

For Immediate Release

January 31, 2001

Contact: Lisa Mader

(601) 359-3227

Mississippi Health Benefits - Surprise, You May Qualify

Many working families who think they are not eligible for Mississippi Health Benefits (CHIP) may now be pleasantly surprised. The monthly income, without any deductions, for a family of four to qualify is \$2,842.00 per month.

When MSHP was implemented in 1998, 233,689 children under age 19 were receiving Medicaid benefits. As of 12/31/00, 339,885 children were enrolled in CHIP and all Medicaid programs. That's a net gain of 106,196 children who are now receiving health benefits since MHB was first introduced and 24,028 of these 106,885 kids are CHIP enrollees. The remaining 82,857 are on Medicaid. Both Medicaid and CHIP provide full health insurance coverage including doctor visits, hospitalization, dental care and eyeglasses. Applications received during the year 2000 were consistently approved at a ratio of two Medicaid for every one CHIP.

Recently two major changes have made the application process easier. One is self declaration of age,(documentation no longer required with your completed application.) The second is the recently enacted zero waiting period, (meaning the child applying for CHIP must be without health insurance coverage at the time of the application.) There is no more waiting for six months without coverage. Rica Lewis-Payton, Executive Director of the Office of the Governor Division of Medicaid continues to urge that every eligible child immediately be enrolled in this program. "Mississippi Health Benefits is the protection qualified parents need to protect their families from today's high cost of medical care. Not insuring our children keeps them at risk." To learn if you are eligible for Mississippi Health Benefits call 1-877-543-7669. The call is free, it's confidential and it can give you peace of mind.

#