



Melanie Simmons PhD
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Healthy Communities Program

Center for Demography and Population Health &
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After many years in the public and private sectors, Dr. Simmons established the Florida State University Healthy Communities Program. The program provides academically sound and directly relevant evidence-based policy expertise to public and private decision makers in Florida. The Healthy Communities Program specializes in investigating the intersection where transportation and land use policies effect community health and well-being. The goal of the program is to help create sustainable, livable and healthier communities. The Healthy Communities Program informs decision makers through policy analysis, impact assessments, population projections, case control research projects, needs assessments, and program process and outcome evaluations. Clients include non-profits, state agencies, city and county governments.

Dr. Simmons received her PhD in 2003 from Florida State University focusing on Population Health. She has over 15 years of experience conducting research and program evaluation for the Florida Department of Health. While there, she used advanced statistical techniques in health, planning and evaluation, disease control, and family and community health. In 2005, she started a policy research firm –Healthy

Development Inc. – and successfully partnered with the American Planning Association, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Association of City and County Health Officials to promote healthy communities. She has expertise in epidemiological and demographic research, quantitative and qualitative methods, geographic information systems, and survey design.

EDUCATION

Health Impact Assessment Training

World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Health Impact Assessment
International Health Impact Assessment Consortium
Department of Public Health, University of Liverpool, UK
November 2005

Ph.D., Sociology, Population Health

Florida State University, August 2003

Dissertation Title: “Problem Behavior versus the Risk Amplification Approach: HIV Risk Behaviors of Homeless Youth in Fort Lauderdale.”

M.S., Demography

Florida State University, June 1995

B.S., Anthropology

Florida State University, May 1990

CONTRACTS from 2005 to Present

2008-09 Smart Growth and Environmental Health Abstracts—practicum’s for decision makers concerning the health and economic effects of public transit, affordable urban housing, green and open space—Florida Department of Health Division of Environmental Health

2008-09 The Climate Change, Energy and Health Benefits of Public Transit—Florida Department of Transportation Transit Office

2007-08 The Impact on automobile trips due to *de minimus* exemptions in subdivision housing developments in Tallahassee, Florida -- CNL Real Estate and Development.

2007 Community Involvement. Program Evaluation of Prenatal Program Enhancement Project with the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention.

2007 Group Prenatal Care. Program Evaluation of Prenatal Program Enhancement Project with the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention.

- 2007 Vitagrant Evaluation--March of Dimes
- 2006-7 Cognitive testing of the Healthy Start and Healthy Families Revised Prenatal Screen.
- 2006-7 Health and Demographic Analysis for the Florida Legislature's Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida.
- 2006 Learning Session on Health and the Built Environment, Seattle WA City Hall and Health Impact Assessment workshop with practitioners, Seattle King County Public Health
- 2006 Program evaluation of the Florida Pregnancy Support Services Counseling Program
- 2006-7 Health Impact Assessment of the Taylor Energy Project (a coal-fired utility) in Taylor County, Florida, contacted by the Taylor County Development Authority
- 2005-6 Coordinated School Health Program's Partners Project evaluation.
- 2005 Health impact assessment of the proposed North Florida Power Park for Jefferson and Madison County Health Departments
- 2005 Delmarva Foundation ACHA Quality Assurance Quarterly Report
- 2005 The Florida Department of Health Comprehensive Cancer Control Program needs assessment and process evaluation

PEER REVIEW PUBLICATIONS

- 2007 M. Simmons, K.B. McLeod, and D.R. Thompson. "Health Impact Assessment of a Coal-fired Electric Plant in Taylor County, Florida." Journal of Public Health Management and Practice, *forthcoming*.
- 2005 M. Simmons and M. LaLota. "Problem Behaviors versus the Situational Adversity Approach: HIV Risk Behaviors of Homeless Youth in Fort Lauderdale" Florida Public Health Review vol. 2, pp. 96-107.
- 2002 C.P. Krebs and M. Simmons. "Intraprison HIV Transmission: an Assessment of Whether it Occurs, How it Occurs, and Who is at Risk." AIDS Education and Prevention Oct; 14(5 Suppl B):53-64.
- 1999 M. Simmons. "Theorizing Prostitution: The Question of Agency." Sex Work and Sex Workers. Dank, B.M., & Refinetti, R.[Eds], New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, pp 125-148.
- 1998 M. Simmons. "Theorizing Prostitution: The Question of Agency." Sexuality and Culture. Vol. 2, pp. 125-148.

POPULAR PUBLICATIONS

- 2008 M. Simmons. "What is the Best Way to Incorporate Health into Sustainable Planning?" Florida Planning: Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association February.
- 2007 M. Simmons, K Baughman McLeod, and J. Hight. "Potential Health Care Cost Savings from Built Environment Interventions," in Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature edited by Doug Farr, Chair of the LEED Neighborhood Development Committee..
- 2007 M. Simmons and J. Hight. "Demographic Changes in Florida: Exploring Natural Increase" Florida Planning: Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association April.
- 2006 KB McLeod and M Simmons. "Let the new state Route 520 take us down a healthier road." Op-Ed Seattle Post Intelligencer, Sunday, December 10, 2006.
- 2005 D. Thompson, M. Simmons and C. Graham. "Infant Mortality Stratified by Maternal Age and Plurality: A Comparative Analysis of Birth Cohorts for 2000 and 2001." http://www.doh.state.fl.us/RW_webmaster/news/abstracts/index.html
- 2003 D. Thompson, M. Simmons and C. Graham. "Infant Mortality and Low Birth Weight Rates Compared to Expected Rates by County for Florida" www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/mch/docs/pdf/expected_v_actual2002.pdf.
www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/mch/docs/final.pdf
2003. D. Thompson, M. Simmons and C. Graham. "Infant Mortality and Low Birth Weight Rates Compared to Expected Rates by Healthy Start Coalition Area" www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/mch/docs/pdf/expected_v_actual2002.pdf.
www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/mch/docs/hsc_final.pdf.
- 2002 D. Thompson, M. Simmons and C. Graham. "Florida Infant Deaths and Low Weight Births Attributable to Absence of Prenatal Care and Tobacco Use of Mother" August 19. www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/mch/docs/infant_deaths.pdf.
2001. M. Simmons, D. Thompson and C. Graham. "An Evaluation of the Healthy Start Prenatal Screen, 1998 Birth Cohort." www.doh.state.fl.us/RW_webmaster/news/abstracts/prenatal_screen.pdf.
- 2001 D. Thompson, M. Simmons and C. Graham. "Infant Mortality and Low Birth Weight Rates Compared to Expected Rates by County for Florida 1999 and 2000." August 14. www.doh.state.fl.us/family/mch/abstract/infantmortality/infantmortality.html
1996. M. Simmons. "An Analysis of Healthy Start Prenatal Screening Data: Race, Smoking and Low Birth Weight." (Incorrectly titled on web page), www.doh.state.fl.us/RW_webmaster/news/abstracts/smoke.html.

PRESENTATIONS

- 2007 "VitaGrant Preconception Education and Multivitamin Distribution Project Evaluation," American Public Health Association Conference, Washington DC, Nov 5th
- 2007 Sarasota County Sustainable Communities Workshop, Session on Population Growth, Sustainable Development and Health, Oct. 31-Nov. 1
- 2007 "Measuring Health and the Built Environment: A concise learning session on health impact assessment." Denver, Redrocks Auditorium, May 17th and a one day pilot project for HIA practitioners, Denver CO May 18th.
- 2007 Faculty--Health Impact Assessment Workshop (Intermediate Level) Built Environment and Public Health Partnerships, National Association of City and County Health Officials, American Planning Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sponsored, Chicago, IL May 10-11.
- 2007 Health Impact Assessment for Planners, American Planning Association Annual Conference, Philadelphia PA, April 15
- 2007 Leadership Session of the 4th Annual Active Living Leadership Event, Colorado Healthy Living Summit. Hosted by the Livable Communities Support Center and Local Government Commission. Denver Grand Hyatt, March 30.
- 2007 "Parks and Greenspace Conference" Atlanta Botanical Garden, March 19th
- 2007 "The Power of Smart Growth for Health: Using Health Impact Assessment and the Built Environment to Optimize Health," New Partners for Smart Growth Los Angeles, CA, February 9. (canceled)
- 2007 "Uniting Planning and Public Health—Various Methods." Florida Department of Health Environmental Health Directors Conference, Orlando, FL January 10.
- 2006 "Measuring Health and the Built Environment: A concise learning session on health impact assessment." Seattle City Hall, December 13th and a one day workshop for HIA practitioners, Seattle WA December 14th.
- 2006 Health Impact Assessment of a Coal-Fired Electric Plant. National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Disease Registry's National Environmental Health Conference December 4-6.
- 2006 "Impacts on Children's Health," National Dialogue on Children and Nature: A connection for the health and well-being of our children. Shepardstown, WV September 7-10.
- 2006 Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association. Presentation on the Built Environment and Health. Marco Island, Florida September 27.

- 2006 Toward Livable Communities: Using Health Impact Assessment to Improve Health and Well-being. NACCHO Annual Conference, San Antonio, Tx, July 26-27.
- 2006 Faculty--Health Impact Assessment Workshop: the Built Environment and Public Health Partnerships. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Association of County and City Health Officials, and the American Planning Association. Washington DC, February 2-3.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal, *Healthy Development Inc.*, 6/2005 to Present.

Primary duties include developing new program evaluation, needs assessment and Health Impact Assessment methodologies for health-care oriented programs or policies, programs or large developments in the built environment that impact health. Dr. Simmons serves as faculty to the joint training workshops of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Association of City and County Health Officials and the American Planning Association Workshop on Building Healthy Communities.

Associate in Research, Florida State University, Consulting to the Florida Department of Health, Infant, Maternal and Reproductive Health Unit, Tallahassee, FL 2/2001 to 3/2005.

Primary duties include developing new research approaches to infant death, fetal death, low birth weight and preterm births, conducting data analysis; writing manuscripts for publications in professional journals and for the Florida public health system; conducting presentations at regional and professional meetings; managing research projects; and developing research-based public health policies.

Research Associate, Florida Department of Health, HIV/AIDS Surveillance Tallahassee, FL 1/1998 to 12/2000.

Primary duties include developing new research ideas related to HIV/AIDS Surveillance and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program; matching data sets and data analysis; writing manuscripts for publication in professional journals and for the Florida public health system; and conducting presentations at regional and professional meetings.

Research Assistant, Florida Department of Health, Health Planning, Evaluation and Data Analysis, Tallahassee, FL 2/1995 to 12/1997.

Primary duties include providing vital statistics data to counties for public health surveillance; data analysis; writing reports for the regional Maternal and Child Health Think Tank, and presenting reports to relevant audiences.

Research Assistant on the National Institutes Health's Project WEAR (Women Empowered against HIV Risks), Tallahassee, FL 1/1994 to 12/1994.

Assisted in development and management of a cognitive behavioral intervention study to prevent high risk sexual and drug use behavior among low-income, Hispanic, Black, and non-Hispanic White women at high-risk of HIV/AIDS; developed questionnaires assessing HIV/AIDS knowledge, condom knowledge and use, sexual behavior, alcohol

and drug use, self-efficacy, and assertiveness; assisted in the management of data organization, coding, and data entry.

Research Assistant on the Florida Refugee Health Project, Tallahassee and Jacksonville, FL, 8/ 1991 to 12/1992.

Assisted in development and management of a study assessing the health needs of refugees to Florida from Russia, Bosnia, Vietnam and other countries; developed questionnaires assessing health status and knowledge of health resources available in the community; assisted in the management of data organization, coding, and data entry.

Research Assistant with the Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, FL 1/1990 to 7/1991.

Investigated the association between demographic characteristics and school performance by geographic location using Geographic Information Systems for a special project with Dr. Lee Clark.

SKILLS

Proficient in SPSS, SAS, SUDDAN, EPI INFO, Microsoft suite including Excel and Powerpoint.

SERVICE

- Ad hoc reviewer: *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*
- Ad hoc reviewer: *Maternal and Child Health Journal*
- Ad hoc reviewer: *Florida Public Health Review*
- Member of the Whole Child Project that provides advocacy on behalf of families and providers, and provides knowledge on best practices to develop specific strategies for children.
- Former Board Member of the Apalachicola Bay and River Keepers and their representative to the Big Bend Environmental Forum.