

By: Representative Hines

To: Public Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 268

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE HEALTH OFFICER TO DEVELOP A  
2 PROGRAM TO CLOSE THE GAP IN THE HEALTH STATUS OF ALL GENDER AND  
3 RACIAL GROUPS; TO REQUIRE A STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT; TO ESTABLISH  
4 MEASURABLE OUTCOMES; TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE; TO PROVIDE  
5 FOR THE SELECTION OF CERTAIN ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP CRITERIA AND  
6 PROCEDURES TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF THIS ACT; TO COORDINATE  
7 WITH OTHER PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES; TO REQUIRE EVALUATIONS AND  
8 REPORTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** (1) It is the goal of the State of Mississippi  
11 to decrease the disparities in all gender and racial groups in  
12 many diseases and preventable conditions by 2020. In order to  
13 achieve this and other measurable outcomes, the State Health  
14 Officer shall establish a program to close the gap in the health  
15 status of all gender and racial groups in the following priority  
16 areas: infant mortality, breast and cervical cancer screening,  
17 HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, adult and child  
18 immunizations, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, accidental  
19 injuries and violence.

20 (2) The State Health Officer, in partnership with  
21 community-based organizations and partners specializing in health



22 disparities in all gender and racial groups, shall develop a  
23 comprehensive, coordinated plan to reduce health disparities in  
24 the health disparity priority areas identified in subsection (1)  
25 of this section.

26 (3) The State Health Officer shall review current data to  
27 support a statewide assessment of the risk behaviors associated  
28 with the health disparity priority areas identified in subsection  
29 (1) of this section. The statewide assessment shall consist of  
30 focus groups, needs assessment surveys and key informant  
31 interviews. The statewide assessment must be used to establish a  
32 baseline to measure the effect of activities that may be funded in  
33 future legislation. To the extent feasible, the assessment shall  
34 be conducted so that the results may be compared to national data.

35 (4) The State Health Officer, in consultation with  
36 community-based organizations and partners, shall establish  
37 measurable outcomes to achieve the goal specified in subsection  
38 (1) of this section.

39 (5) The State Health Officer shall subcontract with an  
40 entity specializing in health disparities, which has at least four  
41 (4) years' experience and is located in the State of Mississippi,  
42 to provide the necessary expertise to ensure that the planning  
43 process is successful in reducing the health disparities  
44 identified in subsection (1) of this section. The State Health  
45 Officer shall provide Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars  
46 (\$250,000.00) in funding to the subcontracting entity to conduct



47 the needs assessment, develop outcomes, and manage the planning  
48 process, coordination and evaluation.

49 (6) The State Health Officer shall identify community-based  
50 organizations and partners in all gender and racial groups,  
51 develop the criteria and procedures to select these organizations  
52 as planning partners and engage them in the process to plan to  
53 eliminate health disparities. At the time the community-based  
54 organizations and partners are selected, the State Health Officer  
55 shall inform these organizations of the intent and purpose of the  
56 outcomes to be jointly established according to subsection (4) of  
57 this section. The plan shall include sections on morbidity and  
58 mortality for health disparities listed in subsection (1) of this  
59 section, a review and report of the statewide needs assessment  
60 process, measurable outcomes and a complete description of a  
61 community grant program for health disparities. The community  
62 grant program shall describe, but not be limited to, the funding  
63 purpose, eligibility criteria and program requirements and  
64 activities.

65 (7) The State Health Officer shall coordinate the closing  
66 the gap program with other projects and initiatives funded from  
67 state and federal funds in order to avoid duplication and promote  
68 complementary efforts.

69 (8) The State Health Officer shall conduct a biennial  
70 evaluation of the closing the gap program.



71           (9) The State Health Officer shall submit a biennial report  
72 to the Legislature on the closing the gap program. The report  
73 shall include information on activities that were conducted using  
74 grant funds, evaluation data, and outcome measures, if available.

75           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
76 and after July 1, 2016.

