

*Remarks for the  
State Board of Health Press Conference  
October 25, 2001*

Good afternoon.

On July 26, I unveiled a proposal to address the health care needs of the people of Mississippi. This proposal involves using a portion of the annual tobacco settlement payment to maximize federal dollars for health care.

The proposal seeks to use tobacco dollars for the purpose for which they were intended – the health of our people.

Yesterday morning, I presented this proposal to the State Board of Health. The board is well aware of the health care issues facing our state. They have dealt with these issues on a daily basis.

They know the faces of the people who are dealing with diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

They know the frustration of the people who cannot afford health insurance and are forced to use the emergency room for their primary care.

They know the statistics that demonstrate the scale of the work that lies before us.

And they know this health care proposal offers options and opportunities that can change the faces, the frustration, and the statistics.

I am pleased to have their support for this proposal. I'd like to ask Dr. Ed Thompson, Executive Director of the Health Department, to make a few comments and then we'll be glad to answer any questions.