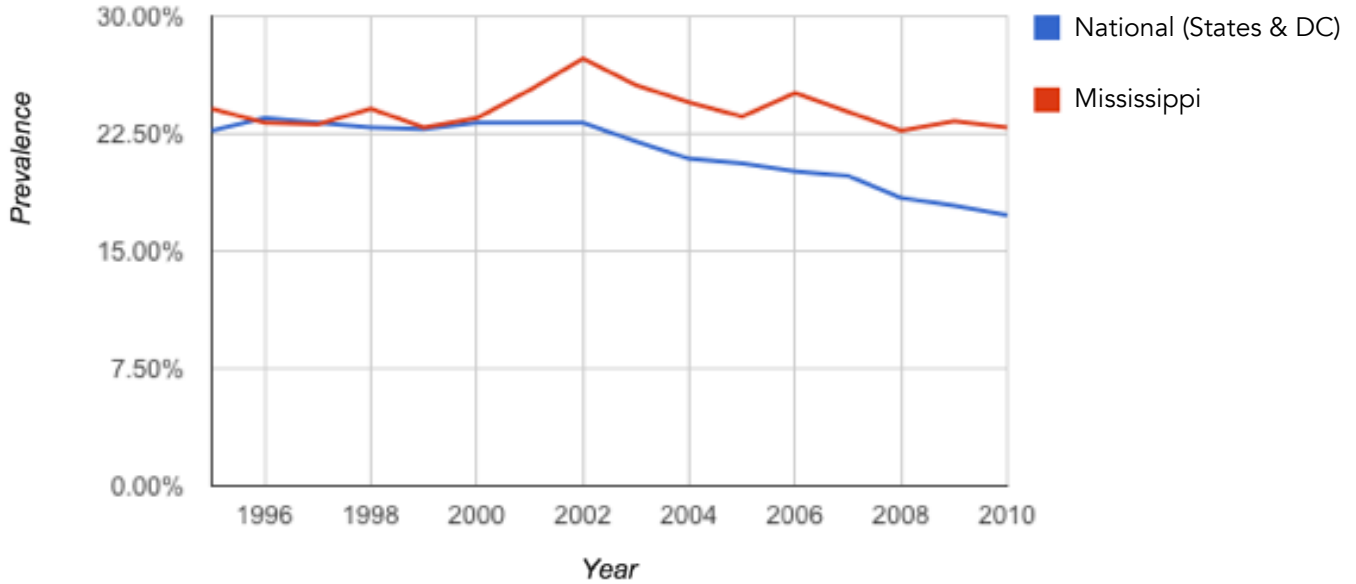
The coalitions reached over 4,800 students through 142 Reject All Tobacco (RAT) and Generation FREE teams. The coalitions' grassroots efforts exceeded expectations with over 600 awareness and cessation events held throughout the six counties reaching thousands of adults and youth. The Care for Their Air program educates parents and caregivers on the harmful effects of tobacco use especially to babies. Throughout the year, the coalitions held fourteen events in head start and daycare centers. Other tobacco control activities include Merchant Identification Training and Multi Housing Unit awareness events.

The Mississippi Tobacco-free Coalitions partner with a number of health advocacy organizations in Mississippi, including the American Lung Association, the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. The Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalitions are funded by a grant from the Mississippi State Department of Health. Please join our effort to promote healthy living and tobacco free policies in Mississippi. Consider becoming a coalition member by visiting our website, www.tobaccofreems.org.

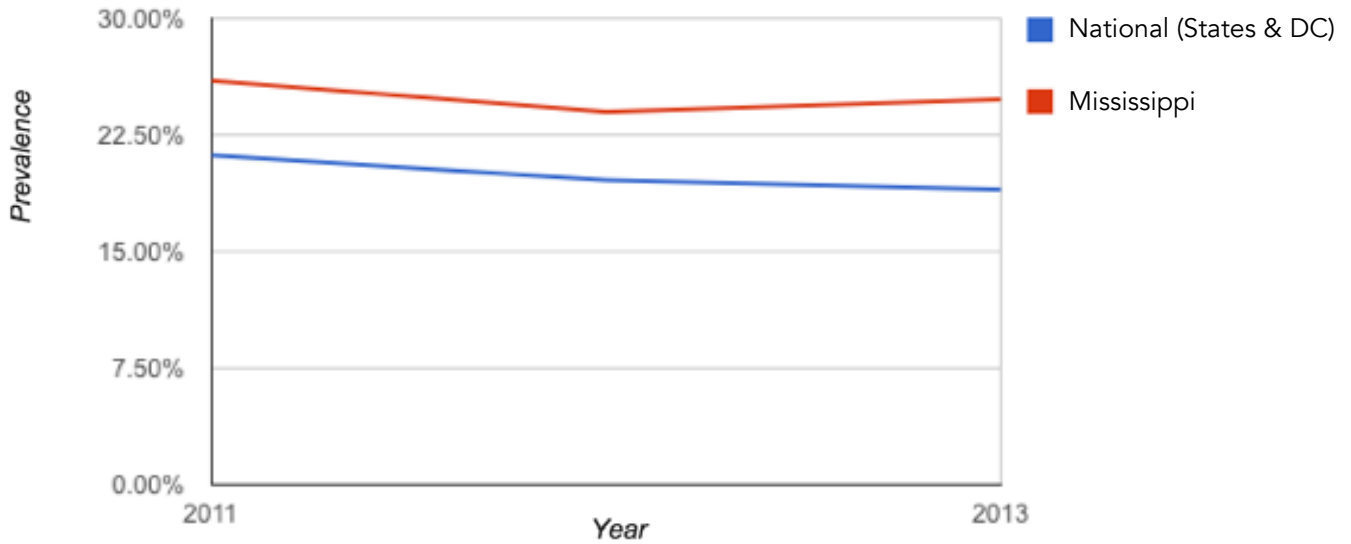


CURRENT ADULT SMOKING RATES

Current Cigarette Smoking - BRFSS US vs. MS



Current Cigarette Smoking - BRFSS US vs. MS



ADVOCACY

Advocacy and government relations have always been a crucial component in The Partnership's comprehensive approach to positively impacting health outcomes. Since 2012, The Partnership has collaborated with like-minded organizations to advocate for and see the passage of several significant and meaningful laws regarding the health of Mississippians.

We have focused much of our work around healthy food access in underserved communities, and have assisted with the passage of policies such as allowing county and municipal governments to donate funds to farmers markets. The Partnership has worked tirelessly on healthy food financing initiatives for more than four years. These initiatives set up funding mechanisms within local and state governments that offer grants and loans to grocery retailers, convenience stores and farmers markets who locate, upgrade or renovate property and/or equipment in underserved communities. During the 2014 Mississippi Legislative Session, a healthy food financing initiative was passed entitled, "The Small Business and Grocer Investment Act." The structure for the initiative is in place but the legislature did not place any funding into it. The Partnership will continue to work on creating a stronger law with funding in the future.

We have continued to work with our partners to pass a statewide, comprehensive, smokefree air ordinance in all public places. However, we have yet to be successful in this manner. Locally, Mississippi communities are leading the way with passing local comprehensive, smokefree ordinances. In fact, in four out of the last five years, Mississippi has received the National Smokefree Challenge Award from American's for Non-Smoker's Rights for passing the most local ordinances per year. To date, Mississippi has passed over 100 local ordinances in our state. We look forward to working with local Mississippi Tobacco Free Coalitions and the Mississippi State Department of Health Office of Tobacco Control to continue to pass not only local ordinances but to finally make Mississippi a smokefree state for all of our citizens.



100% Smoke-free COMMUNITIES in Mississippi

UPDATED | JULY 2015

There
are

103

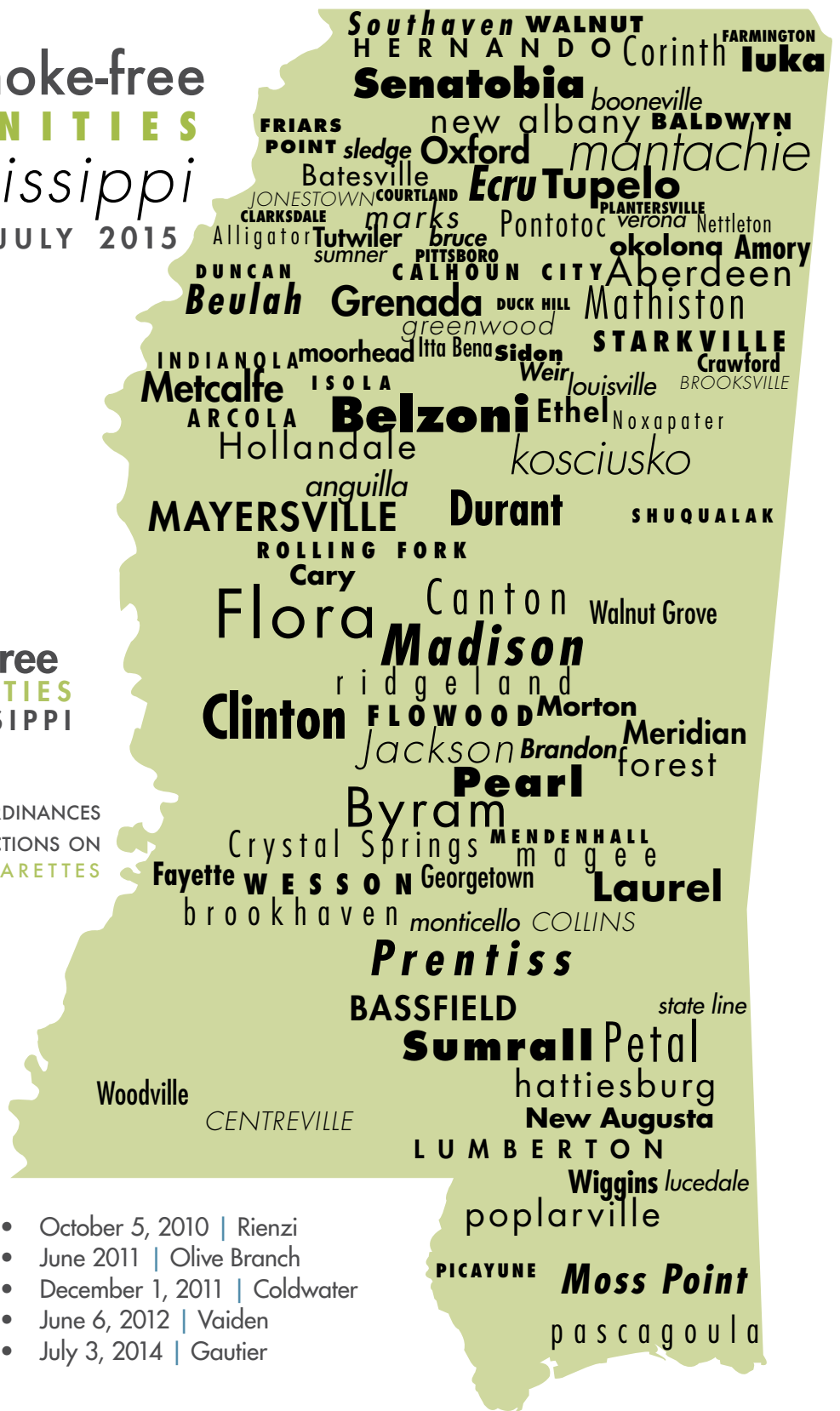
Smoke-Free
COMMUNITIES
IN MISSISSIPPI

*53 OF WHICH HAVE ORDINANCES
THAT INCLUDE RESTRICTIONS ON
ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Partial Smoke-free COMMUNITIES in Mississippi

- August 6, 1996 | West
- October 2007 | Greenville
- November 15, 2007 | McComb
- January 10, 2008 | Summit
- May 1, 2008 | Gulfport
- July 31, 2008 | Walls
- January 6, 2010 | Columbus
- June 3, 2010 | Goodman

- October 5, 2010 | Rienzi
- June 2011 | Olive Branch
- December 1, 2011 | Coldwater
- June 6, 2012 | Vaiden
- July 3, 2014 | Gautier



ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD



The Partnership applied for and received grant funding from Voices for Healthy Kids in 2014. Voices for Healthy Kids is an initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through the American Heart Association with six health policy priorities: Smart School Foods, Healthy Drinks, Food Access, Marketing Matters, Active Places and Active Kids Out of School.

Because of our experience and extensive work in Healthy Food Financing (a mechanism that offers low interest loans and/or grants to established grocers interested in locating and/or renovating a building to offer access to healthy, fresh and nutritious foods in underserved areas), The Partnership was awarded funds under the Food Access policy priority. The Partnership followed the model that has proven successful in the past for passing health policy initiatives. Field coordinators were hired to cover specific parts of the state to educate the public on Healthy Food Financing and to build a groundswell of grassroots support for the initiative. This, coupled with a collaborative lobbying effort between The Partnership and The American Heart Association, the 2014 Mississippi Legislature passed the Small Business and Grocer Investment Act (SBGIA).

The SBGIA provides, to the extent funds are available, a dedicated source funding for healthy food retailers who operate in underserved communities. During the 2015 Mississippi Legislative session, The Partnership utilized renewed funds from Voices for Healthy Kids, partnered with other advocates to seek for funding for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative; remove pre-emption language that would prohibit state funding; and extend the repeal date beyond 2016. Field coordinators continued their efforts of building grassroots support in key communities in the Mississippi Delta and along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Our efforts in the session fell short for funding of the SBGIA. The Partnership will continue with Healthy Food Financing funding and education while searching for new ways to bring healthy food access to underserved communities across Mississippi.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS



Using lessons learned from our work in tobacco prevention, The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi created the Health and Wellness Division in 2010, with the purpose of raising awareness, implementing meaningful programs and educating schools and their surrounding communities about preventative measures regarding Mississippi's childhood obesity epidemic. Starting with a blank page, the division focused on nutrition education and physical activity-related initiatives, and since then have expanded to school health, Farm to School, and established and maintains the statewide obesity coalition, Mississippians for Health and Wellness. We are pleased to share with you some of the work we have completed and are still engaged in through funds from The Partnership as well as several generous private donations and grants.



During the 2014-2015 school year, The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi provided its HERO Fuel Up to Play 60 program to nearly 700 students in Holmes County. The program merged The Partnership's HERO program with the National Football League and National Dairy Council founded program, Fuel Up to Play 60. Combining the two programs enabled The Partnership to provide William Dean Jr. Elementary School with a variety of nutrition and physical activity habits.

Over the course of the school year, students received eight different physical activity and/or nutrition activities. These activities ranged from group wide yoga sessions to a milk mustache contest that encouraged students to try different flavors of low-fat milk. The Partnership also provided our signature program, Just Have a Ball®, to all students which allowed each student to take home a playground ball for additional physical activity opportunities at home. Parents received a workshop that provided education on how to read a food label and how to shop healthy on a budget.

This program was funded by the Walmart Foundation.





JUST HAVE A BALL



Just Have a Ball® (JHAB), PHM's childhood obesity awareness program, aims to increase children's time spent being physically active through increased play activity, resulting in reduced childhood obesity rates through the program's educational awareness presentation and its school-based fitness program. JHAB demonstrates the role of play as a natural way for children to be physically active, and educates elementary-aged students on the importance of healthy nutrition. Once the program has concluded, a playground ball is given to each child to keep, which promotes play and exercise in their home environments, increases the potential for social interaction, and overall improved health and wellness through increased daily physical activity. Through the JHAB awareness presentation and fitness program, students are educated about the benefits of living a healthy and active lifestyle. The playground balls distributed to each student to keep and take home are a way to encourage continued physical activity and play outside of the designated and structured times allotted during the school day or week.

In a February 2015 brief, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released the report, "*Declining Childhood Obesity Rates: Where Are We Seeing Signs of Progress?*" Included in the report is the exciting news that Mississippi has reported a 6% percent decline in overweight and obesity among children in grades K-5. One key factor that is noted for this success is strong collaboration, which across the state has shown positive results in creating and sustaining successful statewide initiatives. Mentioned in the brief is the current partnership between The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, and Subway Restaurants, stating;

"Led by the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, the Just Have a Ball program engages elementary school students in a playful, interactive assembly about the importance of eating healthy and being active. To date, more than 20,000 children across the state have participated and received a playground ball of their own to take home. With funding from the UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Mississippi and Subway Restaurants, the program will reach another 6,000 children in 2014-2015."

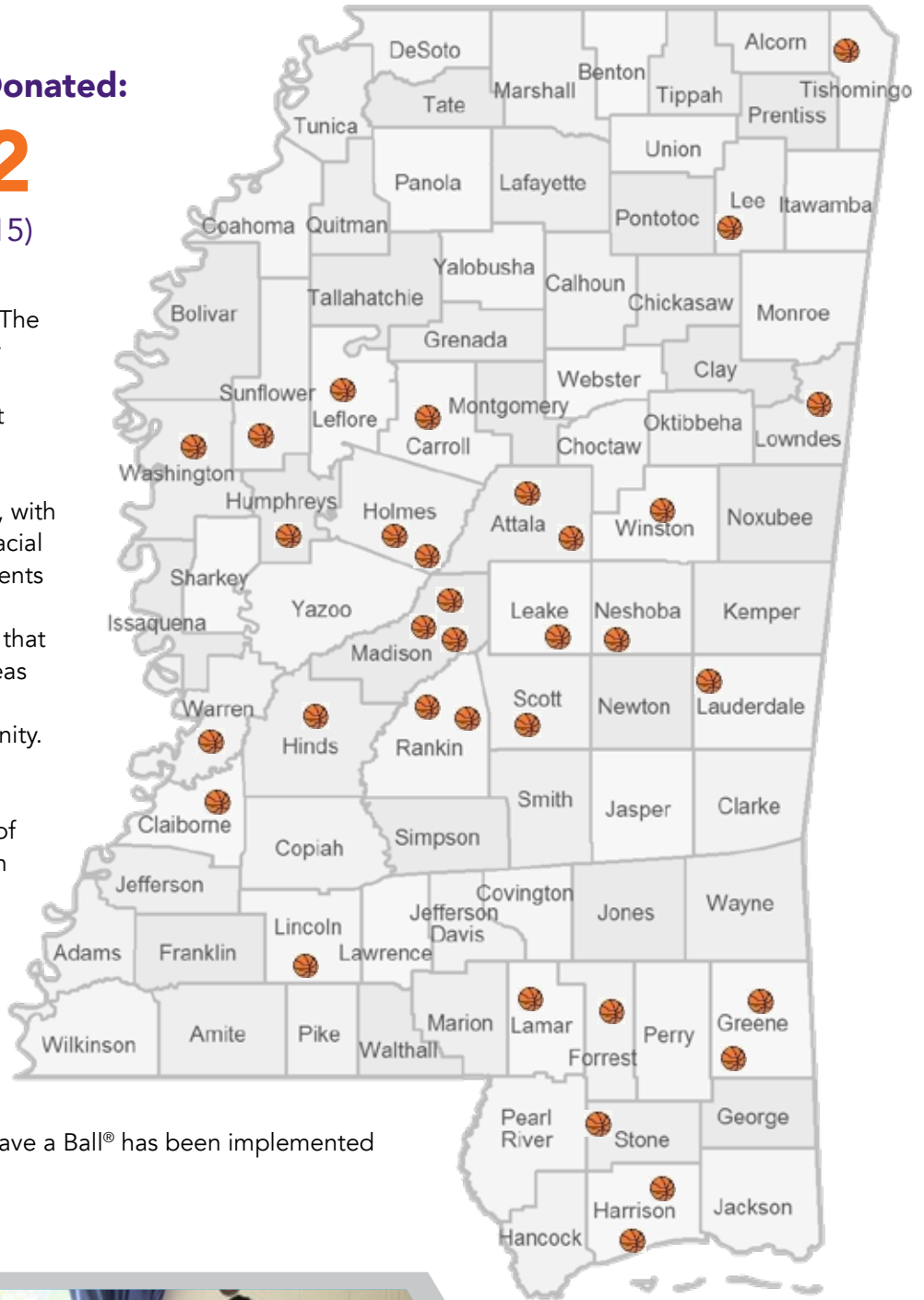



Total Number of Balls Donated:

 **26,462**
(through May 2015)

For the 2014-2015 academic year, The Partnership partnered with Subway Restaurants and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan to implement Just Have a Ball. A total of 24 schools were selected by Subway and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, with schools being selected based on racial demographics, percentage of students enrolled in National School Lunch Program (NSLP), as well as schools that are located in Direct Marketing Areas (DMA) of Subway with restaurants located within the schools' community.

PHM was successful in presenting to 5,922 students across the state of Mississippi, in 24 schools located in 22 counties.



 Represents cities where Just Have a Ball® has been implemented since 2010.



COMBATING CHILDHOOD OBESITY



During the 2012-2013 school year, The Partnership piloted its School Health Council Technical Assistance Project into 17 schools across the state. The pilot was developed based on the knowledge that the Mississippi Healthy Students Act requires all schools in Mississippi to have an active and functioning school health council. The project provides hands on assistance in forming school health councils at individual schools. It also provides technical assistance guiding councils through the Center for Disease Control's School Health Index, which is a self-assessment and planning tool used by schools to improve their health and safety policies and programs. The components of the School Health Index are directly aligned with the components in the Mississippi Healthy Students Act mandate. While completing the School Health Index, staff and students are encouraged to work together to identify strengths and weaknesses related to health in their schools, and find and implement achievable solutions.

The Partnership's pilot project was evaluated by Mississippi State University Social Science Research Center. The evaluation results showed that this pilot proved to be an effective project which significantly improved council functionality, activity, meetings, and task assignments amongst the council. Because the pilot project was such a success, The Partnership has continued its project throughout the years. In the 2014-2015 school year, The Partnership was funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation implemented technical assistance into 25 new school health councils in Hinds County, East Biloxi, and Sunflower County areas. These schools are currently working to complete Year One benchmarks of the project, and will begin Year Two benchmarks of the project in the 2015-2016 school year. Also in the 2015-2016 school year, The Partnership will recruit an additional 20 schools to participate in the Year One benchmarks of the project.



The Mississippians for Health and Wellness Coalition (MSHW) serves as the statewide coalition for addressing policy, prevention, and management issues related to obesity with a goal of promoting positive health initiative efforts across the state in the most unified, effective and non-redundant manner with the overall goal of reducing the prevalence of obesity in Mississippi. Because of the undeniable correlation between chronic disease and obesity, the Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Preventative Health, and The Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi have partnered to promote this statewide effort, which is necessary to successfully combat the prevalence of obesity in the state; in turn decreasing the prevalence of chronic disease.

MSHW hosts meetings throughout the state on a quarterly basis, which allows greater participation at a statewide level. During the 2014-2015 grant period, the coalition met in Oxford, Flowood, Natchez, and Jackson. Hosting meetings in a variety of locations throughout the state gives coalition members the opportunity to experience first hand health and wellness initiatives from across the state and outside of their communities. To date, the MSHW Coalition has a membership base of 381 participants from entities throughout the state, representing non-profit organizations, state agencies, public and private sector business, and other professional organizations. Coalition members have the opportunity to participate in one of more of MSHW's pillar work groups. These work groups allow for collaboration in specific obesity-related areas and include: physical activity, nutrition, schools, and worksite wellness.

USDA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

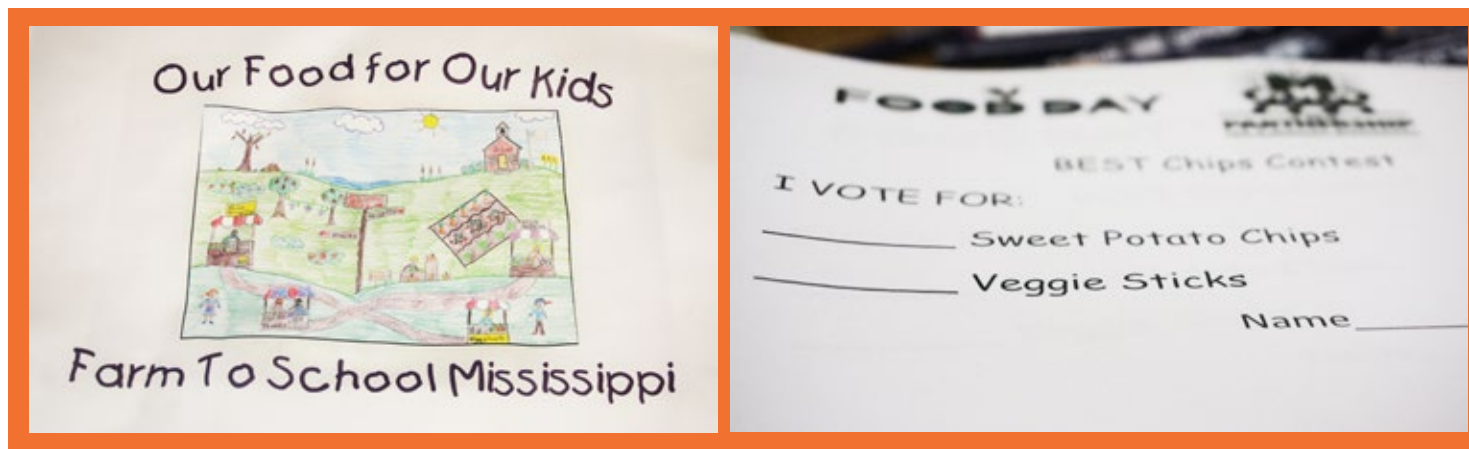


The Partnership has been working on Farm to School policy initiatives for several years, while at the same time, applying for programmatic Farm to School grants in order to assist the Farm to School movement in the state.

During the 2014–2015 school year, The Partnership received a Farm to School grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). We “hit the streets” to educate growers, consumers and students about Farm to School (locally grown foods sold by farmers to schools for student consumption) by visiting farmers’ markets across the state and speaking with over 100 farmers and interested individuals; holding three regional trainings in Oxford, Goodman and Jackson; disseminating over 5,000 pieces of USDA developed educational materials and organizing Farm to School taste testing opportunities which impacted over 2,900 students in schools around the state.

Farmers who participate in Farm to School by selling their products to an entire school district must receive “Good Handling Practices” and “Good Agricultural Practices” certifications from the Mississippi State Department of Agriculture and Commerce. These certification programs can be expensive for small farmers. Through the Farm to School grant, The Partnership was able to give eight farmers reimbursements for these certifications making it less expensive and easier for them to sell fresh, healthy and nutritious local foods to school districts.

At The Partnership, we strive to make health education fun to those we distribute our programs and materials. This includes creating a garden curriculum, “Just Have a Ball in the Garden,” and contests for school children to be involved. Two contests for Farm to School included a statewide Farm to School coloring contest with the winner’s design being used for the artwork of a recyclable grocery bag; and a social media contest on Facebook. These two contests reached 500 schools and 400 students, respectively. We are grateful to the USDA for funding us for two years to implement a plethora of Farm to School programs across the state. As we continue this work and build up a database of supporters (well over 100 individuals currently), look for us in your area of the state and ask how you can be a part of this important initiative.



Winning grocery bag design



THE PARTNERSHIP
FOR A HEALTHY MISSISSIPPI

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