

*Remarks for the  
11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Long-Term Care  
September 19, 2002*

(recognize Janice Broome-Brooks, other dignitaries)

I appreciate the opportunity to be here with you today, and want to thank you for the dedication you bring to your work.

I've always believed the measure of our society is found in how we treat those who need our help the most – and the commitment we make to meet the needs of our people may be the highest standard by which our society is remembered.

There are great needs in our state. There are people in Mississippi with specific long-term care needs, and they must be met.

Those you serve have already served Mississippi. They have invested their time and their energy to building this great state of ours. Now, it's our turn to serve them.

These individuals have done, and continue to do, so much for our state and communities.

I share their commitment to a better Mississippi, and together we can reach our shared hopes for better schools, better health care, and better jobs for our people.

I understand Bo Bowen from the Division of Medicaid will be speaking after me this morning, and giving you an update on the situation with Medicaid.

Let me give you a little teaser: We're on our way to making it the most efficient and effective Medicaid program in the nation. About 25 percent of our population – more than 700,000 Mississippians – are on the Medicaid rolls today.

I'm proud of the work that's been done with this agency, especially reducing its shortfall while serving a larger number of people. It's strong evidence of how we can make a difference in the lives of our citizens.

Whether through Medicaid, Human Services or any agency that serves the long-term care needs of our people, we are fighting for the resources we need and we remain committed to those we serve – and all for the simplest reasons.

The investments we make today in health care will mean a stronger Mississippi tomorrow.

The investments we make today in education will mean a smarter Mississippi tomorrow.

The investments we make today in jobs will mean a more secure Mississippi tomorrow.

And, the investments we make in each other today will impact the generations that follow – and there is no greater legacy we can leave.

The work you do makes that legacy stronger, and I thank you for that.

I wish you the best for a successful conference.