

*Remarks for the  
National Health Center Week Press Conference  
August 8, 2003*

- Recognize Robert Pugh of Mississippi  
Primary Health Care Association
- I'm happy to join you today in celebrating  
National Health Center Week
- I am honored and it is indeed a pleasure to  
be surrounded by so many people who care  
deeply about the health and well being of  
Mississippians

- Healthcare is not a privilege to be enjoyed by just a few
  - Nor is it a partisan issue over which we should become divisive
  - Instead, to ensure quality health care for our people
    - We must work together
    - To find affordable, accessible solutions
  
- By bringing people together,
  - Community health centers are helping to make that happen

- I am proud to know that this program is supported members of both political parties,
  - As well as President Bush
  
- This partnership is a testament that Government does not always have all the answers
  
- Through a partnership of public and private interest,
  - Community health centers provide economic opportunity
  - Not only through the jobs they create
  - But also through the services they provide

- This venture shows that private enterprise believes
  - Healthy citizens make a better workforce for today and tomorrow
  - Healthy adults wake up ready to go to work
  - Healthy children go to school ready to learn the skills necessary to be productive members of tomorrow's workforce

- In 2001 Mississippi Health Care Centers provided health services to 268,326 Mississippians
  - Their doors are open to all seeking health care
  - Who otherwise would not have had access to care
  
- A continuing focus on primary care and preventative care will benefit Mississippi for years to come
  - It is in our best interest to treat health concerns before they become problems
  - It is far less painful and expensive to immunize a child today than it is to treat an illness tomorrow

- I'm proud to say Mississippi ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation
  - for early childhood immunizations
  - But we must not be complacent
  - We must continue moving forward
  
- By working together with public and private partnerships to address health care
  - we can make tomorrow,
  - the coming months
  - and the coming years
  - brighter for all of our children
  
- *Read proclamation, then ask Robert Pugh to make remarks*