

June 9, 2003

To: Sub-Committee Members of the Governor's Medicaid Task Force

Ted Woodrell  
Sean Courtney  
Robert Pugh  
John Bower

From: Dwalia South, M.D.

Subject: Verbalizing the Charge of the Sub-Com and Putting Hands to the Plow

Dear Colleagues:

I am so sorry that I was unable to attend the last meeting of the Governor's Medicaid Task Force on March 28. I feel light years behind the rest of you now, but I understand that a lot was accomplished. Wanda Smith tells me that we need to start moving with the sub-committee and have at least one meeting prior to the next full board meeting. Thank you so much for your interest in this project and your continued willingness to serve our state in this endeavor.

My understanding is that this committee will begin the development of some sort of an educational vehicle (such as public forums around the state and whatever other strategies you come up with) to educate the people of Mississippi on the **REAL IMPACT OF THE MISSISSIPPI MEDICAID PROGRAM ON OUR STATE ECONOMY AND OUR QUALITY OF LIFE**. I can truly say that throughout the process of our meetings I personally came to understand much more about the Mississippi Medicaid program than I had ever dreamed imaginable, and I'm quite sure I am not the only member who feels enlightened. It is frightening to think how little the public really understands about the Program based on questions that people have posed to me in forums such as Medical Society meetings and jaw-dropping questions from well-meaning friends and patients. One person who particularly needs enlightenment is the Republican Gubernatorial Candidate who seems to think that the solution to the Medicaid Budget Problem is to shuck it all and start a completely new system, presumably one of his own design. He has no specifics about how he would accomplish this, but plenty of campaign rhetoric. (Excuse me for this departure from professionalism.) **WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK OF THE IDEA OF A FORMAL PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE TOPIC OF "MISSISSIPPI MEDICAID CRISIS" BETWEEN THE CANDIDATES ???** I think the public would benefit from visualizing the distinction between style and substance in the candidates who would lead our state.

We need you guys to get together soon for a brainstorming session. HOW DOES FRIDAY **JUNE 27** SOUND ??? Please e-mail or call Wanda Smith today or tomorrow regarding the feasibility of this date.

Thank you for your passion and continued commitment to service.

Sincerely,

Dwalia