

*Remarks for the  
Mississippi Alliance for Prevention Press Conference  
September 18, 2002*

Good morning. On May 21, we announced a new program aimed at curbing substance abuse in Mississippi children between the ages of 12 and 17. This program is the Governor's Mississippi Alliance for Prevention – or MAP – and it's going to help lead us to a brighter and more successful future.

We've worked hard to secure the funding for this program – a total of \$9 million over the next three years.

The funding is coming to the state through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

In partnership with the Department of Mental Health, we are going to distribute these funds to communities around the state to implement prevention programs at the local level. These communities submitted proposals in competition for \$100,000 per year for three years.

We've got representatives of those 19 communities here with us today – and I want to thank them for their commitment to Mississippi's children. They represent all areas of the state, but they do so with a unified cause.

I'm especially proud of the communities represented here today because their proposals were reviewed and scored by an objective panel – each of which included an out-of-state member – and the comments on the proposals were overwhelmingly positive.

Support of this initiative will come from a 42 member Advisory Council, made up of professionals in the areas of substance abuse prevention, mental health, compulsive disorders, and volunteerism.

These professionals will be working closely with Dr. Randy Hendrix and the Department of Mental Health to help the communities around the state carry out their programs, and I want to thank DREAM for their staff support of this exciting initiative.

There's an old saying that our children are the message we send to a time we won't see – and I believe every one here today would agree with that statement.

Dr. Hendrix couldn't be with us here today, but Roger McMurtry is here to speak from the perspective of the Department of Mental Health. I'd like to ask him to offer his thoughts, then we'll be glad to take your questions. Roger?