

# The RURAL Heart & Lung Study Kentucky Core Bulletin

A Network of Neighbors and Partners Taking a Stand for the Health of Your Community



With less than a year until the Mobile Exam Unit (MEU) is projected to arrive in Kentucky, the RURAL Team wanted to share information regarding the differences between a regular check-up at the doctor’s office and the results given to participants from their baseline exam on the MEU. Participants will receive their results to share with their healthcare provider.

## Regular MD Exam vs. Baseline Exam on MEU



	<u>Regular MD Exam</u>	<u>Baseline Exam on MEU</u>
<b>Purpose</b>	To improve health on an <b>individual level</b> by screening for diseases, assessing risk of future medical problems, encouraging a healthy lifestyle, etc.	To increase understanding of health concerns in <b>rural communities</b> , with a focus on heart and lung health
<b>Content</b>	To provide tests that will maintain/improve wellbeing, and enhance knowledge of <b>personal health</b>	To provide tests that help guide future programs for the improvement of health in rural areas, including tests related to heart, lung, and blood vessel health
<b>Results</b>	To give recommendations for next steps that will better quality of life on an individual level	To utilize study findings for addressing critical gaps in the knowledge of heart and lung disorders in <b>rural counties in the southeastern U.S.</b>
<b>Value</b>	To prevent adverse health outcomes for <b>individuals</b>	To identify risk factors for heart and lung diseases and to uncover solutions by examining differences between <b>higher and lower risk rural counties</b>

## *Kentucky Activities*

This Fall, the RURAL KY Team has been ramping up our community engagement efforts! Caleb Williams attended Back-to-School Bashes at Hazard Independent (Perry County), Jackson Independent (Breathitt County), and multiple Perry County schools in early August. On August 8th, Dr. Stephanie Boone and Stephie Abraham presented at a Boyle County Fiscal Court meeting to introduce the RURAL study to the magistrates and to discuss plans to prepare for the MEU’s arrival in Kentucky in 2024. On August 25th and 26th, Stephie and Scotland promoted the study at the Garrard County Rural Heritage Tobacco Festival. They introduced the study to about 70 people and were able to connect with other community stakeholders at the festival.

In the month of September, Caleb attended the Black Gold Festival in Perry County, allowing the RURAL Study to reach hundreds of individuals in the communities within a brief period. Stephie and Scotland then presented at a Perryville City Council meeting to provide a brief overview of the RURAL Study and answer any questions regarding eligibility criteria and timeline for the MEU’s arrival.

Our Team visited Boyle County during the first weekend of October to attend the Perryville Commemoration Festival. Later that month, they attended the Paint Lick Village Fest in Garrard County and set up a booth at the Boyle County Fiscal Court Health Fair. The Team then travelled to support Dr. Boone at the TEDxDanville event about the value of time spent on community engagement in epidemiology and population health studies. The edited video will be released later this year. Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings were held in both counties, for which meeting minutes are available: [Perry/Breathitt](#) & [Boyle/Garrard](#).



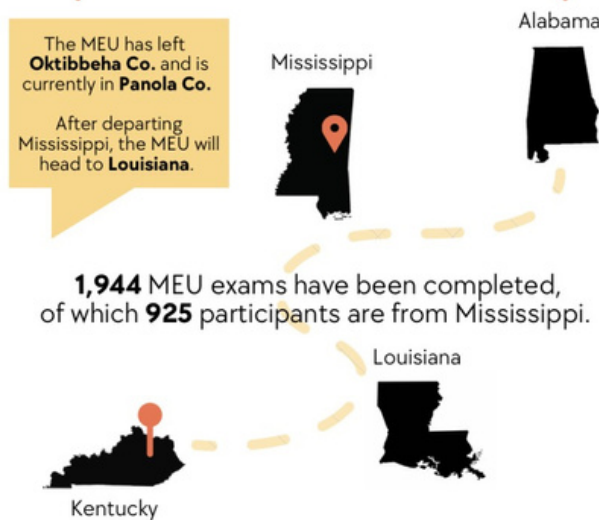


## *A Word from Scotland Stewart: (Graduate Research Assistant)*

As a resident of a small town in Southeastern Kentucky, I have a passion for understanding the underlying causes of adverse health outcomes in Appalachia. The RURAL Heart & Lung Study has ignited this passion by allowing me to play a role in bridging the rural research gap through community engagement events in each of the four KY counties. As a result of our efforts, we hope to strengthen ties with the rural communities as we continue to promote the study.



### Where Are We Now?



### *Where Are We Now?*

The MEU has officially moved to Panola County, Mississippi! As of October 2023, over 1,900 participants from Alabama and Mississippi have now completed their baseline exams. The MEU will move through Assumption and Franklin Parishes of Louisiana in Spring 2024 before heading to Kentucky in the Fall.



### *Recruiting CAB Members*

Through our in-person community engagement efforts, we have recruited a total of 6 Community Advisory Board (CAB) members (2 from Garrard, 2 from Boyle, and 2 from Breathitt counties). Yet, we are still searching for 4 CAB members from Garrard, 5 from Perry, and 5 from Breathitt counties. If you know someone interested in joining our CABS, we would love to send them **additional information** about the study and the impact that can be made with their help. You may contact Stephanie Abraham, Research Coordinator for the RURAL Study, via email or phone: [stephie.abraham@louisville.edu](mailto:stephie.abraham@louisville.edu) or (502) 852-3992



## ***CAB Member Spotlight: Betsy Clemons, Perry County, KY Resident***



As the Executive Director of the Hazard Perry County Chamber of Commerce, I became interested in the RURAL Heart and Lung Study-Kentucky Core study because Perry County, Kentucky has consistently ranked as one of the unhealthiest counties in the state and nation.

I have been involved in several projects through the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence in Rural Health that work to identify and reduce health disparities in our region. There are many social factors and barriers that contribute to poor health. This study will help researchers learn more about the high rates of heart, lung, blood, and sleep disorders in our county. Often, rural areas are overlooked. This project will offer diagnostic tests that are often not accessible in our community. I look forward to working with our community to identify participants to help with disease prevention and causes in a rural setting. The continual transformation of health care and insurance make this project more crucial than ever and I am proud to be a part of it. Hopefully, a better understanding of obstacles will be obtained and solutions identified to offer better and more accessible education and health care to underserved areas, which is something I am very passionate about.

### ***Keep Up-to-Date with RURAL***

[Click here](#) to like and follow the RURAL Heart & Lung Study Facebook page.



Our page provides information on upcoming events that we will be attending, ways to promote health, updates on the MEU's status, and more..

Check out the main study website for updates on all things RURAL at [www.theruralstudy.org](http://www.theruralstudy.org) and the KY Community Engagement webpage at <https://theruralstudy.org/kentucky/>.

***Happy Holidays and safe travels to  
all of our fellow Kentuckians!  
See you in 2024!***

