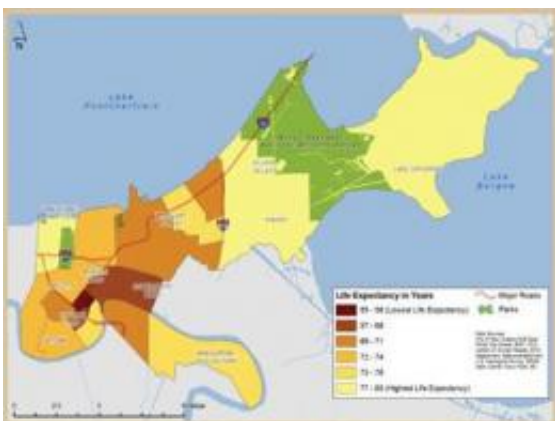


# New findings shed light on health inequalities in New Orleans

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Life expectancy differed by as much as 25 years between a disadvantaged New Orleans zip code in which two of every five adults was a high school dropout, and a zip code where less than one of twelve residents failed to complete high school.

A new study by Virginia Commonwealth University Center on Human Needs researchers shows that lack of education has deep impact on the health and crime rate of a community.

In collaboration with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Policy Institute and the Virginia Network for Geospatial [Health Research](#), the VCU Center on Human Needs is releasing the second of eight studies assessing [population health](#) inequities and related social and [economic conditions](#) in urban and rural communities across the United

States. Working alongside the project partners are eight “Place Matters” teams consisting of individuals who work and live in each of the communities studied.

The second report examines health disparities for the city of New Orleans. The city is still recovering from the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina seven years ago, and areas that are repopulating are experiencing shifting trends in both health and crime.

The technical report by the VCU Center on Human Needs has been translated into a policy brief that has been issued by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Policy Institute.

“The intention of this study is to provide the technical background necessary for community members to advocate for the regrowth of their neighborhoods in a healthy and safe manner,” said the lead author of the study, Benjamin Evans, a policy research manager at the VCU Center on Human Needs.

Further, according to Evans, core issues that are important to the New Orleans community team that participated in the project – education and crime prevention – are common to many more communities across the nation. The findings of this report can serve as examples of how to impact health equity through policy change.

“The strength of this project is the combination between the research and policy expertise of VCU and the Joint Center with the advocacy capability of community teams organized around the common goal of promoting health equity,” said Evans.

In the New Orleans population, the VCU team examined how educational attainment impacted health and violent crime. They observed that life expectancy differed by as much as 25 years between a

disadvantaged New Orleans zip code in which two of every five adults was a high school dropout, and a zip code where less than one of twelve residents failed to complete high school.

According to Evans, crime is a significant concern in New Orleans, and the community team wanted to determine if crime was associated with the rate at which the neighborhood had repopulated. Areas with a larger percentage of repopulated households – whether with returning or new residents – tended to have more violent crime. Also, as with other communities around the nation, education was a significant predictor of violent crime.

In the next several months, the VCU Center on Human Needs will be releasing studies of other communities, including Alameda County in Oakland, Calif.; Baltimore; Cook County in Chicago; Bernalillo County in Albuquerque, N.M.; Boston; and South Delta, Miss.

**More information:** [www.jointcenter.org/research/p ... -good-health-for-all](http://www.jointcenter.org/research/p...-good-health-for-all)

Provided by Virginia Commonwealth University

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