

For Immediate Release

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Rica Lewis-Payton Confirmed as Medicaid's Executive Director

Jackson, Miss. — Acting on the recommendation of the Senate Public Health Committee, the Mississippi State Senate confirmed Rica Lewis-Payton as Executive Director of the state's Division of Medicaid today. Appointed by Governor Musgrove this past July, Ms. Lewis-Payton has been serving as the acting head of the 599 employees who serve over 559,000 Mississippians enrolled in the state's Medicaid program.

The 2.4 billion dollar a year program is mandated to provide equal access to quality health care for qualified recipients despite their socio-economic status. The new agency head stated, "I want us to continue building strong relations with the beneficiaries we have the privilege to serve and their providers, and with other agencies and advocacy groups. It is also my goal to maintain a work environment where all employees feel they are valued and have the opportunity to excel."

Rica-Lewis Payton is the third of four children. She earned her bachelor's degree in economics from Talladega College and her master's degree in hospital and health administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In 1993 she went on to become the Assistant to the Chief of Staff at the G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery VA Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi after holding various positions of increasing management responsibilities at the VA since 1982. Ms. Lewis-Payton is married to JSU Golf Coach/Retired NFL Player Eddie Payton and they have two children Edward and Erica.