

Taking a Head-On Approach to Health Care Issues in Mississippi

Providing better health care coverage for all Mississippians continues to be a top priority of my administration. We are constantly looking for new, innovative ways to improve the quality of life for every person living in our state. The Governor's Health Care Summit Series includes three health care summits to be held across the State of Mississippi.

We cannot possibly tackle all the critical health care issues facing the people of our state in one day. That is why we are bringing together health care experts with people who utilize medical services through a series of health care summits to create solutions that make health care opportunities and access better for every Mississippian. These health care summits will be helpful to every Mississippian ranging in age from birth to senior citizens.

We are taking a head-on approach to the health care issues in Mississippi, and we expect to create open dialogue that will result in solutions that make health care opportunities better for every Mississippian. Solutions that will create an even better atmosphere for living in our state.

The health care professionals and providers involved in the summits come from different areas of the state, with different areas of interest and expertise. We do have one thing in common; we are committed to ensuring that every person in the state of Mississippi has access to top quality health care options and has the opportunity to have their medical needs met.

The first summit in the series, *Governor's Health Care Summit-Solutions For the Uninsured*, will address the health insurance needs of the people of our state and will be held June 1, 2001, in Jackson. It will feature state leaders, nationally recognized state and federal health policy experts, legislators, providers and consumers in panel presentations, reactor panel discussions and interactive break out sessions.

The second summit in the series, *Governor's Health Care Summit – Measuring Up*, will be in Tupelo on August 21st, and will focus on the health care issues where Mississippi faces challenges. For the last several years Mississippi has been ranked near the bottom in areas such as heart disease, diabetes, breast cancer screening, overweight teenagers and adults, physical inactivity, emergency room visits and teenage births. This summit will give us the opportunity to bring together experts who can help develop new ways to approach improvements in the health areas that are continuing to harm the people of our state.

The third summit in the series, *Governor's Health Care Summit – Defining the Needs of Mississippi's Senior Adults*, will be in Hattiesburg on October 22nd and 23rd, and will explore new ways to develop feasible and accountable solutions, which will address the health care needs of Mississippi's growing senior adult population.

Senior Mississippians are vibrant, thriving and play a vital role in every community across our state. Seniors serve as mentors, tutors and volunteers in an effort to make a positive difference in their communities. It is important that we are defining what their needs are in regard to health care so we can make sure they are getting the services necessary to maintain a good quality of life.

The conferences are free and the public is welcome to attend. Pre-registration is required in order to prepare lunch for meeting participants. To get more information about the Governor's Health Care Summit Series, call 1-877-982-2990 or on the Internet at <http://www.mhap.org/healthcaresummit/register.html>.

Mississippi is facing a critical need for better health care options in the rural areas of our state. We need improvements made in the areas of health insurance and preventative health care, and with our state's growing senior adult population, we have new things to learn about their health care needs. We are committed to having healthier children - healthier adults - healthier Mississippians.