HOUSE BILL NO. 321

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON OBESITY AND ITS EFFECTS; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT DETAILING ITS FINDINGS TO THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) This act shall be known as the "Obesity Impact Study."

(2) For the purposes of this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings ascribed in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(a) "Obese" means excessively fat.

(b) "Obesity" means an increase in body weight beyond the limitation of skeletal and physical requirement, as the result of an excessive accumulation of fat in the body.

(c) "Morbid obesity" means the condition of weighing two (2) or three (3), or more, times the ideal weight.

(3) The Mississippi State Department of Health (department) shall conduct a study on the effects of obesity in adults and children for the purpose of identifying factors that have a negative impact on their health and well-being and making recommendations for improvement in awareness of the problem of obesity and suggested treatment. The department shall also explore means to decrease the number of residents affected by obesity. The study shall include, but not be limited to, the following components:

(a) A statement of the number of residents that are affected by obesity and the reasons for this condition;
(b) An exploration of the causal relationship that exists between obesity and serious, life threatening disorders such as: hypertension, dyslipidemia, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, gallbladder disease, respiratory dysfunction, gout, osteoarthritis, and other health problems;

(c) An estimation of the amount of money spent on health problems caused by obesity;

(d) The potential for a reduction in health care expenditures through obesity prevention efforts;

(e) The effects of obesity in children on their overall health and the health care costs for treatment; and

(f) Recommendations for a program that would heighten awareness about obesity and its related health effects and to discourage behavior that leads to obesity.

(4) Before December 15, 2001, the department shall submit a written report detailing the results of its study and recommending any legislation necessary for the implementation of its proposals to the Legislature.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.