

Chapter No. 510  
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***SENATE BILL NO. 2646***

Originated in Senate *Remondino* Secretary

SENATE BILL NO. 2646

AN ACT TO CREATE A STATE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR DEFINITIONS; TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR THE WELLNESS PROGRAM; TO AUTHORIZE STATE AGENCIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM; TO REPEAL SECTIONS 41-97-1 THROUGH 41-97-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH AUTHORIZE STATE AGENCIES TO ESTABLISH EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER WELLNESS AND PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAMS, PRESCRIBE THE DUTIES OF AGENCIES ESTABLISHING THOSE PROGRAMS, AND REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH TO ADMINISTER AND APPROVE THOSE PROGRAMS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

**SECTION 1.** State Employee Wellness Program. (1)

Definitions. In this act:

(a) "Department" means the Mississippi Department of Health.

(b) "State Health Officer" means the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Health.

(c) "State agency" means a department, institution, commission or other agency that is in the executive, judicial or legislative branch of state government.

(d) "State employee" means a state employee who participates in the state and school employees health insurance plan under Section 25-15-3 et seq.

(2) Rules. The State Board of Health is authorized to adopt rules for the administration of this act.

(3) Creation of model program; designation of coordinator.

(a) The department may designate a statewide wellness coordinator to create and develop for use by state agencies a model statewide wellness program to improve the health and wellness of state employees. The wellness program may include:

(i) Education that targets the most costly or prevalent health care claims, including information addressing stress management, nutrition, healthy eating habits, alcohol and drug abuse, physical activity, disease prevention, and smoking cessation;

(ii) The dissemination or use of available health risk assessment tools and programs, including surveys that identify an employee's risk level for health-related problems and programs that suggest to employees methods for minimizing risks;

(iii) The development of strategies for the promotion of health, nutritional and fitness-related resources in state agencies;

(iv) The development and promotion of environmental change strategies that integrate healthy behaviors and physical activity, including recommending healthy food choices in snack bars, vending machines and state-run cafeterias located in state buildings; and

(v) Optional incentives to encourage participation in the wellness program, including providing flexibility in employee scheduling to allow for physical activity and participation in the wellness program and coordinating discounts with gyms and fitness centers across the state.

(b) The statewide wellness coordinator is authorized to:

(i) Coordinate with the State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board and other agencies that administer a health benefits program as necessary to develop the model wellness program, prevent duplication of efforts, provide information and resources to employees, and encourage the use of wellness benefits included in the health benefits program;

(ii) Maintain a set of Internet links to health resources for use by state employees;

(iii) Design an outreach campaign to educate state employees about health and fitness-related resources, including available exercise facilities, online tools, and health and fitness-related organizations;

(iv) Study the implementation and participation rates of state agency worksite wellness programs and report the findings to the Legislature biennially; and

(v) Organize an annual conference hosted by the department for all state agency wellness councils.

(c) The statewide wellness coordinator may consult with a state agency operating health care programs on matters relating to wellness promotion.

(d) A state agency shall designate an employee to serve as the wellness liaison between the agency and the statewide wellness coordinator.

(e) A state agency may implement a wellness program based on the model program or components of the model program developed under this section.

(f) The statewide wellness coordinator may assist a state agency in establishing employee wellness demonstration projects that incorporate best practices for encouraging employee participation and the achievement of wellness benefits. A wellness program demonstration project may implement strategies to optimize the return of state investment in employee wellness, including savings in direct health care costs and savings from preventing conditions and diagnoses through better employee wellness.

(4) State agency wellness councils. (a) A state agency may facilitate the development of a wellness council composed of employees and managers of the agency to promote worksite wellness in the agency.

(b) A wellness council may work to:

(i) Increase employee interest in worksite wellness;

(ii) Develop and implement policies to improve agency infrastructure to allow for increased worksite wellness; and

(iii) Involve employees in worksite wellness programs.

(c) Members of a wellness council may review the recommendations of the statewide wellness coordinator and develop a plan to implement the recommendations.

(d) A state agency may allow its employees to participate in wellness council activities for two (2) to three (3) hours each month.

(e) The department shall provide technical support to each state agency wellness council and shall provide financial support to councils if funds are available.

(f) A wellness council may annually identify best practices for worksite wellness in the agency and report the practices to the statewide wellness coordinator.

(5) A state agency may allow all employees to attend on-site wellness seminars when offered.

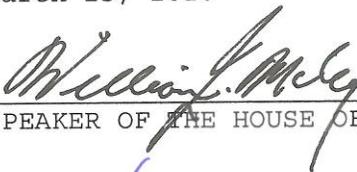
**SECTION 2.** Sections 41-97-1, 41-97-3, 41-97-5 and 41-97-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, which authorize state agencies to establish employee volunteer wellness and physical fitness programs, prescribe the duties of agencies establishing those programs, and require the State Board of Health to administer and approve those programs, are repealed.

**SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2010.

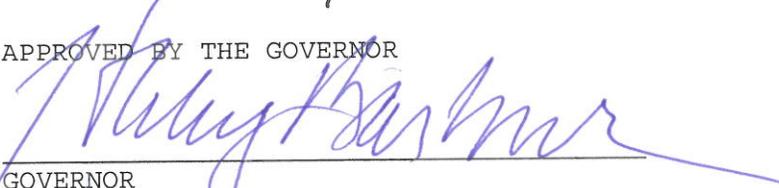
PASSED BY THE SENATE  
March 25, 2010

  
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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
March 25, 2010

  
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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR

  
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GOVERNOR

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