HOUSE BILL NO. 216

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE PRESCRIBED USE OF PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS BY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN THIS STATE AND THE EFFECTS OF PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS ON THOSE CHILDREN, AND TO PRESENT A REPORT OF ITS STUDY TO THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The Legislature finds that:

(a) During the past decade the number of American children receiving psychiatric drugs for behavioral and emotional disorders has increased dramatically; and

(b) National medical reports indicate that psychiatric drugs are prescribed to between five and six million children each year, who represent about ten percent (10%) of the total school-age population; and

(c) The International Narcotics Control Board of the World Health Organization has reported that the United States is among the leading users of psychiatric drugs and has warned us against our national trend to overprescribe stimulants for children; and

(d) Opponents of the use of psychiatric drugs express concern that there is not enough information about the drugs' effect on children's development or on their long-term side effects, while proponents say that children sometimes need medication to combat mental illnesses.

(2) The State Department of Health shall conduct a study on the prescribed use of psychiatric drugs by school-age children in this state and the effects of psychiatric drugs on those children, and shall provide recommendations for improved oversight of the
prescribed use of psychiatric drugs among those children. The
department shall present a report of its study, together with any
recommended legislation, to the Legislature not later than

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2002.