

# Stay Healthy!

Mississippi Coalition of Partners in Prevention Newsletter



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Issue 11

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## Members:

Alcorn State University  
Delta State University  
East Central Community College  
East Mississippi Community College  
Hinds Community College  
Holmes Community College  
Jackson State University  
Jones County Junior College  
Meridian Community College  
Mississippi Delta Community College  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi University for Women  
Mississippi Valley State University  
Northeast Mississippi Community College  
Northwest Mississippi Community College  
Pearl River Community College  
Rust College  
Southwest Mississippi Community College  
University of Mississippi  
University of Southern Mississippi

## Predictors of Student Flourishing

During this academic year, MCPP has undergone several exciting changes. Perhaps the most significant is the decision to broaden the scope of work to include the education of Mississippi's college students in all areas of health. The new mission statement explains this goal: *MCPP proactively addresses the prevention of high-risk, negative health behaviors on Mississippi campuses by providing high-quality consultation and training, research support, and policy development to our member institutions. We actively seek partnerships with state and community agencies in order to provide campuses with a variety of resources to support their prevention efforts.*

Mental health-related issues affect Mississippi college students, and it is important to work as a team, not only with others on our individual campuses but statewide, to provide a place where students can thrive as they grown and learn. Fink (2014) identified supportive college environments, students' sense of belonging, professional confidence, and civic engagement as the predictors of positive mental health outcomes in the college environment (p. 380). His work drew upon Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) college impact theory and Astin's (1993) Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) model. Fink (2014) used Keyes' (2002; 2007) mental health continuum to operationalize mental health, which includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being (p. 381).

The author said that students individual characteristics and experiences in college contribute to their mental health (Fink, 2014, p. 381). Fink (2014) hypothesized that factors related to alcohol use, social support, engaged learning, and civic engagement would predict whether college students flourish in their environments (p. 382). The following environmental variables predicted students' score on the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) when all other individual characteristic and institutional environment predictors were held constant:

- Ease with social transition to college
- A socially supportive residence hall climate
- Professional confidence
- A sense of belonging
- Civic engagement (Fink, 2014, p. 385).

This study examined positive mental health outcomes for students, and Fink (2014) stated that administrators can promote good mental health through high-impact practices of student learning and engagement, such as living-learning communities (LLPs) (p. 386). These create socially supportive environments through interactions with other students, promote a sense of belonging, civic engagement, and self confidence. Also, first-year interest groups (FIGs) promote student flourishing, as they create a cohort of students across a series of linked courses during the difficult time of transition to university life (Fink, 2014, p. 387).

Finally, Fink's (2014) research can provide guidance for all faculty members and student affairs administrators to work together to create programs, whether LLPs, FIGs or others, which incorporate high-impact practices of engagement to facilitate learning. Engaging students as soon as they arrive on campus (and keeping them engaged) may enable a greater number to become entrenched in the college environment and help them, not only to persist to graduation, but to develop skills, which will have a positive impact on their lives for years to come.

Of Note: Fink (2014) found that multiple measures of engaged learning were not found to predict mental health. Could this be due to students becoming "overcommitted" and perhaps overwhelmed?

**Fink, J.E. (2014). Flourishing: Exploring predictors of mental health within the college environment. *Journal of American College Health*, 62(6), 380-388.**

## Find Us Online

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## Binge Drinking Affects Immune System

Afshar et al. (2015) studied the effects of binge drinking on the immune system. Based on weight, participants took either four or five shots of vodka. Researchers tested their immune system activity through blood samples at 20 minutes, two hours, and five hours after peak intoxication. The intervals were chosen because these are times when intoxicated patients typically arrive at trauma centers for treatment of alcohol-related injuries. Afshar et al. (2015) found:



- At 20 minutes after reaching peak intoxication, participants showed increased immune system activity. There were higher levels of three types of white blood cells (leukocytes, monocytes, and natural killer cells), as well as proteins that signal the body's defenses to ramp up.
- At two hours and five hours, the opposite happened. There were fewer monocytes and natural killer cells, as well as higher levels of different cytokines that signal one's immune system to become less active than when a person is sober. In short, "binge drinking significantly disrupts immune systems" (Gregoire, 2014).

As cold and flu season rages on, this is an important message to share with students who may not think a night out can lead to an increased risk of getting sick.

**Afshar, M., Richards, S., Mann, D., Cross, A., Smith, G.B., Netzer, G., ... Hasday, J. (2015). Acute immunomodulatory effects of binge alcohol ingestion. *Alcohol*, 49(1), 57-64. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.alcohol.2014.10.002>**

**Binge drinking disrupts immune system in young adults, Loyola researcher finds. (2014, December 26). Retrieved from <http://loyolamedicine.org/newswire/news/binge-drinking-disrupts-immune-system-young-adults-loyola-researcher-finds>**

**Gregoire, C. (2014, December 30). Binge drinking 'significantly' disrupts 20-somethings' immune systems: Study. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/30/binge-drinking-immune-system\\_n\\_6395506.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/30/binge-drinking-immune-system_n_6395506.html)**

## Timely Topic: MCPP Committee Update

Have a question or an idea? Below are the current members of MCPP committees. These folks are always looking for additional help, so please let us know if you are available.

- **Media Campaign Committee:** Erin Cromeans, University of Mississippi
- **Workshops Committee:** Aime Anderson, Northwest Mississippi Community College and Velesha Williams, Metro Jackson Community Prevention Coalition
- **Publication Committee:** Jodi Ryder and Katie Sheridan, University of Southern Mississippi
- **QPR Training Committee:** Tony Montgomery and LaPari Morant, East Mississippi Community College; Katie Cranston, Mississippi University for Women

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to MCPP!

## Billboards

Two billboards with an alcohol and drug abuse prevention message are currently running in the Macon and Meridian areas until the end of March. If you are in the region, keep an eye out for them!



## What's Happening at Your School?

### Alcorn State University: Substance Abuse Prevention Grant

Alcorn State University was recently awarded a Substance Abuse Prevention Grant through the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. Mr. Khary Ratliff, a native of Port Gibson and an alumnus of Alcorn State University was hired in December 2014 as Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator. Dyann Moses, director of the Counseling and Testing Center at Alcorn serves as the Project Director.

On January 30 prior to the Super Bowl, Mr. Ratliff visited several vendors in Port Gibson, requesting permission to place stickers on cartons of alcoholic beverages. The sticker simply states "Know the LAW! It is ILLEGAL to purchase or provide alcohol for anyone under 21." This is an initiative through Mississippians Advocating Against Unhealthy Decisions (MAAUD) Coalition sponsored by Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Department of Mental Health, Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse.



MAAUD Prevention Stickers

### Mississippi State University: Alcohol & You

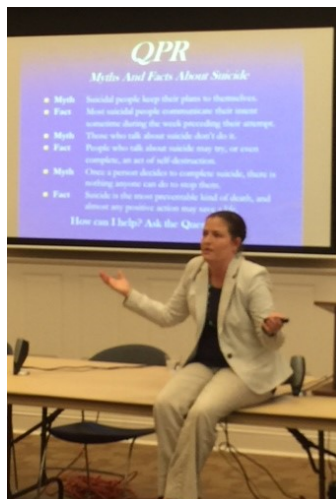
The Department of Health Education and Wellness has been off to a great start this semester with an abundance of program requests in the areas of alcohol and drug prevention. On January 28 Jodi Dunnan presented "College Drinking: Alcohol and You" to over 125 students in an Intro to Biochemistry class. Programs like this one will continue throughout the semester.

### Mississippi University for Women: Health Fair

This semester MUW will host its annual community health fair. As with previous years, vendors from the surrounding area provide free or discounted information and/or services such as blood pressure, BMI, cholesterol, hearing, grip strength and flexibility screenings to participants from the campus and surrounding community. Among the vendors will be MUW Public Health Education interns, who will be providing participants with information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, T.K. Martin, and Habitat for Humanity, which they will later use to begin researching handicap accessibility on campus.

### Northwest Mississippi Community College: QPR Training

Northwest was honored to host QPR training followed by two exciting workshops in January. Approximately 30 participants attended the training and workshops that were held on the Senatobia campus. Northwest is focusing on training and program implementation for their next preventative challenge – preventing unplanned pregnancies and STDs.



Kim Kavalsky Presenting QPR