

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

To: Public Health and Human
Services; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1490

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

60 **SECTION 5.** The State Department of Health shall develop a
61 system that supports preventive health care measures throughout
62 the Delta region by requiring local school districts to
63 demonstrate attempts made by the district to employ a school nurse
64 which demonstrate an understanding on the part of school district
65 officials of the need and importance of preventive health

66 services. Acceptable evidence of attempts to hire a school nurse
67 include, but are not necessarily limited to: exploration of
68 funding sources and options; submission of grant applications;
69 requests for technical assistance from the State Department of
70 Education and other sources; and collaboration with other
71 districts or organizations for the employment of a school nurse.

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

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

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