

*Remarks for the  
Gulf Coast Minority Health Fair  
March 29, 2003*

- Recognize Dr. Amy
  
- Gettysburg story
  
- Image of MS in 2003 far different than the image most know
  - Moving faster than anyone else into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - Competing and leading in the global marketplace
  - Setting new standards for education and economic development

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
  - Princeton Review: 6<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
  - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article
  - 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers
  
- We’re proving that we’re serious about education
  - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow
  - 62 percent of general fund

- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs
  
- Time to change another image of Mississippi
  - No longer a state that depends on agriculture / low wage jobs
  - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people
  
- We gained the attention of companies around the world when we landed Nissan
  - Now more than ever, Mississippi is being visited by companies

- In the middle of national recession, we've had several companies just this week visiting sites across the state
  
- They are coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do
  - Site Selection magazine: Mississippi ranked as Top 10 location for new companies
  - One of top 10 states for small business survival
  - Expansion magazine: 4 Mississippi cities ranked in latest survey of 50 hottest American cities for expansion or location of facilities / Pascagoula, Gulfport, Biloxi, Jackson

- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer
  - They realize the image has changed
  
- The image continues to change despite the obstacles still before us
  - The challenge is to turn those obstacles into opportunities
  
- The ultimate health of our state depends on the health of our people
  - Fighting to ensure quality health care for all Mississippians

- There are challenges in this fight
  - Worst firsts: heart disease, diabetes, obesity
  
- More than half the nation's deaths from heart disease are women
  - African-American women more likely to die of breast cancer than women of any other racial or ethnic group
  
- We're working to make sure health care works for everybody
  - Rica Lewis Payton / flexibility in Medicaid

- Working to ensure health care available in rural areas
  - Signed legislation yesterday to authorize local counties or municipalities to transfer property to non-profit primary health care clinics
  - Good way to extend health care to those who need it most
  
- There's no denying there are challenges still before us
  - There's also no denying the progress we've made

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
  - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
  - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
  - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state



- It's an image that you're helping to build every day through your work
  - Thank you for your commitment and dedication to building a better Mississippi
  - Building good schools, good jobs, good communities