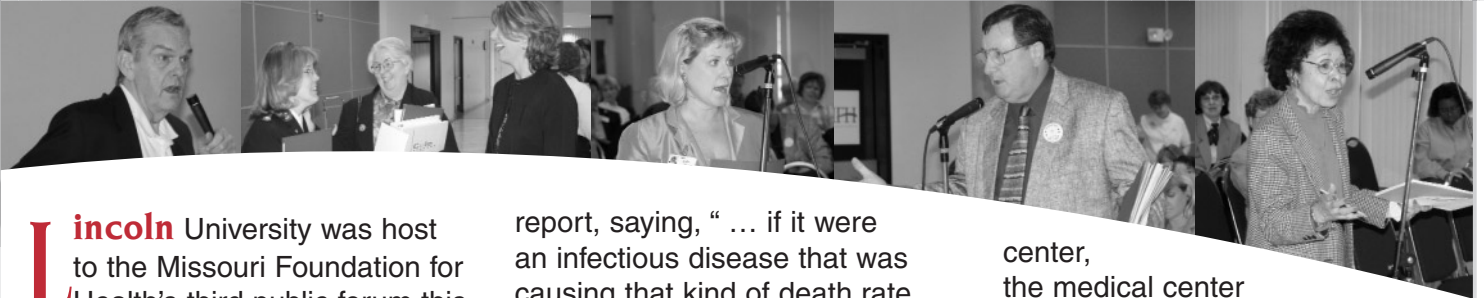


# Forum Focus

## Jefferson City, Missouri



**L**incoln University was host to the Missouri Foundation for Health's third public forum this year, held on April 10. The Jefferson City program welcomed 56 attendees and 26 speakers on issues ranging from mental and dental health to advocacy. The majority of attendees hailed from Jefferson City but represented citizens from all over the state, including those as distant as the Bootheel.

As at the Washington forum, the session opened with grant recipients sharing how the foundation's contributions are making a difference for Missourians. Bob Whittet, Pathways, explained how its two-year grant has expanded and developed a telemedicine and electronic charting program, enabling mental health patients to receive care at home. Gloria Crull with Family Health Center of Boone County then spoke about how her organization's new information system has helped it provide better service to patients.

**J**efferson City speakers raised several topics that were emphasized in last year's forums but had not yet been mentioned this year. Deborah Boldt of the Missouri Partnership on Smoking was glad to see the foundation's focus on smoking in last year's "Community Voices"

report, saying, "... if it were an infectious disease that was causing that kind of death rate, there would be some type of an inoculation program going on." She further urged the foundation to use its influence to educate the public and the legislature, noting that Missouri spends less on tobacco prevention than any other state.

**O**ther topics addressed included care for the elderly and homeless, many of whom suffer from mental illness or physical disability. Also emphasized was the large number of uninsured and underinsured in the state. James R. Kimmey, MD, president and CEO of the foundation, pointed out that over a million Missourians went without health insurance for part of last year.

Although some new issues were raised at the Jefferson City forum, lack of access, dental care, diabetes, mental health and substance abuse continued as common threads for the state.

According to Laura Gajda with Phelps County Regional Medical Center in Rolla, they encounter a number of these issues. The only hospital between St. Louis and Springfield with a trauma

center, the medical center sees 30,000 visits per year to its emergency center and also experiences a shortage of nurses. She stated that congestive pulmonary disorder, cardiovascular disease and diabetes are some of the major health issues they encounter. "We have so many problems and this is just the tip of the iceberg," she concluded.

**S**amaritan Center in Jefferson City is another organization that wears many hats, operating as both a food pantry and free dental and medical clinic. "We have 350 patients on our waiting list and most are in severe pain," said

**"I have a 23-year-old who is off our health insurance but is still in college, but the cost is so expensive that we cannot afford it."**

Cinda Hudson, Citizen, Jefferson City

Annie Carmichael, referring to the dental clinic. "When they call the clinic for an appointment, they do not realize there is at least a two-month waiting period."

Carol Giesecke, Lincoln University Cooperative Extension, shared her

# Jefferson City, Missouri

concerns about diabetes in the state. Her organization conducted a forum in the Bootheel to see why there were such high levels of diabetes-related amputations in the area. Access, transportation and racial issues were all mentioned as obstacles to care.

**Jenny** Wiley, who works for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill in the Lake of the Ozarks, thanked the foundation for a recent grant to her organization, stating that psychiatric illness is the most



**D**on Carter with Crossroads Community Recovery Center in Cole County expressed the importance of inpatient and partial hospitalization services for alcohol and substance abuse patients, saying that these diseases “coexist many times with other things, especially related to the health and well-being of children and family.”

Representatives of the Missouri Recovery Network supported Carter’s assertions, adding that addiction can lead to traffic accidents, homicides, suicides, incarceration, violence

and broken families.

Missouri Representative Mark Bruns of District 113 pointed out a number of concerns,

summarizing his goals in the following statement: “I think we want to have a world where health is a blessing and not something with a costly price tag. We have to believe that is not out of the realm of possibility and that all of us can have access to the health care we need and deserve, and hopefully by working together that can become a reality.”

**“Last month, we worked with three families ... being asked to relinquish custody of their children ... These are not abusive parents; these are not parents who have neglected their children. These are good parents who can’t afford psychiatric treatment for their children.”**

**Cindi Keele, NAMI, Jefferson City**

common reason for hospitalizations nationwide. Other speakers emphasized the lack of mental health services for children, particularly the insurance industry’s reluctance to cover mental illness.



MISSOURI FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH

Grand Central Building, Suite 400 • 1000 St. Louis Union Station • St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2269

Phone: (314) 345-5500 • Fax: (314) 345-5599 • Toll Free: (800) 655-5560

E-mail: [info@mffh.org](mailto:info@mffh.org) • [www.mffh.org](http://www.mffh.org)

