

*Remarks for the
MS Alliance for School Health Press Conference
January 21, 2002*

Thank you, Dr. Cooper, and good morning.

About a year ago, I met with Joe Cole and Ron Cain, both members of the Governor's Commission on Physical Fitness and Sports.

I pledged my full support to their efforts and designated a member of my staff to work closely with them to increase the importance of physical activity and exercise across our state.

I want to thank Joe, Ron, and the other members of the Commission who are here today.

Today, I have one result of the Commission's hard work – their report card on the physical activity and exercise of our people.

The grade on these two areas is an "F." In a time when our health care needs are so vital, this grade just isn't acceptable.

It's important for both children and adults to participate in exercise and physical activity. It makes us healthier and more productive in our work and family lives.

Some people who know understand that fact first-hand, and who witness the benefits of exercise every day, are some metro-area sports reporters who join us this morning.

These reporters have accepted the challenge to see which of them can "Get Fitter Faster" in 2002.

Here they are, the ones who have accepted the challenge:

- Rob Jay, WLBT;
- Rick Whitlow, WAPT;
- Tony Bahou (*bah-hoo*) WAPT;
- Brian Eubank, ESPN Radio;
- Russ Robinson, ESPN Radio;
- Doug Colson, with Chuck and Doug in the Morning;
- Kathy Lumpkin, Clarion-Ledger.

Today, they begin a ten-week exercise challenge at Baptist Hospital's Healthplex.

They will have ten weeks to exercise and maintain a healthy diet. The reporter with the most improvement will be declared the winner.

Today, we challenge all Mississippians to join them in the effort for better health.

You can get fitness tips and meal plans to help in this effort by logging on to my website, www.governor.state.ms.us, or Baptist Hospital's website at www.mbmc.org.

Good luck to all of you. We look forward to watching your progress, and may the best sports reporter win!

Thank you.