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Governor Musgrove Discusses Health Care Proposal With Joint Legislative Select Study Committee

Jackson, MS – Governor Ronnie Musgrove today discussed in detail with members of the Joint Legislative Select Study Committee the proposal he unveiled at the Neshoba County Fair on July 26. Musgrove has suggested using a portion of the annual payments from the tobacco settlement to maximize federal dollars for health-related purposes.

“This is one of the most important things we can do for the people of Mississippi,” said Musgrove. “We are facing serious problems in the health of our citizens, and we need to do everything possible to ensure access to quality health care, provide preventive screenings to catch health problems early, and make health insurance affordable for state and school employees and their families. This is about more than numbers and statistics; it is about the health of our children, our families, and our state.”

Making his point that “a quarter of prevention is worth a dollar of cure,” Musgrove illustrated to the lawmakers how the state can draw down more federal dollars for health care by looking for new ways to address health care needs.

“The Department of Health and Human Services has made it clear they are looking for new efforts by the states to ease the constraints on state health care budgets,” Musgrove said. “Secretary (Tommy) Thompson introduced new waiver reforms last month to encourage those efforts, and we need to be responding to this offer. We can’t afford to lose opportunities to bring in new federal dollars to help the people of Mississippi.”

Musgrove added that many Mississippians visit emergency rooms because they don’t have access to primary health care, and the cost of those emergency room visits is borne by the state. “My office receives calls every day from people who are frustrated and looking for help with health care, and we need to be there for them. Our people deserve our best efforts.”

