Background

- The Gulf Region Health Outreach Program (the "Outreach Program") is a series of four integrated, five-year projects to strengthen healthcare in Gulf Coast communities in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the Florida Panhandle.

- The Target beneficiaries of the Outreach Program are residents, especially the uninsured and medically underserved, of 17 coastal counties and parishes in Alabama (Mobile, Baldwin), Florida (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton, Okaloosa, Bay), Louisiana (Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Lafourche, Terrebonne, Cameron) and Mississippi (Hancock, Harrison, Jackson).

- The Outreach Program involves local communities in the targeted areas and, taking into account this input from the community, builds capacity tailored to their special needs. Importantly, The Outreach Program is embedded in and complements, rather than detracts or replaces, the existing efforts being undertaken by the public health community in the Gulf Region.

Methods

The Outreach Program's Primary Care Capacity Project conducted community health needs assessments for the targeted counties. Demographic data and data on health determinants and health status were gathered from national and state data sources including the U.S. Census, state Vital Statistics, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and Gulf States Population Survey. Both state and county level data were gathered for the 17 counties in the four states. Differences in health determinants and health status were examined based on factors such as race/ethnicity, poverty status, and geographic location.

Key Messages

- Both residential segregation and SES segregation are linked to poor health outcomes
- Different mental health disparities exist for different ethnic minorities in Alabama
  - African Americans—higher anxiety
  - Hispanics—higher depression
  - Whites—higher suicide
- Unique findings for each racial/ethnic group have implications for how The Outreach Program informs capacity in Mobile and Baldwin Counties
- Important to know state, county and neighborhood contexts when understanding health disparities; need to drill down to sub-county level data