

CHIP Press Conference  
Head Start Centers/Private School  
Wednesday, January 10, 2001  
10:30 a.m.

### **Talking Points**

- Good morning.
- It's great to be here this morning among all these beautiful, smiling faces. ((Humorous) Of course, I am talking about the children gathered here.) But, it's also good to be here with representatives of Head Start.
- We are always looking for new opportunities in Mississippi to improve the quality of life of our people.
- Whether in education, economic development, public safety or in healthcare, we are finding new ways to make life better for Mississippians.
- Today we are expanding our efforts to help more Mississippi children - more Mississippi families.
- We are finding new ways to reach out to Mississippians who need health insurance coverage for their children.
- In July 2000, we announced that The Division of Medicaid would pay each public school \$20 for every eligible child successfully enrolled in Mississippi Health Benefits.
- Today, we are expanding that offer to all Head Start agencies in the State.
- Head Start will directly benefit from the enrollment of their students.
- The \$20 for every newly enrolled child will help each Head Start Center.
- That means our students benefit through better education and better health care opportunities.
- As a result of our efforts and those of our partners, more than 24,000 children have been enrolled in Mississippi Health Benefits and are receiving much needed health insurance coverage.
- That is up from about 500 children at this time last year.
- That is what I call success.

- Every new child enrolled in the CHIP program is a success story.
- We are expanding and improving our outreach efforts so that every parent knows about the CHIP.
- Every family that has an eligible child needs to be made aware of these benefits.
- We will not stop with this effort.
- We will continue to look for new opportunities and new ways to enroll every eligible Mississippi child.
- We are seeing results from our efforts, but there is still more to be done.
- We must reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program this legislative session.
- I urge legislators in the House and Senate to help us continue to help our parents and our children by reauthorizing CHIP in Mississippi.
- This important program is making a positive difference for thousands of Mississippians by providing health insurance that is vital to our children's future.
- Health children make healthy, productive adults.
- I thank the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Mississippi Division of Medicaid, the Department of Finance Administration along with our many partners who have helped us reach more children.
- And, I would like to ask Rica Lewis Payton, Director of the Division of Medicaid to say a few words.