

## MEMORANDUM

June 5, 2003

TO: Governor

FROM: John

RE: Newborn screening press conference

On April 11, 2002, you signed House Bill 717, known as the “Ben Haygood Comprehensive Newborn Screening Program.” This bill was passed as a result of the death of 2-year-old Ben Haygood of Tupelo, who died from a genetic disorder known as “MCAD.” Newborn screening could have detected the disorder. Robin Haygood, Ben’s mother, led the charge to pass this legislation.

Before the law was passed, only five screening tests were done on newborns. After you signed this law, the Board of Health worked with the American Academy of Pediatrics to add 35 more genetic screening tests. Mississippi is the first state in the nation to have a screening program this extensive.

The tests are done by drawing 5 drops of blood from a newborn’s heel, and take about 5-7 days for results. Tests are done by Neo Gen Screening, a Pittsburgh-based laboratory. The tests are mandatory. The state doesn’t fund newborn screening, so the Department of Health charges a \$70 fee that covers all testing costs and funds the state’s follow-up program.

Others speaking at this event include Dr. Brian Amy, Robin Haygood, and Nancy Helman, RN, Chair of the March of Dimes Program Services Committee.