MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
By: Representatives McCoy, Burnett, Hines, Mayo, Perkins

REGULAR SESSION 2007
To: Public Health and Human Services; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1490

AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT THE LEGISLATURE SHALL PROVIDE
SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO FULLY FUND THE CHILDREN’S HEALTH INSURANCE
PROGRAM AND MEDICAID PROGRAMS; TO AUTHORIZE THE GOVERNOR TO
REQUIRE THE DIVISION OF MEDICAID TO APPLY FOR GRANTS FROM
FOUNDATIONS AND SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MARKETING
THE CHILDREN’S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA
REGION; TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE DELTA TO DEMONSTRATE TO
THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH THEIR UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO
EMPLOY A SCHOOL NURSE; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
TO DEVELOP A MEANS TO ENSURE THAT ANNUAL PHYSICALS ARE PROVIDED,
FREE OF CHARGE, TO ALL STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELFTH
GRADE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE DELTA REGION; AND FOR RELATED
PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The Legislature finds that the most
fundamental aspect of a good quality of life is good health.
Healthy people are happier, more productive and less costly to
insure. According to the Mississippi State Health Plan, poverty,
low educational levels, large minority groups, limited health care
manpower, particularly in rural areas, are conditions that
contribute to racial and ethnic health care disparities. The
Legislature finds that these conditions describe the Mississippi
Delta region more than any other area of the State of Mississippi.

(2) The Legislature further finds federal funding for health
insurance for children is limited; therefore, it is imperative that
children in the Delta remain as healthy as possible. In an area
such as the Delta, with its high rates of chronic health problems,
lack of a sufficient number of health care providers and a
population most likely to be uninsured, prevention health services
become increasingly important.

(3) Further, the Legislature finds that a school nurse may
be the only consistent source of health services for uninsured

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school-aged children. School nurses provide health education to students, staff and parents. They may also be utilized to help link and enroll uninsured children to the state CHIP program. However, eleven (11) school districts in the Delta region are without a school nurse, including the county with the largest number of school districts in the region. The following action is requested.

**SECTION 2.** For purposes of this act, the terms "Mississippi Delta region," "Delta region" and "region" are defined as the western section of the State of Mississippi that lies between the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, encompassing in part or whole the counties of Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington and Yazoo.

**SECTION 3.** In order to maximize the benefits of the Mississippi Children's Health Insurance Program established under Chapter 86, Title 71, Mississippi Code of 1972, and Medicaid in the Mississippi Delta region, the Legislature shall provide such funds that may be necessary to fully fund the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid programs.

**SECTION 4.** The Governor may require the Division of Medicaid or any other appropriate agency to apply for grants from organizations such as the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation and other similar funding sources in order to secure funding for the purpose of aggressively marketing the Children's Health Insurance Program in the Delta region.

**SECTION 5.** The State Department of Health shall develop a system that supports preventive health care measures throughout the Delta region by requiring local school districts to demonstrate attempts made by the district to employ a school nurse which demonstrate an understanding on the part of school district officials of the need and importance of preventive health...
services. Acceptable evidence of attempts to hire a school nurse include, but are not necessarily limited to: exploration of funding sources and options; submission of grant applications; requests for technical assistance from the State Department of Education and other sources; and collaboration with other districts or organizations for the employment of a school nurse.

**SECTION 6.** (1) The State Department of Health shall develop a means to ensure that annual physicals are provided, free of charge, to all students in kindergarten through Grade 12 in the public schools in the Delta region. However, no child may be required to undergo any physical examination if the child's parent objects on the grounds that such physical examination is contrary to his sincerely held religious beliefs.

(2) The department shall solicit funding from any available source for the purposes of providing the physical examinations required under this section.

**SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2007.