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Governor Joined By Health Care Providers To Announce Three Statewide Health Care Summits

Jackson, Miss. – Governor Ronnie Musgrove, surrounded by health care professionals from across the state, announced his *Governor's Health Care Summit Series* initiative.

The Governor's Health Care Summit Series includes three health care summits to be held across the State of Mississippi. "We can't possibly tackle all the critical health care issues facing the people of our state in one day," said Governor Musgrove. "These health care summits will be helpful to every Mississippian ranging in age from birth to senior citizens."

The three summits are entitled; *Governor's Health Care Summit – Solutions for the Uninsured*, *Governor's Health Care Summit – Measuring Up* and *Governor's Health Care Summit – Defining the Needs of Mississippi's Senior Adults*.

"Our Health Care Summit Series will bring together and represent every type of health care provider," said the Governor. "By bringing together health care experts with people from across Mississippi who utilize medical services, we expect to create open dialogue that will result in solutions that make health care opportunities better for every Mississippian."

The first summit in the series, *Governor's Health Care Summit-Solutions For the Uninsured*, will be held June 1, 2001, 9:00 a.m., at the Jackson Hilton on County Line Road. The summit will feature state leaders, nationally recognized state and federal health policy experts, legislators, providers and consumers in panel presentations, reactor panel discussions and interactive break out sessions.

Panelists will include John Holahan, Ph.D., Director of the Health Policy Research Center at the Urban Institute; Dr. Aaron Shirley, M.D., Director of Community Health Services for University Medical Center and Chairman of the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation; Rica Lewis Payton, Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid; Kimberly Perry, Field Coordinator for Families USA, the national consumer health care

organization in Washington, D.C.; Chuck Espy, State Representative; Matt Salo, Director of Health Legislation for the National Governor's Association; Gary Anderson, Executive Director for the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration; Jocelyn Guyer, national policy staff at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; Robert Pugh, Executive Director of the Mississippi Primary Health Care Association.

This conference is free and the public is welcome to attend. Pre-registration is required in order to prepare lunch for meeting participants. To register, call 1-877-982-2990 or on the Internet at <http://www.mhap.org/healthcaresummit/register.html>.

The second summit in the series, *Governor's Health Care Summit – Measuring Up* will be held August 21, 2001 in Tupelo. This summit will focus on the health care issues where Mississippi faces challenges. For the last several years Mississippi has been ranked near the bottom in areas such as heart disease, diabetes, breast cancer screening, overweight teenagers and adults, physical inactivity, emergency room visits and teenage births. "This summit will give us the opportunity to bring together experts who can help develop new ways to approach improvements in the health areas with the greatest need," said Governor Musgrove. "We will look at new ways to take on health care problems that are continuing to harm the people of our state."

The third summit in the series, *Governor's Health Care Summit – Defining the Needs of Mississippi's Senior Adults* will be held October 22 and 23, 2001 in Hattiesburg. "We have been exploring new ways to develop feasible and accountable solutions, which will address the health care needs of Mississippi's growing senior adult population," said Musgrove.

"Senior Mississippians are vibrant, thriving and play a vital role in every community across our state," said the Governor. Seniors serve as mentors, tutors and volunteers in an effort to make a positive difference in their communities. "It is important that we are defining what their needs are in regard to health care so we can make sure they are getting the services necessary to maintain a good quality of life," said Governor Musgrove.

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