

Governor Ronnie Musgrove's Health Care Accomplishments, 2000:

Children's Health Insurance Program

The Children's Health Insurance program received federal approval in December 1999. When Governor Musgrove took office in January 2000, fewer than 525 Mississippi children were enrolled in CHIP. We have more than 85,000 children in our state who are eligible to receive health insurance benefits through the Mississippi Health Benefits Program, which provides health insurance to Mississippi's children whose parents are caught in the gap between making too much money to be eligible for Medicaid, but not enough to afford health insurance.

The Governor's office joined with the Department of Human Services, the Division of Medicaid and the Department of Finance and Administration to develop a new action and marketing plan for CHIP. While in the development stages of planning, staff members met with community health care advocacy groups, medical professionals and concerned community members to gather their advice and input as the plan took shape.

On May 9th we revealed a community outreach plan and new aggressive marketing and advertising campaigns to promote the program. The campaign materials include a new brochure with a tear-off application, a poster, print advertisement, several radio public service announcements and a television public service announcement.

We have found ways to simplify the application process, eliminate the waiting period and make the information much more widely available to parents who are seeking health insurance for their children. Applications are now available at county Department of Human Services offices, local Health Department offices, community health centers, rural health clinics, Head Start Centers and some private health clinics.

Thanks to several new partnerships we are reaching more Mississippi families with information about CHIP. The Mississippi Hospital Association volunteered to place applications in hospitals across the state. The Department of Education and the Governor's office partnered to bring schools into the enrollment effort. A school will receive \$20.00 for every child they successfully enroll in CHIP. This incentive program will allow schools to use the money they earn for school programs or other needs. The Department of Health has enlisted its 2,500 employees to help spread the message. Their

employees will wear lapel buttons that advertise the plan. They are also trained to talk with people about the CHIP program and enroll those eligible children.

Partnerships continue to form and we continue to enroll our children and give them the health insurance they desperately need. The Governor's administration will not rest until every eligible child is enrolled.

Improving Access to Affordable Care

Primary care providers are becoming more and more scarce. We must act if we are going to stop this exodus. During this past legislative session, Governor Musgrove signed House Bill 729, which establishes a Medical Education Scholarship Program that will provide up to twenty new recipients each year with a full scholarship to obtain a medical education at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. When scholarship recipients have completed their residency, they agree to practice family medicine for at least ten years in an area of the state that is designated a critical needs area.

This scholarship program will provide two positive outcomes for the people of Mississippi. More students will have access to scholarship funds that will aid them in their efforts to attain their education, and people who live in areas of the state that had to drive long distances for medical care will have more, options and opportunities to access quality and affordable healthcare.

During the past legislative session Governor Musgrove also signed legislation authorizing the licensing of nurse practitioners. Before this legislation was signed, Mississippi had not allowed nurse practitioners to administer services. Now, Mississippians have another option when it comes to making choices of healthcare providers.

Trauma Care Network

After more than 20 years of debate, Governor Musgrove in 1996, then Lt. Governor, provided the leadership that established the Mississippi Trauma Care System. Ronnie Musgrove played a critical role in Mississippi's hospitals' receiving Trauma Center designations. Now as the chief executive, Governor Musgrove's continued support of the trauma care system ensures that all citizens have access to adequate trauma response and that each regional system is an integral part of the statewide trauma system.

The statewide system operates through geographic trauma care regions, comprised of voluntarily-participating hospitals and medical staffs. They conduct public education, information and injury prevention programs. They also provide financial assistance for indigent trauma victims, and conduct ongoing evaluation of trauma care programs.

So many Mississippians' lives will be improved because of the designation of Trauma Care Centers across the state. Medical personnel not only touch the lives of the patients they treat, but they have a profound positive effect on the family members of the patients.

The role that the Trauma Care Centers will have in our state is important as we further develop top-rated healthcare options for the people of Mississippi.

Prescription Medications for Senior Adults

Senior Mississippians are vibrant, thriving and play a vital role in every town, city and community across our state. We are exploring new ways to develop feasible and accountable solutions, which will address the needs of Mississippi's growing senior adult population.

Plans are now underway for a Senior Summit where senior adults, caregivers, medical professionals and others will join in an effort to address the areas of greatest need for our seniors. Participants in the summit will cover topics such as affordable prescription medications, long-term care and single entry services.