

For Immediate Release

October 13, 2003

Contact: Shannon McMullan

601-359-3227

Governor Musgrove Offers Mediator to BCBS and NMMC

(Jackson, MS) –Today, Governor Ronnie Musgrove announced that he has recommended an outside professional mediator to facilitate contract negotiations between Blue Cross Blue Shield and North Mississippi Medical Center.

“Access to affordable health care is critical. After speaking with Rick Hale of Blue Cross Blue Shield and Mickey Holliman of North Mississippi Medical Center, I am encouraging them to continue their negotiations and have offered the appointment of an outside professional mediator to assist,” said Musgrove. “To keep healthcare costs down for everyday Mississippians it is essential we make every effort to facilitate contract negotiations between these parties.”

Musgrove stated that access to affordable health care is a critical component of building better communities. Recently, contract negotiations between North Mississippi Medical Center and Blue Cross Blue Shield ended in a dispute over reimbursement rates.

“Today, we are rolling up our sleeves to ensure that Mississippians continue to have access to affordable health care in rural Mississippi,” said Musgrove. “Healthy children go to school ready to learn, ready to succeed, ready to make the most of their promise and potential. Healthy adults are more productive workers and are better prepared to face the future.”

###