

*Remarks for the  
Health Care Press Conference  
April 30, 2002*

Good afternoon. We are here today to announce two great pieces of news for health care in Mississippi.

As I said last week, with the flexibility to manage Medicaid, we are working to restructure health care to the advantage of the people who need it and to make our health care system as effective and efficient as possible.

First, we are meeting next week with representatives from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, also known as CMS to discuss the issues outlined in the health care plan I unveiled last fall.

In particular, we will focus on prescription drugs, diabetes and heart disease, school nursing, home and community-based services for disabled individuals, and screenings for breast and cervical cancer.

I am excited about the meetings next week and the promise they hold for Medicaid and the entire health care system. I believe that, with the combined professional expertise of CMS and Rica Lewis-Payton at the table, we will see strong progress.

I am also pleased to announce that Mississippi will be one of nine states taking part of a National Policy Academy on health care in August. This academy will focus on two of the “worst firsts” we are working to turn around – diabetes and heart disease.

Rica Lewis-Payton and several others from the state, including legislators and health care professionals, will be a part of this policy meeting.

That's a reason we chose to come here today. This center, one of the oldest community health centers in the country, is part of the National Diabetic Collaboration, and the work done here is vitally important in the effort to curb this disease that affects so many Mississippians.

I'd like to recognize Dr. Jasmin Chapman, CEO of the center, and thank her for her good work here.

I am confident in the work we are doing to make health care in Mississippi the best it can be. I will not stop until we reach that goal, and I know I'm not alone in that effort.

I'd like to ask Rica Lewis-Payton to make a few remarks. Rica?

*(Rica speaks)*

We'd be glad to answer any questions...