



February 12, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dr. David E. Rivers (843-792-5546)
Mr. Albert A. George, II (843-579-8563)
Dr. Marcus Ferguson (803-255-4792)

The science on climate change is crystal clear; climate change is a global reality. The fact that the United Nations Climate Conference (Paris, 2015) yielded a historic agreement, signed by representatives of 196 nations, is testament to international consensus that climate change and its impacts must be addressed in a timely fashion to assure a habitable planet for generations to come.

Six months prior to the U.N. Conference, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and South Carolina Educational Television (ETV) produced and distributed a made-for-television dialogue on climate change and its impacts across the United States. Moderated by CNN Chief National Correspondent John King and featuring a diverse panel of experts on climate change and its impacts, "Climate Change: A Global Reality" first aired on ETV in July 2015. It has since appeared on public and educational television affiliates nationwide, bringing attention to the many impacts of climate change on our nation and its people.

While the televised dialogue was a significant milestone in raising awareness of climate change, the reality is that many actions addressing climate change and its impacts must be taken at the local, community level. Such complex and potentially costly issues as water/sewer infrastructure enhancement, wetlands protection, human health and safety, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of residential and commercial development require significant commitment and buy-in at the community level.

In order to promote and continue this effort, we will conduct Community Leaders Institutes in the following coastal communities:

- St. Helena Island, SC – Penn Center – May 14, 2016,
- Savannah, GA – Coastal Georgia Center – June 11, 2016,
- Charleston, SC – South Carolina Aquarium – July 16, 2016, and
- Myrtle Beach, SC – To Be Determined – August 20, 2016.

In each location, the made-for-television dialogue, "Climate Change: A Global Reality," will be used to introduce climate change issues to a local audience. Following the program, a group of local experts will discuss the dialogue and encourage a broad-based discussion including audience members. These sessions and individual interviews will be recorded by ETV, which will package them as part of a larger, made-

for-television program to be broadcast statewide in South Carolina and neighboring cities in Georgia and North Carolina in 2017.

Program partners include: the Medical University of South Carolina, South Carolina Educational Television, Allen University, the South Carolina Aquarium and the U.S. Department of Energy.

For more information, visit the Medical University of South Carolina's PICO website at: <http://pico.library.musc.edu/>. Program contacts include: Dr. David E. Rivers, Associate Professor and Director of Public Information and Community Outreach at the Medical University of South Carolina, at riversd@musc.edu; Mr. Albert A. George, II, Director of Conservation at the South Carolina Aquarium, at AGeorge@scaquarium.org; and Dr. Marcus Ferguson, Coordinator and Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry; Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, and Director of the Environmental Justice Institute at Allen University, at mferguson@allenuniversity.edu.