Increased food benefits for poor could reduce ER visits

A University of Missouri study has found that an increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits can reduce emergency room visits for hypoglycemia.

SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, reduced the incidence of extreme poverty by 13.2 percent and childhood poverty by 15.5 percent between 2000 and 2009.

In 2014, SNAP provided $70 billion in nutrition support benefits to 46.5 million families and children in 22.7 million American households.

The study found that not only does SNAP improve poverty levels but may reduce the incidence of ER visits due to hypoglycemia, low blood sugar.

"According to prior research, the average medical costs associated with hypoglycemia requiring medical treatment was $1,186 per ER visit with costs often paid by Medicaid for individuals in extreme poverty," Colleen Heflin, professor of public affairs at the University of Missouri at Columbia, said in a press release. "Public safety net programs do not operate in silos; health cannot be addressed without attending to proper nutrition. Understanding how programs interact can improve policy programs while controlling costs."

Heflin and her team compared data from the Missouri SNAP and Medicaid programs to determine the benefit of SNAP and the timing of ER claims by analyzing the link between receipt of SNAP benefits and healthcare utilization.

The results showed a strong link between the size of SNAP benefits and the number of ER visits for hypoglycemia, and that an increase of $100 in SNAP benefits decreased the likelihood of ER visits by 13 percent.

"This research suggests more generous SNAP benefits could help low-income families manage their household budgets," Leslie Hodges, a Ph.D. candidate in the Truman School of Public Affairs and co-author of the study, said in a press release. "The SNAP program could help..."
families avoid fluctuations in the quality and quantity of food that might result in low blood sugar severe enough to require treatment at the ER."

Peter Mueser, professor of economics in the College of Arts and Science at the University of Missouri, also co-authored the study, which was published in Public Health Nutrition.

Study Finds Millennials want Work Place to Reflect Values

Generated from News Bureau Press Release: 'Values Gap’ in Workplace Can Lead Millennials to Look Elsewhere

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=1f4bf65a-c432-40d0-b489-38cec8873cff

MU international students search for answers on Trump immigration order

By BRITTANY RUESS

Farnaz Fallahi, a 28-year-old doctoral student at the University of Missouri, had been in the United States for about two weeks when President Donald Trump signed an executive order restricting travel from her home country of Iran and six other nations.
Surprised and confused, Fallahi said she cried remembering the promise she made to her family to visit home this summer. Since the death of her sister five years ago, she said, her mother and sister have needed her ongoing support.

“You feel that you are in a prison and you can’t go wherever you want and whenever people need you,” Fallahi, who is studying industrial engineering, said. “Because of that, I think it’s not a good situation for me and people like me and Muslim students.”

Fallahi was one of about 80 international students to attend an informational session Tuesday afternoon at Memorial Union’s Jesse Wrench Auditorium. The event was closed to media to protect student privacy, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

About 140 MU students and 15 post-doctoral students are from the seven majority-Muslim countries listed in Trump’s executive order, Basi said. Trump’s order bans people from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen from entering the country for at least the next 90 days, freezes refugee entry into the United States for 120 days and stops the admission of Syrian refugees indefinitely.

The university had an immigration lawyer, several deans and representatives from the international center, student affairs and counseling center available to answer students’ questions. Basi said students expressed concerns over visa and immigration status and the process for authorizing off-campus employment.

Malid Darzi, 30, a doctoral student in mechanical engineering from Iran, said he would like to see the university act as an advocate on behalf of the students to the federal government.

In a message earlier this week, interim Chancellor Hank Foley said the university is working with national research university groups to share concerns with government leaders in Washington, D.C., but did not say university officials were directly advocating against the immigration order. He spoke to students briefly at the beginning of the meeting.

After his appearance, Foley told the Tribune he had said everything he can say publicly about the immigration order.

“We will see what comes out of the meeting and work with students on the issues,” he said.

In the country on a single-entry visa, 28-year-old Poria Azizi of Iran said he did not learn new information in the meeting, which had “discussion but no results.” He said the immigration order has not affected his travel, but he called it a disaster for multiple-entry visa holders who need to travel during the next several months.

“I’m not really sure anybody can say anything, but I hope there’s going to be some leniency for at least international students because they’re not at fault,” he said. “They’re here to study, and many of them will go back to their home country. For me, this is all nonsense.”
Iqbal Alshalal, 40, a doctoral student in mechanical engineering, said when she learned about the immigration order she felt sad and a little afraid. Though she said she has never experienced negativity on campus, Alshalal worries about what she could face as a Muslim woman wearing a hijab. She said she was comforted recently when she saw people placing flowers at the local mosque, the Islamic Center of Central Missouri.

“I thought no one can care for us, but there are a lot of people here who care for us,” she said.

Fallahi’s doctoral program lasts four years. If the immigration order is continued, she isn’t sure she will be able to finish her degree.

“I, and other people, know that Muslims aren’t terrorists and we come here, my friends and I, to build better lives for ourselves and the people who live here in the United States, and we try to do our best,” she said. “But if this order remains, we won’t be able to work as we could do.”

MU students come together to protest President Trump's executive order

by Caileigh Peterson

COLUMBIA — More than 100 University of Missouri students came together Wednesday at Speakers' Circle to protest President Trump's immigration ban.

The protest was organized by the National Association of Graduate Professional Students and the Graduate Professional Council.

Protesters chanted, "Muslim rights are human rights" and "Love not hate, that's what makes America great".

The President of the MU Iranian Students Association said he was blown away by the support his fellow students were giving.
"I think it's really heartwarming and really nice. I think in this community we are a Mizzou community regardless of where we are originally from. I personally appreciate the support," Omid Kamran-Disfani said.

Kamran-Disfani said his peers are afraid.

"There is anxiety and fear among the students. Anxiety and fear are caused by uncertainties because there is a lot of uncertainties in terms of how long this will last, how it will affect it, whether people can even think about traveling outside of the United States," Kamran-Disfani said.

The protesters referred to the executive order as "nakedly racist" and "religiously biased".

The protesters marched from Speakers' Circle and ended in front of Jesse Hall.

The NAGPS and GPC organizations also ran a phone bank asking people to call their legislators and urge them to oppose the President's executive order.

Mizzou students gather, show support for international students


By: Jordana Marie

COLUMBIA, Mo. - A few hundred students gathered Wednesday at Speakers Circle on the Mizzou campus, showing their support for international students studying at the university.

The demonstration comes days after President Donald Trump issued an executive order suspending new-refugee admissions and blocking travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries. Trump also tweeted Wednesday morning saying, "Everybody is arguing whether or not it is a ban. Call it what you want, it is about keeping bad people (with bad intentions) out of (the) country!"
Supporters in attendance included professors, students and small children. Many held signs showing support for their international colleagues. Some of the signs read "Muslim students are welcome here," "this is not freedom, it is fear," and "Mizzou stands with you."

One professor who spoke said he is from Iran and has been living and working in the United States for about six years. He said there are about 5,000 Iranian students doing research at universities across the United States.

According to the Institute of International Education, there were more than 1 million international students in the United States during the 2015 - 2016 school year. A little more than 17,000, or 1.7 percent, were from countries affected by the order.

ABC 17 News spoke with one student from Indonesia who said the University of Missouri has been a welcoming place for her and other international students. She also said as a Muslim, she felt it was important to attend the demonstration because she thinks her religion is often thought to be unkind when she said it is a religion of peace.

After the gathering at Speakers Circle, the MU Graduate Professional Council held a "call-Congress" event at the student union. Participants are calling their congress representatives and asking to override Trump's executive order on travel.

ABC 17 News spoke with two students who said as white females, they said they would be calling their lawmakers because they felt it was their responsibility to stand up for others who have not grown up with the same privileges as them.

"This is not OK," Remy Hellstern said. "Borders are imaginary lines we've drawn in the sand to block people. If we have refugees who need help and are in crisis, they should be welcome in our country."

On Wednesday, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer spoke with reporters about the executive order.

“The president’s number one goal has always been to focus on the safety of America, not the religion," Spicer said. "He understands it is not a religion problem but a radicalization problem.”
Graduate workers hold demonstration in support of international students

By AMBER CAMPBELL AND DANIEL KONSTANTINOVIC

COLUMBIA — Graduate student Jo Smiley held up a sign Wednesday that read, “This isn’t freedom, this is fear.”

She was in the middle of a crowd where people were chanting, "Muslim rights are human rights."

Smiley came out on a chilly day to show solidarity with international students fearful of the impact of President Donald Trump’s new immigration policy.
“I feel like the only real purpose of banning these people is to prevent members of a religious group from entering the country, which I think goes against American values,” Smiley said.

She was one of more than 100 demonstrators rallying against a ban on travel at Speakers Circle on the MU campus.

The rally, organized by the Coalition of Graduate Workers, was one of several events in Columbia sparked by the ban over the last few days.

On Sunday, hundreds of people gathered in Peace Park to protest the executive action. In response to international student worries about their futures, MU administrators and faculty held a closed information session on Tuesday.

During the rally, the Coalition of Graduate Workers encouraged protesters at Speakers Circle to sign a letter addressed to Interim Chancellor Hank Foley.

The letter asked that MU guarantee certain protections for its international students who are from the seven countries listed in the travel ban — Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

The letter also outlined seven demands the group wants MU to provide, including protection for individuals affected by the travel ban so they won’t lose their student status or employment.

“The letter is not meant to condemn MU’s efforts but to say that we would also like to see guarantees that people won’t lose their student status, and we have not,” said Eric Scott, chair of the Coalition for Graduate Workers’ coordinating committee.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said Wednesday that decisions regarding employment and student status are made by each department on a case-by-case basis. In other words, it is not an administrative decision.

“We understand that this is a stressful time for international students,” Basi said. “We would encourage everyone to be as accommodating as possible in helping students who are facing a situation beyond their control.”
Basi suggested that students go to the counseling center if they are anxious or worried about how the travel ban will affect them.

"I appreciate what the university has already done, but there are other things that they can guarantee to students, faculty and staff," Scott said.

At Speakers Circle, Scott led the crowd in chants of “Love, not hate, that’s what makes America great.”

“Our international students need protections and guarantees that, if they get caught up in this mess the federal government has created, this university will stand by them,” Scott said to the crowd.

He then led the rally toward Jesse Hall as chants of “Don’t give in to racist fear, immigrants are welcome here” broke out.

When asked if there are graduate students enrolled at MU who are not able to return to the U.S. because of the ban, both Basi and Scott said they did not know of any.

“Just because they’re not currently facing problems or stuck overseas doesn’t mean they might not have those problems in the future,” Scott said. “They might not be able to travel home.”

*Supervising editor is Allison Colburn.*
A third of Missouri’s 200 most dangerous intersections can be found in the Kansas City metro area, according to a study based on the state’s crash data from 2015.

Of the top 10 most dangerous intersections, four can be found in Kansas City, including the intersection at Blue Ridge Cutoff and Interstate 70.

That intersection came in as the second-most dangerous intersection in the state, according to the study published by the law firm of Douglas Haun Heidemann, which has offices in Bolivar and Springfield.

“One key area of our practice is personal injury, and you see how accidents affect and can have tragic effects on people’s lives,” said Nathan Duncan, a litigation partner with the law firm.

Two intersections that use a newer, safer design — the diverging diamond interchange — were among the most dangerous in the law firm’s study, but Missouri transportation officials say that’s because the study is flawed in that it didn’t include traffic volume to create crash rates.

Making the roads safer should be a goal for everybody, Duncan said.

“We thought that identifying some of the most dangerous places for drivers would be helpful information for everybody on the road. … Ideally, I’d like for our personal injury practice to be put out of business.”

The Blue Ridge Cutoff/I-70 intersection is only slightly safer than the intersection at Interstate 270 and Dorsett Road in Maryland Heights, Mo., which is the most dangerous one in the state.

The study analyzed more than 148,000 crash records from the Missouri Highway Patrol to identify the 200 most dangerous intersections in the state.

The study looked at total accidents, injuries and fatalities and computed a danger index. The formula counted noninjury wrecks as one point, injury crashes as three and fatal wrecks as 10 points.

With 45 dangerous intersections each, Kansas City and St. Louis tied for the cities with the most on the list. However, only one St. Louis intersection — Interstate 44 at Jefferson Avenue — made the top 10.
“That is one of the interesting things,” Duncan said. “Even though Kansas City is somewhat smaller than St. Louis, it did have in the top 10 a greater number of dangerous intersections. It had more accident collisions than St. Louis or Springfield.”

Other cities in the metro area that had intersections on the list were Independence, with 10 intersections; Blue Springs, three; Gladstone, one; Lee’s Summit, one; Liberty, two; and Raytown, two.

The study doesn’t take into consideration the number of wrecks versus traffic volume. Duncan said they wanted to make the results “fairly digestible” so they didn’t come up with a complicated algorithm.

“Obviously, the higher the volume, the greater the risk for injury,” Duncan said. “It might not be the perfect study, but it’s instructive.”

Derek Olson, district traffic engineer for the Missouri Department of Transportation’s Kansas City District, said he applauds the law firm and other businesses for being interested in highway safety. But Olson was concerned that traffic volumes were not taken into account.

Typically when traffic engineers look at whether a section of road is dangerous, they calculate a crash rate, which includes traffic volume as part of the equation.

What people can take away from the law firm’s study, Olson said, is that whenever they get into a vehicle, they need to take the utmost care and caution. For traffic safety information, check out savemolives.com.

Jenna Murrell, content marketing specialist with San Diego data visualization firm 1Point21 Interactive, which conducted the study, said that in an ideal scenario, they would have liked to have had traffic volumes, but the Highway Patrol didn’t have the data for all the intersections.

Transportation officials think the list would be different if traffic volume had been considered. For example, two intersections that used a diverging diamond interchange were among the most dangerous. That interchange design is used in areas of heavy traffic as a way to increase capacity and decrease congestion.

Those interchanges include the Maryland Heights interchange at Dorsett and I-270, which was the most dangerous, and the intersection at Front Street and Interstate 435 in Kansas City. That interchange was the sixth most dangerous.

“As effective as they are for reducing traffic backlog, it seems the drivers aren’t accustomed to them, and perhaps that is why we see more accidents there,” Duncan said. “Inexperienced drivers or even experienced drivers not knowing exactly how to navigate those.”
A recent University of Missouri traffic study on diverging diamond interchanges in Missouri, however, found that they are reducing crashes. The study found that fatal and injury crashes decreased by 63 percent, and total crashes decreased by 41 percent.

“That’s really good news for MoDOT and for folks who travel our highways,” said Olsen of MoDOT. Still, people need to give driving the attention it deserves so that they get home safely, Olsen said.

“I’ll just re-emphasis to buckle up, don’t text and drive, and give the driving experience the respect it deserves,” he said. “Arrive alive.”

MU Health Care announces new recruitment and retention plan

BY JESSICA DENNIS

COLUMBIA — MU Health Care nurses and health professionals are being given new incentives to work and stay within MU Health Care, the system announced in a news release Wednesday.

The incentives are part of a new 2017 recruiting and retention plan. One is a student loan debt repayment program, which offers nurses and health professionals up to $10,000 if they agree to work in high-volume patient clinics.

The funding will be available March 1 and will be paid out monthly in increments of $166.66, according to the release.

In addition, MU health professionals without student loan debt will be awarded a retention bonus of $2,000 at the end of each year, with a maximum total of $10,000. That benefit also begins March 1.
MU Health Care will also be instituting an award program for employees who refer health professionals to work in high-volume patient clinics.

The incentives could help bring more nurses to central Missouri. They are needed by the health care system to keep up with the increase in the number of patients in the last five years, according to the release.

"As an academic health center, MU Health Care receives patients from every county in the state of Missouri," Peter Callan, director of talent acquisition for MU Health Care, is quoted as saying in the release.

"With more than 600 physicians, we specialize in treating patients with the most complex illnesses and injuries. For that reason, community hospitals often transfer patients needing advanced specialty care to MU Health Care."

The 2017 plan is a continuation of the 2016 incentive plan, which increased registered nurse recruitment by 51 percent last year.

Medical school mental health bill draws support from citizens, students

BY JOHN SADLER AND LYDIA NUSBAM

JEFFERSON CITY — A ring of white-coated medical students surrounded the hearing room Wednesday as Rep. Keith Frederick, R-Rolla, cried reading a letter aloud from a mother whose son had committed suicide.
Frederick, R-Rolla, was presenting a bill that addressed mental health issues in medical schools, a continuation of his effort to pass similar legislation that he said failed last year only because time ran out in the legislative session. This year, Frederick hopes to get luckier.

The bill takes steps to raise awareness of the mental health risks faced by medical school students and to foster research about ways to address the problem.

It would designate Aug. 28 as "Show-Me Compassionate Medical Education Day" and make it illegal for a school to prohibit a medical organization from doing a study on mental health issues among medical students, or to punish one for doing so.

The bill also establishes the "Show-Me Compassionate Medical Education Research Project Committee" and makes it possible for medical schools to conduct ongoing studies on stress-alleviation techniques with the committee. The committee would collect data on mental health issues among medical students.

Alex Goodson, a second-year medical student at MU, said this bill would help break through the culture of silence around mental health problems in the medical field.

"It would bring the problem out of back halls and quiet spaces," he said, adding that some students worry that people will see their mental health issues as obstacles making them incompetent to care for others.

Michele Dietl, whose son, Kevin, committed suicide, has been an advocate for Frederick's bill for several years. Kevin Dietl was a fourth-year medical student at A.T. Still University in Kirksville in 2015 and suffered from depression.

His mother told lawmakers that Kevin believed the treatment he'd received for his illness would be held against him.

"Through it all, Kevin was terrified to reach out for help for fear of destroying his medical career," she said. "I can tell you without reservation that losing our beloved, intelligent, compassionate, son, brother and future physician in this way takes heartbreak to an entirely new level."
She told lawmakers that she believes the measures included in Frederick's bill could have made a difference.

"Although it is too late for Kevin, we believe that the careful scientific study of this problem will help countless students that follow," she said.

Frederick said he is likely going to remove language in the bill that would require medical schools to warn incoming students about potential mental health hazards. This move would prevent future objections and expedite the process, he said.

He has made changes to the legislation in the past to remove objections. A previous version of the bill required schools to conduct mental health surveys of their students and make the results public, but medical school leaders objected.

Fittingly, the hearing for the bill happened to fall on the day the Missouri Medical Students, or MMS, division of the Missouri State Medical Association held their annual lobby day. The students lined the walls, their white coats in stark contrast to the room’s black suits.

Matthew Faubion, an MU medical student, said the legislation was particularly important to the MU chapter of the organization because representatives from the school have helped write similar guidelines for the American Medical Association.

He said the next step was getting these guidelines into law, which he hopes will happen during this session.

"I think any step is a step in the right direction," he said.

Maren Loe, a student at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, said physicians put their focus on patient needs.

"As doctors we are trying to help others," Loe said, "but we are forgetting to help ourselves."

*Supervising editor is Mark Horvit.*
Missouri S&T confirms a case of the mumps on campus

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 20 hrs ago

ST. LOUIS • The Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla announced its first confirmed case of mumps Wednesday morning.

A state public health laboratory confirmed the case Tuesday afternoon.

The announcement at the Rolla campus of the University of Missouri System comes a few months after mumps spread across the University of Missouri-Columbia during the fall.

One of the first Mizzou announcements warned of four cases, which spread to more than 200.

“We will continue to monitor reports to determine whether further measures are needed,” Dennis Goodman, Missouri S&T director of student health services, said in a statement.

Common symptoms of mumps include swollen glands, fever, fatigue and headache, among other things. The viral infection is spread through saliva or mucus.
MU still dealing with mumps cases

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri-Columbia is still dealing with the mumps.

An update was released Wednesday. Since the start of the fall semester, there have been 325 cases identified in students.

We've told you the university is recommending that students get a third MMR vaccine.

So far more than 2,100 students have gotten the mumps.

Meanwhile, the Missouri University of Science and Technology says one of its students has also been diagnosed with mumps.