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## Professor Helps Underserved Communities Through Pharmacy

Meagan Brown's work driven by a passion for health equity

FEBRUARY 17, 2021 BY PATRICK SMITH



Archive Photo: Meagan Brown (left), UM clinical associate professor of pharmacy practice, chats with Kristie Gholson, a pharmacy professional with North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo, at the School of Pharmacy's 2019 Preceptors Conference in Oxford. Brown has demonstrated her commitment to serving communities in need by continuing the work of the Mississippi Delta Health Collaborative. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – For **Meagan Brown**, a clinical associate professor of pharmacy practice at the **University of Mississippi**, serving the underserved has been the driving force in her career.

Since joining the UM **School of Pharmacy** faculty in 2011, Brown has been involved in the **Mississippi Delta Health Collaborative**. The project, funded through a grant from the Mississippi Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, focused on providing clinical pharmacy services in the Mississippi Delta.

Many residents in the Delta face high levels of chronic disease, exacerbated by high levels of poverty and health disparities in the region. Brown and her colleagues sought to improve health outcomes and show that pharmacists can make a difference for patients dealing with cardiometabolic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and dyslipidemia.

Brown, in particular, conducted her work at a federally qualified health clinic in Yazoo City. The work has made her a better pharmacist, as well as a better educator, she said.

"Being in the Mississippi Delta, there were a number of socioeconomic barriers that existed," Brown said. "It really teaches you the balance of what we teach our students in school versus what they're really able to do when they're out in the real world.

"Ideally, we would pick the best therapy for a patient. But if it's an expensive drug and the patient doesn't have insurance or even a ride to the pharmacy to pick it up, that presents another set of challenges."

Brown said that this work has been invaluable to her students as well. Ole Miss students and residents working alongside her not only get hands-on experience; they also receive preparation for a future in serving patients who may be facing challenging circumstances.

"It has helped them experience and navigate those socioeconomic barriers that patients have," Brown said.

According to the researchers, significant improvement in the health of patients was observed over the

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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#### Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

course of the grant. And though the funding ended in 2019, Brown has continued her work in the Delta, working at the clinic two days a week.



Meagan Brown

Her work extends to other areas. In 2020, Brown and **Justin Sherman**, associate professor of pharmacy practice, received one of the university's **inaugural Achieving Equity Grants**. Brown is serving as co-principal investigator with Sherman, exploring health inequities stemming from the use of vaping and other electronic nicotine delivery systems.

She and Sherman will seek, through a series of focus groups, to get thoughts from students about their perceptions of the dangers associated with tobacco products, particularly around vaping.

Brown pointed out that there is a disproportionate health burden on disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups for smoking-related diseases. However, not much literature exists focusing on usage by youth and young adults, particularly for vaping. Her research will seek to remedy that.

Besides her work as a faculty member, Brown also has served as a member of the **National Pharmaceutical Association** since 2017. She was asked to serve on the organization's board of directors, and previously served as the clinical initiatives chair.

The association's convention chair, she is planning the group's national convention set for July in Los Angeles.

Founded in 1947, NPhA is an organization that seeks to elevate the voices of minority pharmacists, as well as bring attention to issues facing underserved communities. Brown said the organization aligned perfectly with her career goals.

"We're a small but mighty group," Brown said. "I think especially this year, NPhA has risen to the top as an organization that really can help folks identify some areas for improvement and serve as a resource in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion."

Lakesha Butler, immediate past president of NPhA, praised Brown's work for the organization. Butler pointed to Brown's work as clinical initiatives chair, where she led the collaborative efforts between NPhA and VotER.org as the organizations celebrated Civic Health Month by providing members with resources to assist in signing patients up to vote.

Brown also took the lead in NPhA's initiatives on chronic kidney disease, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

"I have known Dr. Brown for close to 10 years as a mentee, colleague and friend," Butler said. "Her passion for underserved communities, work ethic, leadership, tenacity and overall great personality made her the ideal candidate as I identified individuals to serve on the NPhA board of directors during my presidency.

"I wanted individuals who would be ready to work hard and be committed to the vision I set forward. Meagan was all of that and more."

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