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Report Shows That Mississippi Blacks Have Worse Outcomes Than Whites on Some Quality of Life Indicators

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

Mississippi blacks fare worse than their white counterparts in terms of life expectancy and infant mortality, according to a county-by-county report released on Monday, the [Jackson Clarion-Ledger](#) reports. The report, "A Portrait of Mississippi: the Mississippi Human Development Report 2009," is based on the Human Development Index, which examines developing nations in terms of health, education and income. Mississippi is the first state to use the index, according to the [Clarion-Ledger](#). The Mississippi branch of the [National Advancement of Colored People](#) commissioned the study.

Among health indicators in the index, the study found that:

- The average life expectancy for a black man born in Mississippi is 68.2 years -- more than 11 years shorter than that of white women born in the state, today;
- The infant mortality in some of the state's poorest areas is more than 18 deaths per 1,000 births for minorities, compared with an average of 6.6 deaths per 1,000 births for whites; and
- The state's minority infant mortality rate is three times the U.S. rate and about the same as those in some foreign countries such as Libya and Thailand.

The state has a gap in access and affordability of health care, Derrick Johnson, president of the Mississippi NAACP, said. "There are also jobs that individuals work at every day, yet are not offered any kind of health benefits because of the cost of health insurance, which directly impacts black male health and thus life expectancy," he added, calling for lawmakers to "take a critical look at this report and adjust their priorities so all Mississippians have a quality of life that any human being should have, particularly citizens of this country."

The report recommends that lawmakers adopt an earned income tax credit, state minimum wages, affordable housing, affordable health care and subsidized child care to help address the problems the state's poorest residents face (Mitchell, Jackson [Clarion-Ledger](#), 1/27).

The report is available [online](#).

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