

New research center launched to fight health disparities in the Delta

|
Keith Brannon kbrannon@tulane.edu

[View PDF](#)

Tulane Vice President for Research Laura Levy, right, participates in the Delta Clinical and Translational Health Disparities Conference in Jackson, Mississippi. Photo courtesy of University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Tulane University, University of Mississippi Medical Center and University of Tennessee Health Science Center have formed a new research consortium to fight health disparities in the Mississippi Delta.

The Delta Clinical and Translational Science Consortium will be dedicated to improving the health of communities stretching along both sides of the Mississippi River from Memphis to New Orleans as well as the region around Jackson, Mississippi. With high concentrations of poverty and rural areas with low access to health care, the region struggles with high rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity.

Researchers will conduct clinical trials and studies that translate findings from basic medical research into ways that can be applied to improve the health of patients and communities, said Dr. Jiang He, who is leading the Tulane arm of the partnership.

“The consortium will support high quality interdisciplinary team-based clinical and translational research locally, regionally and nationally to improve health in populations, including rural residents, low-income patients and racial/ethnic minority groups,” said He, Joseph S. Copes Chair of Epidemiology at Tulane University School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine.

The consortium will include the [Tulane University Translational Science Institute](#), the University of Mississippi Medical Center Clinical Research Institute and the Tennessee Clinical and Translational Science Institute.

Nearly 200 researchers from the three organizations gathered in Jackson earlier this month for the consortium's inaugural event, the [Delta Clinical and Translational Health Disparities Conference](#). The event featured nine keynote speakers from each institution and a poster session which allowed attendees to feature their health disparities research. Open to all faculty, staff and students interested in health disparities research, the event featured research topics ranging from disparities in breast cancer to pediatric inequities associated with healthy mental and physical development.

"We at Tulane are really pleased to participate in this newly formed Delta consortium," said Laura Levy, Tulane vice president for research. "We look forward to engaging new and longstanding collaborators, now partner institutions, in Tennessee and Mississippi to explore the potential of that collaboration."

The consortium is applying for a major National Institutes of Health grant award to become a hub linked to a network of U.S. medical research institutes recognized by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences.