MU’s Center for Health Policy presents *IMPACT*, an e-newsletter about timely local, state and national health policy issues and initiatives. MU’s Center for Health Policy is dedicated to helping Missourians achieve better health care through objective analysis and in-depth understanding of key policy issues facing our state. For more information, please visit [http://healthpolicy.missouri.edu/](http://healthpolicy.missouri.edu/).

**Reducing Health Disparities**

The University of Missouri (MU) Center for Health Policy was awarded $350,000 from the Missouri Foundation for Health to collaborate with Washington University (WU) in St. Louis to create a health disparities center designed to confront statewide health care discrepancies in rural and urban areas. The project will create a network of Missouri people and organizations focused on reducing health care disparities. Primary data collection will take place over an 18-month period and will be centered on urban St Louis and on the rural Bootheel region of Missouri. For more information about the project see: [http://healthpolicy.missouri.edu/press.release.pdf](http://healthpolicy.missouri.edu/press.release.pdf)

**February Minority Health Seminar**

*Health and the Built Environment: The Effects of Where We Live, Work and Play* explores the significant health inequalities between blacks and whites by examining the connection between the health status of African Americans and the built environment. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr., Ph.D., professor and Director of the Center for Urban Studies, School of Architecture and Planning, State University of New York at Buffalo, will be the presenter. The presentation is a live broadcast of the 7th Annual William T. Smalls, Jr. Keynote Lecture from the 26th Annual Minority Health Conference held at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. The Center for Health Policy is sponsoring the broadcast, which takes place on February 25, 2005, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in the Academic Support Center.

**Save the Date! Health Care Quality Research Conference**

The [Center for Health Care Quality](http://healthcare.missouri.edu) in collaboration with the Center for Health Policy invite you to attend *Bridging the Quality Gap in Mid-America: Innovation and Improvement in Health-Care Delivery* on April 21 - 22, 2005. The conference will showcase cutting-edge research and innovative programs that are improving health care quality in the Midwestern states. Designed to bridge the communications gaps among researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers, sessions will facilitate public, professional, and legislator awareness of the problems in health care quality and the research and best-practices being implemented to enhance quality. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Executive Center. Registration, program information and directions can be found at [http://healthcare.missouri.edu/Announcement.htm](http://healthcare.missouri.edu/Announcement.htm)

**Kristofer Hagglund Named to Institute of Medicine Panel**

Kris Hagglund was recently appointed to an Institute of Medicine committee to study the Social Security Administration’s process for determining eligibility for disability benefits. The committee will make specific recommendations concerning the "Listing of Impairments" and how to best utilize medical expertise in disability determination. Nearly $100 billion in annual benefits are provided through SSDI or SSI to more than 10 million individuals. The committee will meet approximately six times over the next fourteen months and will produce a report to be published by the National Academy of Sciences.
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On the web:
www.healthpolicy.missouri.edu

**Summit Success**

The Second Annual Missouri Health Policy Summit held in Jefferson City, Mo., on Nov. 12, 2004, was once again a very successful event. In the morning session, panelists provided in-depth analysis of changes facing the state due to implementation of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. Recent data and policy recommendations of the state Advisory Council on the Affordability and Accessibility of Health Insurance Coverage were presented in the afternoon session, which included lively debate among policy experts, state officials, legislators and other key stakeholders. For a complete program listing including presentations made during both sessions go to:

**Advisory Council Update**

The Advisory Council on the Affordability and Accessibility of Health Insurance Coverage has been extended through 2005 to continue working on policy recommendations expanding both public and private forms of health insurance to reduce further the number of uninsured Missourians. The Council will hold five meetings to finalize its list of recommendations by the end of August.

In addition, the Center for Health Policy, in collaboration with Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) and University of Missouri Extension, will conduct 21 meetings within the seven AHEC regions throughout the state to raise awareness and gather public input on the impact lack of health insurance has in their communities. These communications activities are sponsored by the Department of Health and Senior Services as part of the second phase of the Missouri State Planning Grant. For more information about the grant go to: http://www.insuremissouri.org/.

**New Government Leaders in Health Care**

With the new year comes new leadership in health policy committees at both the state and federal levels. The following is a list of those legislators and their respective appointments.

**FEDERAL:**
- Congressman Kenny Hulshof, R-Columbia, House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee

**STATE:**
- Sen. Norma Champion, R-Springfield, Aging, Families, Mental and Public Health
- Sen. Chuck Gross, R-St. Charles, Appropriations
- Sen. John Loudon, R-Ballwin, Small Business, Insurance and Industrial Relations
- Sen. Carl Vogel, R-Jefferson City, Ways and Means

**House Committee Chairs**
- Rep. Jodi Stefanick, R-Ballwin, Appropriations—Health, Mental Health and Social Services
- Rep. Brad Lager, R-Maryville, Budget
- Rep. Susan Phillips, R-Kansas City, Children and Families
- Rep. Robert Wayne Cooper, R-Camdenton, Health Policy