



MISSISSIPPI
ACADEMY
OF
FAMILY
PHYSICIANS

755 Avignon Drive
Ridgeland, MS 39157
601-853-3302 (P)
601-853-3002 (F)
www.msafp.org

President
Sue H. Simmons, MD
Maben

President – Elect
Walter M. Burnett, MD
Yazoo City

Vice President
Katherine T. Patterson, MD
Indianola

Secretary
David B. Wheat, MD
Clinton

Treasurer
William E. Loper, III, MD
Ridgeland

Immediate Past President
Samuel N. Crosby, MD
Hattiesburg

Executive Director
Beth Embry
Madison

AAFP Delegates
Timothy J. Alford, MD
Kosciusko

Lucius M. Lampton, MD
Magnolia

AAFP Alternate Delegates
John R. Mitchell, MD
Pontotoc

Susan A. Chiarito, MD
Vicksburg

Directors
District 1
Erin DeWitt, MD
Diamondhead

District 2
James W. Griffin, MD
New Augusta

District 3
Kimberly Estes, MD
Meadville

District 4
Scott A. Carlton, MD
Jackson

District 5
J. Lee Valentine, DO
Meridian

District 6
Carlos A. Latorre, MD
Vicksburg

District 7
P. Brent Smith, MD
Cleveland

District 8
Christopher L. Park, DO
New Albany

Director at Large
Christy B. Vowell, DO
Eupora

Contact: Kristen Kern
Phone: (601) 853-3302

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 5, 2017

Students to learn healthy eating habits at Vicksburg schools

RIDGELAND – Eating fruits and vegetables. Exercising each day. Cutting out junk food. Making these healthy choices is something kids need to learn early in Mississippi, where one out of every five middle and high-schoolers is already obese.

Mississippi's childhood obesity rates rank as the highest in the nation, according to the State of Obesity report, released in September 2016 by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Even more alarming: Mississippi's adults have a 35% obesity rate.

How can we reverse this trend? By giving young kids the knowledge they need to make good choices, said Sandy Hearn, Child Nutrition Field Coordinator for the Vicksburg Warren School District (VWSD). "With kids, you need something that makes them want to change their habits," Hearn said. "Anything that makes it fun will enable them to learn easily."

To that end, Vicksburg-area elementary school students will be taught that "Good Eating is Great Fun" April 10-13 during FOODPLAY presentations at all eight elementary schools in the Vicksburg Warren School District. Altogether, about 4,600 children are expected to take part.

Created by a nutritionist, the FOODPLAY program has as its slogan, "Good Eating is Great Fun." With a team of jugglers and other performers, the group turns a school assembly into a high-energy presentation that teaches kids the importance of:

- making healthy food choices
- eating a healthy breakfast
- increasing their level of physical activity
- reading and understanding nutrition labels on foods
- thinking critically about junk food marketing ploys

The program is presented by the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) in cooperation with the VWSD. Vicksburg family physician Susan A. Chiarito, MD, FAAFP, who works at Mission Primary Care in Vicksburg, leads the MAFP's efforts to bring the FOODPLAY program to the local area.

###

The MAFP has over 1,000 members consisting of physicians, residents and medical students. The MAFP is dedicated to advancing the specialty of Family Medicine and improving the health of all people in Mississippi. The vision of the MAFP is for every person in Mississippi to have access and availability to a well-trained family physician to manage their medical care.

MISSION: Dedicated to advancing the specialty of Family Medicine and improving the health of all people in Mississippi.