

By: Representatives Bondurant, Barnett,
Masterson, Flaggs, Scott

To: Public Health and Human
Services; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1046

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HEPATITIS C
2 FOR THE PURPOSE OF INCREASING THE PREVENTION AND THE CONTROL OF
3 THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS; TO PROVIDE FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP AND ITS
4 DUTIES; TO PROVIDE THAT A REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL SHALL BE
5 SUBMITTED BEFORE THE CONVENING OF THE 2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION;
6 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

7 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C is a silent killer that is largely
8 asymptomatic until irreversible liver damage occurs; and

9 WHEREAS, infecting approximately four million five hundred
10 thousand (4,500,000) people in the United States, with thirty-five
11 thousand (35,000) new infections each year, Hepatitis C is
12 referred to as the "silent epidemic"; and

13 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C infects three times more people than
14 does AIDS, and is responsible for one-third (1/3) of all liver
15 transplants; and

16 WHEREAS, being one (1) of the most significant preventable
17 and treatable public health problems facing our nation today,
18 Hepatitis C may be carried by individuals who expose others to the
19 virus for more than twenty (20) years without showing any
20 symptoms; and

21 WHEREAS, Hepatitis C does not have a vaccine, and as a
22 result, emphasis must be placed on other means of awareness and
23 prevention of this disease, including, but not limited to,
24 educating individuals who are at high risk for contracting
25 Hepatitis C, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, health care
26 workers and the general public; and

27 WHEREAS, educating the public and health care community
28 throughout the state about Hepatitis C will help to ensure an

29 optimal approach to controlling this lethal disease; NOW,
30 THEREFORE,

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

32 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established the State Advisory
33 Council on Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).

34 (2) The advisory council shall consist of ten (10) members
35 as follows:

36 (a) One (1) member of the House Public Health and Human
37 Services Committee who is appointed by the Speaker of the House of
38 Representatives;

39 (b) One (1) member of the Senate Public Health and
40 Welfare Committee who is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;

41 (c) One (1) member of the House Military Affairs
42 Committee who is appointed by the Speaker of the House of
43 Representatives;

44 (d) One (1) member of the Senate Veterans and Military
45 Affairs Committee who is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;

46 (e) One (1) member shall be an internist who is
47 appointed by the Governor;

48 (f) One (1) member shall be a hematologist who is
49 appointed by the Governor;

50 (h) One (1) member shall be a hepatologist who is
51 appointed by the Governor;

52 (i) One (1) member shall be a clinical researcher
53 specializing in the diseases of the liver who is appointed by the
54 Governor;

55 (j) One (1) member shall be a member of the general
56 public who is appointed by the Governor; and

57 (k) One (1) member shall be a nurse practitioner who is
58 appointed by the Governor.

59 (3) The duties of the advisory council shall include, but
60 are not limited to, the following:

61 (a) Collecting and analyzing data regarding the extent
62 to which Mississippians suffer from HCV, and the programs and
63 services currently available to meet the needs of those
64 individuals and to identify those who may be infected;

65 (b) Collecting and analyzing data to demonstrate the
66 economic impact on the state of treating HCV and the estimated
67 cost savings of implementing a comprehensive statewide prevention
68 and management model;

69 (c) Establishing and maintaining a resources data bank
70 containing information about HCV and related subjects accessible
71 to educational and research institutions, as well as members of
72 the general public;

73 (d) Establishing recommendations to enhance funding for
74 effective prevention and management programs and services,
75 including Medicaid, private health insurance programs and other
76 state and federal funds;

77 (e) Recommending policy to enhance clinical education
78 curricula in medical, nursing and other schools of higher
79 education to implement comprehensive, coordinated HCV awareness
80 and education courses;

81 (f) Recommending policy to increase education and
82 awareness among primary care physicians, other health care
83 professionals, veterans, law enforcement officers and fire
84 fighters regarding the recognition, prevention and effective
85 management of HCV;

86 (g) Considering a state prevention campaign to increase
87 public awareness of the need for early prevention and management
88 of HCV that may include the following:

89 (i) A broad-based public education campaign
90 outlining health risks associated with failure to receive
91 treatment for HCV;

92 (ii) A professional training campaign; and

93 (iii) A targeted public education campaign
94 directed towards those at high risk.

95 (h) Coordinating with the United States Department of
96 Health and Human Services, the United States Centers for Disease
97 Control, and the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention to
98 share resources and information in order to ensure a comprehensive
99 approach to preventing and controlling HCV; and

100 (i) Coordinating with the State Department of Health
101 and the Division of Medicaid to share resources and information in
102 order to ensure a comprehensive approach to prevent and control
103 HCV.

104 (4) The members of the advisory council shall serve terms of
105 two (2) years, and if a member resigns before the end of his or
106 her term, then his or her successor shall be appointed to complete
107 the unexpired term. At its first meeting, the advisory council
108 shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from its membership, and
109 shall adopt rules for transacting its business and keeping
110 records. If sufficient funds are available to the advisory
111 council, members of the advisory council other than legislative
112 members may receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred
113 while engaged in official business of the advisory board in
114 accordance with Section 25-3-41.

115 (5) The advisory council shall conduct meetings at least
116 quarterly. Meetings of the council shall be open to the public
117 and opportunity for public comment shall be made available at each
118 meeting.

119 (6) The advisory council shall be assigned to the Department
120 of Human Services for administrative purposes only, and it shall
121 designate staff to assist the council. The council may solicit
122 grants, donations and other funds, and may accept and expend any
123 funds that are made available to the council to carry out its
124 purpose. However, no state general funds may be used to pay any
125 expenses of the advisory council.

126 (7) All agencies, departments, offices and institutions of
127 the state, including the state universities and the community and
128 junior colleges, shall cooperate with the advisory council with
129 such assistance as requested by the council.

130 (8) Before December 1, 2006, the advisory council shall
131 submit a report, including any proposed legislation if necessary,
132 to the Governor and to the House Public Health and Human Services
133 Committee and the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. The
134 report shall include a comprehensive state plan for implementation
135 of services and programs in the state that will increase
136 prevention and control of HCV, and an estimate of the cost of the
137 implementation of such a plan.

138 (9) The advisory council shall be dissolved on July 1, 2008.

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