

May 30, 2002

Dear Friends,

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to each of you for your commitment and willingness to share your knowledge and experience to improve healthcare in Mississippi. I truly believe that by working together, we can meet the challenges that we face regarding healthcare. Our most valuable resource in Mississippi is our people. You have knowledge about the needs of our most vulnerable citizens that no one else can share. As you know, Mississippi is first in too many health categories. Many of you know the meaning of Mississippi's "first worst" firsthand. You see our citizens with diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease on a daily basis and know how this impacts their quality of life.

I'd also like to express my appreciation to Dr. Art Cosby, Professor and Director of the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University, and the Bower Foundation. They have formed a partnership that focuses on health policy and health services issues. The Decision Support Lab (DSL) was developed at Mississippi State University to assist in developing informed planning and policy. Today, NASA has joined the partnership by loaning us their DSL. Together, we are working to improve the healthcare status of Mississippians.

Healthcare is a top priority for my administration and a necessity to improve the quality of life for our citizens. With the continued support and dedication of committed leaders, like those of you gathered today, and the technology of the DSL, we will develop solutions to healthcare. I look forward to a successful meeting and hope that today's efforts will lead us to a healthy plan for tomorrow.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE