



For Release to the Media
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A-State Social Work Department To Hold Delta Health Disparities Conference

JONESBORO — A Delta Health Disparities Conference designed to identify tools to combat poverty and address health issues in the Delta region will be held Wednesday, Nov. 12, on the third floor of the Carl R. Reng Student Union, 101 N. Caraway Road, on the Arkansas State University campus.

The conference, open to the public, features individual workshop sessions to address different health issues in the Delta and how to battle them. Chris Masingill, the federal co-chairman of the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), is the keynote speaker and will discuss how the regional authority helps to create jobs, build communities and improve lives for the 10 million people who live in the eight states and 252 counties of the Delta region.

Dr. Susan Hanrahan, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions, and interim dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science at Arkansas State University, will have opening remarks.

Conference activities get underway with registration at 8:30 a.m. in the Heritage Plaza Lounge in the student union, followed by a free continental breakfast. Participants can pick up a health passport to visit various workshop and health stations. All station visits will earn a stamp for the passport holder. A completed health passport may be eligible for a chance to win one of over \$2,000 in prizes and gift cards during live drawings at the closing recognition.

Also, those attending can visit free health screening stations to pick up free materials about health education. St. Bernards Medical Center community wellness programs will provide results of height, weight, body mass index and blood pressure/pulse tests. A fasting lab workstation will be available for testing total cholesterol, anemia, and glucose tests. Participants planning to go to this station must be fasting for lab results to be accurate, which means no food or drink six hours prior to lab draw. Water intake is encouraged.

Other health passport stations include stress screening, alcohol and drug screening, depression screening, diabetes screening, and free STD/HIV testing. HIV testing courtesy of the Arkansas Department of Health and the North Arkansas Regional AIDS Network (NARAN). All day free HIV testing locations include the Spring River room (three stations), the Pine Tree Room and 1909 Suite.

A silent auction will be held throughout the day with opportunities to place bids until 3 p.m. Proceeds from the silent auction will fund a social work HIV/AIDS internship scholarship at Arkansas State University.

Conference workshops cover a variety of topics regarding health care initiatives, including obesity in the Delta, breaking the cycle of poverty, historical perspectives of rural black women's health care issues, improving pregnancy outcomes in the Delta and others.

Guest speakers and faculty members will also hold sessions on eliminating child abuse and reducing trauma, health disparities among homeless youth in the Delta, breast cancer risk in the Delta, support for caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's, and how to develop healthy relationships and practice safe sex.

Masingill was appointed by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2010. He has extensive experience in developing strategic connections between the public and private sectors to achieve economic and community development results.

Prior to leading the Delta Regional Authority, Masingill served the state of Arkansas as Governor Mike Beebe's director of intergovernmental affairs and as the Arkansas Recovery Implementation director for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which totaled over \$2 billion in Arkansas.

Masingill has placed a greater emphasis on supporting small business and entrepreneurship ventures as well as investing in workforce training efforts and increasing access to quality, affordable health care. In more than four years with the Delta Regional Authority, Masingill has worked with the governors of the eight Delta states to leverage \$34.6 million in DRA investments into nearly \$1 billion in private and other public sector investment. These investments are helping to create and retain more than 8,500 jobs and to train 23,000 workers for 21st-century jobs.

Masingill's focus on addressing health access challenges for rural communities has led to more than \$3.2 million in DRA investments leveraging another \$24 million for community-based health infrastructure. Additionally, under Masingill's leadership, the DRA has strengthened its partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense to expand the Innovative Readiness Training program that has provided medical care to 30 communities. This year, medical care reached 50,000 patients in the Delta region.

To register for the conference, go to <http://www.astate.edu/college/conhp/departments/social-work/delta-health/> or contact Dr. Kat Carrick, assistant professor of social work, at (870) 972-3596 or through email at krcarrick@astate.edu.

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