

By: Flaggs

To: Public Health and
Welfare

HOUSE BILL NO. 877

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE TASK FORCE TO
 2 MAKE A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF EXISTING PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE
 3 IN MISSISSIPPI, EXAMINE AND STUDY APPROACHES TAKEN IN OTHER STATES
 4 TO HELP MAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS MORE AFFORDABLE, AND MAKE
 5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS BY THE LEGISLATURE AND EXECUTIVE
 6 BRANCH AGENCIES TO MAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS MORE AFFORDABLE FOR
 7 RESIDENTS OF MISSISSIPPI; TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE
 8 TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE THAT THE TASK FORCE SHALL MAKE A REPORT OF
 9 ITS WORK TO THE LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR BEFORE DECEMBER 15,
 10 2000; TO PROVIDE THAT THE TASK FORCE SHALL BE ASSIGNED TO THE
 11 DIVISION OF MEDICAID FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY, AND THE
 12 DIVISION SHALL DESIGNATE STAFF TO ASSIST THE TASK FORCE; AND FOR
 13 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

15 SECTION 1. (1) There is created the Prescription Drug
 16 Coverage Task Force, which shall be composed of thirteen (13)
 17 members as follows:

18 (a) The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Public Health
 19 and Welfare Committee of the House of Representatives;

20 (b) The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Public Health
 21 and Welfare Committee of the Senate;

22 (c) One (1) member of the House of Representatives
 23 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

24 (d) One (1) member of the Senate appointed by the
 25 Lieutenant Governor;

26 (e) The Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid;

27 (f) The Commissioner of Insurance;

28 (g) Two (2) persons who are representatives of the
29 pharmaceutical manufacturing industry, to be appointed by the
30 Governor;

31 (h) One (1) person who is a pharmacist licensed in
32 Mississippi, to be appointed by the Governor; and

33 (i) Two (2) other persons appointed by the Governor.

34 (2) At its first meeting, the task force shall elect a
35 chairman and vice chairman from its membership, and shall adopt
36 rules for transacting its business and keeping records. Members
37 of the task force shall receive a per diem in the amount provided
38 in Section 25-3-69 for each day engaged in the business of the
39 task force. Members of the task force other than the legislative
40 members shall receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred
41 while engaged in official business of the task force in accordance
42 with Section 25-3-41, and the legislative members of the task
43 force shall receive the expense allowance provided for in Section
44 5-1-47.

45 (3) The duties of the task force shall be to:

46 (a) Make a comprehensive study of prescription drug
47 coverage in Mississippi, examining existing coverage under health
48 insurance plans and government programs such as Medicaid and
49 Medicare; the problems that residents of Mississippi have in
50 obtaining necessary prescription drugs at affordable prices; and
51 the number and demographics of those residents of Mississippi who
52 are unable to obtain necessary prescription drugs because of their
53 high cost;

54 (b) Examine and study approaches taken by other states
55 to help make prescription drugs more affordable for the elderly
56 and other persons, specifically the program in Maine, which
57 provides discounts on drugs to residents who lack coverage; the

58 program in California, which requires pharmacies participating in
59 Medicaid to supply the same discounts to Medicare beneficiaries;
60 and the program in Texas, which provides for voluntary drug
61 rebates to be passed on to residents enrolled in certain programs;
62 and

63 (c) Make recommendations for actions by the Legislature
64 and executive branch agencies to make prescription drugs more
65 affordable for residents of Mississippi.

66 (4) Before December 15, 2000, the task force shall make a
67 report of its work and shall submit a copy of the report to the
68 Legislature and the Governor.

69 (5) The task force shall be assigned to the Division of
70 Medicaid for administrative purposes only, and the division shall
71 designate staff to assist the task force. The task force may
72 solicit grants, donations and other funds, and may accept and
73 expend any funds that are made available to the task force to
74 carry out its purpose.

75 (6) All agencies, departments, offices and institutions of
76 the state, including the state universities and the community and
77 junior colleges, shall cooperate with the task force with such
78 assistance as requested by the task force.

79 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
80 and after July 1, 2000.