

Medicaid/MHA  
Press Conference  
Friday, January 12, 2001  
10:00 a.m.  
Capitol Rotunda

**Talking Points**

- Illness has probably touched all of our lives in some way.
- Whether it was a mother, father, sister, brother, relative or a friend who was affected, it is terrible to have a loved one suffer with an illness.
- Can you imagine being sick, in need of medical care and having to drive 100 miles or more to reach medical care.
- Community by community, county by county, doctors, nurses and health care providers are becoming more and more scarce.
- The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 had an enormously negative impact on rural health care in Mississippi.
- The massive budget cuts contained in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 hit Mississippi hard.
- Over a five-year period, we lost almost a billion dollars of badly needed funding.
- This is revenue our hospitals need to survive.
- At least 15 Mississippi hospitals are under such severe stress they are in danger of closing.
- That impact affects the mother whose child is sick when the closest doctor is an hour drive away.
- It impacts the Mississippian who has no one to care for them when they get sick.
- It impacts countless numbers of people across our state.
- Our establishment of the Medicare Upper Limits Program will help.
- Mississippi will have additional funding through the establishment of the Medicaid Upper Payment Limits Program to help keep our rural hospitals open.
- With the help of the Mississippi Hospital Association this program will provide a dramatic increase in funding.
- That funding helps every Mississippian.
- After passage by the Mississippi Legislature, and federal approval by the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), we anticipate this program will pump an additional \$90 to \$120 million into our state's health care economy.
- This money will help improve the financial condition of our hospitals, and will maintain in-patient hospital care.
- The additional revenue helps Mississippi hospitals weather the massive budget cuts implemented by Congress with the passage of the BBA of '97
- Our people across the state must have access to health care options they need for themselves and their families.
- This program is a federal matching program, the state's portion, which is put up by our hospitals.

- Our Division of Medicaid will use this money to draw down federal matching funds that are then returned to hospitals in the form of enhanced reimbursement.
- In practical terms, we will get approximately \$100 million each year to finance inpatient hospital care at virtually no cost to our state's General Fund.
- We have talked with the leadership of both the House and Senate and both are supportive of our efforts with this program.
- (Recognize Huggins, Moody, etc.)
- I look forward to working with the Mississippi House and Senate to pass this important legislation.
- We thank them for working with us to strengthen health care access and options for the people of Mississippi.
- And I call on our state's congressional delegation to work with us to gain swift federal approval of the Medicare Upper Payment Limits Program.
- I would like to thank the Mississippi Hospital Association along with Sam Cameron, Mary Patterson and Brent Alexander for helping us find ways to make positive difference in the quality of life we provide for our people.
- Sam, would you like to say a few words?
- (Rica will follow Sam with thank yous.)
- (You return to open for questions.)