

By: Representatives Clarke, Banks, Bailey,  
Blackmon, Broomfield, Burnett, Calhoun,  
Ellis, Evans (70th), Evans (91st),  
Fredericks, Huddleston (30th), Middleton,  
Myers, Straughter, Thomas

To: Public Health and Human  
Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 897  
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A JOINT LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE TO STUDY  
2 AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM IN  
3 MISSISSIPPI; TO REQUIRE THE COMMITTEE TO MAKE A REPORT OF ITS  
4 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED  
5 PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created a Joint Legislative Study  
8 Committee to study and make recommendations for improving the  
9 mental health system in Mississippi. The committee shall, at a  
10 minimum, examine the following topics:

11 (a) The current delivery system of mental health  
12 services by state, regional and local public entities;

13 (b) The structure of the State Department of Mental  
14 Health, including the makeup of the State Board of Mental Health  
15 and the qualifications of the executive director of the  
16 department;

17 (c) The delivery of mental health services through a  
18 community-based system rather than an institutional-based system,  
19 focusing on delivery through the community mental health centers;  
20 and

21 (d) Any other matters of importance relating to the  
22 delivery of mental health services in the state.

23 (2) The joint committee shall be composed of the following  
24 ten (10) members:

25 (a) The Chairman of the House Public Health and Human  
26 Services Committee and the Chairman of the Senate Public Health  
27 and Welfare Committee, who will be the cochairmen of the joint  
28 committee;



29           (b) The Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee,  
30 or his designee;

31           (c) The Chairman of the Senate Appropriations  
32 Committee, or his designee;

33           (d) Three (3) senators to be appointed by the  
34 Lieutenant Governor; and

35           (e) Three (3) representatives to be appointed by the  
36 Speaker of the House.

37           (3) Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after  
38 the effective date of this section. The first meeting of the  
39 committee shall be held on a day to be designated jointly by the  
40 Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor. A majority of  
41 the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. In the  
42 adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of  
43 a majority of the members of each house shall be required.

44           (4) Members of the committee shall be paid from the  
45 contingent expense funds of their respective houses in the same  
46 manner as provided for committee meetings when the Legislature is  
47 not in session; however, no per diem or expense for attending  
48 meetings of the committee may be paid while the Legislature is in  
49 session, except that members of the committee may receive per diem  
50 and expenses when the Legislature is in session but in recess  
51 under the terms of a concurrent resolution, or in recess during a  
52 special session.

53           (5) The committee shall make a report of its findings and  
54 recommendations to the Legislature not later than December 1,  
55 2009, including any recommended legislation. At the time of  
56 submission of its report, the committee shall be dissolved.

57           (6) (a) The Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the  
58 House of Representatives may jointly appoint not more than twelve  
59 (12) members to an advisory council to the joint committee.

60           (b) The members of the advisory council shall either be  
61 engaged professionally in rendering mental health services or



62 general medical services or be consumers of mental health services  
63 or representatives of those consumers.

64 (c) The advisory council may meet with the Joint  
65 Legislative Study Committee and may hold special meetings as  
66 deemed necessary.

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

