

# HPM students' research contributes to Mississippi legislation

A TEAM OF UNC HEALTH POLICY AND management graduate students helped convince the Mississippi state legislature to require communities around the state to fluoridate their water. The students include Lauren Brown, Kim Hammersmith, DDS, Ashley Kranz, Presha Patel and Bhav Shukla, as well as Nick Mosca, Mississippi State Dental Director and student in the School's distance education DrPH program.

As part of a course on health care in the U.S., students were assigned a state and a broad topic area – in this case, “dental health.” Mosca asked the students to conduct research on water fluoridation and other states' mandates on the process. Last fall, he shared their findings with the Mississippi

State Board of Health. In April 2009, the board mandated that all Mississippi communities with populations over 2,000 add fluoride to their water supplies.

Later in April, Hammersmith and Kranz took the team's findings to the National Oral Health Conference in Portland, Ore., where Hammersmith made a poster presentation to dentists and dental directors from around the country.

“This project was a great example of student activity being an important part of a real-world public health benefit,” says Edward “Ned” Brooks, PhD, who taught the course.

Findings were published in the May 2009 *Journal of the Mississippi State Medical Association*. ■