

Tulane SPHTM to study effects of healthy kids beverage ordinance

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In January of 2023, New Orleans became the first city in the Deep South to implement a [law requiring restaurants to offer health beverages](#) as the default with children's meals.

The [Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#) aims to discover the effectiveness and reach of the ordinance, thanks to a grant recently awarded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The 5-year, \$2.3 million funded study, “Evaluation of New Orleans Healthy Kids’ Beverage Menu Ordinance” is a joint effort with Xavier University that will examine implementation efforts throughout the area to curb childhood obesity through the ordinance.

The grant is administered through the NIH Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Institute.

[Dr. Melissa Fuster](#), associate professor in the [Department of Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences](#), and SPHTM graduate Dr. Megan Knapp of Xavier will be the principal investigators for the study. Drs. Diego Rose and Charles Stoecker will also contribute, in addition to LSU’s Dr. Elizabeth Gollub.

“We were definitely excited to get the news, given the importance of the NIH as a funder for health-related research and how competitive these grants are,” Fuster said.

Sugar-sweetened beverages are the largest source of added sugar in the diets of children and are associated with childhood obesity. As of 2022, 29 jurisdictions in the United States have passed laws requiring restaurants to offer healthier default beverages such as water, milk, or 100% juice on their menus.

As Fuster explains, the ability to explore the ordinance over time will provide important insights for lawmakers that may inform future policies designed to improve effectiveness. The project will also offer a critical regional perspective to this growing body of research at a location with great need and identify the impact of health-promoting legislative efforts on children at highest risk for obesity and diet-related health disparities.

“The passing of the ordinance was a victory for public health, and this research will allow us to document it and provide key insights for future work in the area,” Fuster added. “We are thrilled to have this collaboration, as two key academic institutions in the city, working together in this important work.”