MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION 2022  

By: Representatives Gunn, Felsher, Carpenter, Ford (73rd), Stamps, Lancaster  

To: Appropriations  

committee substitute  
for  
house bill no. 764  

AN ACT TO CREATE THE "MISSISSIPPI HEALTH CARE WORKERS RETENTION ACT OF 2022"; TO MAKE AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FROM THE CORONAVIRUS STATE FISCAL RECOVERY FUND TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH; TO PROVIDE THAT A PORTION OF THE FUNDS SHALL BE EXPENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR PROVIDING FUNDS TO MISSISSIPPI LICENSED HOSPITALS TO PROVIDE PREMIUM PAY TO THEIR MISSISSIPPI LICENSED/CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE WORKERS WHO ARE PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO MITIGATING OR RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY; TO PROVIDE THAT A PORTION OF THE FUNDS SHALL BE EXPENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR PROVIDING FUNDS TO MISSISSIPPI LICENSED LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES TO PROVIDE PREMIUM PAY TO THEIR MISSISSIPPI LICENSED/CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE WORKERS WHO ARE PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO MITIGATING OR RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY; TO PROVIDE THAT A PORTION OF THE FUNDS SHALL BE EXPENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR PROVIDING FUNDS TO MISSISSIPPI LICENSED AMBULANCE SERVICES TO PROVIDE PREMIUM PAY TO THEIR MISSISSIPPI LICENSED/CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE WORKERS WHO ARE PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO MITIGATING OR RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY; TO PROVIDE THAT A PORTION OF THE FUNDS SHALL BE EXPENDED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOR PROVIDING FUNDS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES UNDER THIS ACT TO PROVIDE PREMIUM PAY TO THEIR MISSISSIPPI LICENSED/CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE WORKERS WHO ARE PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO MITIGATING OR RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN THE MANNER THAT THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES IS THE MOST EQUITABLE AND EFFICIENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE FUNDS OTHERWISE PROVIDED AND TO EFFECTUATE THE PURPOSES OF THIS ACT; TO PROVIDE THAT MISSISSIPPI LICENSED/CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE WORKERS THAT QUALIFY FOR PREMIUM PAY UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL RECEIVE PREMIUM PAY WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ACT SUBJECT TO THE RECIPIENT'S WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE EMPLOYMENT WITH THE RECIPIENT'S PRIMARY CURRENT EMPLOYER FOR FIVE MONTHS FOLLOWING THE RECEIPT OF SUCH PREMIUM PAY; TO FURTHER PROVIDE THAT THE WRITTEN AGREEMENT SHALL BE DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND INCLUDE A
PROVISION THAT THE LICENSED/CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE WORKER MAY BE
REQUIRED TO REPAY TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI THE AMOUNT OF HIS OR
HER PREMIUM PAY FUNDS IF THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT ARE NOT MET;
TO PROVIDE CERTAIN REPORTING AND APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS UNDER THIS
ACT; TO PROVIDE THAT NONE OF THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER THIS SECTION
MAY BE USED TO PROVIDE PREMIUM PAY TO ANY LICENSED/CERTIFIED
HEALTH CARE WORKERS WHO ARE WORKING UNDER A CONTRACT WITH A
STAFFING AGENCY TO PROVIDE SERVICES IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
FOR A LIMITED DURATION OF LESS THAN ONE YEAR, SUCH AS TRAVEL
NURSES, AS DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
"Mississippi Health Care Workers Retention Act of 2022."

SECTION 2. The following sum, or so much of it as may be
necessary, is appropriated out of any money in the Coronavirus
State Fiscal Recovery Fund not otherwise appropriated, to the
State Department of Health for the purposes described in Section 3
of this act, for the period beginning July 1, 2021, and ending
June 30, 2022.................................................................$ 56,000,000.00.

SECTION 3. (1) (a) Of the funds appropriated under Section
2 of this act, the following amount shall be expended by the
department for providing funds to Mississippi licensed hospitals
in Mississippi to provide premium pay to their licensed/certified
health care workers who are primarily devoted to mitigating or
responding to the current COVID-19 public health emergency
.................................................................$ 40,000,000.00.
(b) In providing the funds to Mississippi licensed
hospitals under paragraph (a) of this subsection, the department
shall determine the maximum possible amount available to each
Mississippi licensed hospital using a formula based on the total
number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients that the Mississippi licensed hospital treated from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, and the number of Mississippi licensed hospital beds in the hospital as of the most recent date known by the department. The formula should provide double the weight to the total number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients that the Mississippi licensed hospital treated from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, as compared to the weight given to the number of Mississippi licensed hospital beds in the hospital as of the most recent date known by the department.

(2) (a) Of the funds appropriated under Section 2 of this act, the following amount shall be expended by the department for providing funds to Mississippi licensed long-term care facilities to provide premium pay to their licensed/certified health care workers who are primarily devoted to mitigating or responding to the current COVID-19 public health emergency........$ 7,500,000.00.

(b) In providing the funds to Mississippi licensed long-term care facilities under paragraph (a) of this subsection, the department shall determine the maximum possible amount available to each Mississippi licensed long-term care facility using a formula based on the total number of COVID-19 positive residents at the Mississippi licensed long-term care facility from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, and the number of Mississippi licensed and staffed long-term care beds in the long-term care facility as of the most recent date known by the department.
department. The formula should provide double the weight to the total number of COVID-19 positive residents that the Mississippi licensed long-term care facility treated from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, as compared to the weight given to the number of Mississippi licensed and staffed long-term care beds in the long-term care facility as of the most recent date known by the department.

(3) (a) Of the funds appropriated under Section 2 of this act, the following amount shall be expended by the department for providing funds to Mississippi licensed ambulance services to provide premium pay to their licensed/certified health care workers who are primarily devoted to mitigating or responding to the current COVID-19 public health emergency....$ 2,500,000.00.

(b) In providing the funds to Mississippi licensed ambulance services under paragraph (a) of this subsection, the department shall determine the maximum possible amount available to each Mississippi licensed ambulance service based on the total number of ambulance runs, including transfers, as reported to the Mississippi EMS information system for the period January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021.

(4) Of the funds appropriated under Section 2 of this act, the following amount shall be expended by the department for providing funds to eligible entities under subsections (1) through (3) of this section to provide premium pay to their licensed/certified health care workers who are primarily devoted...
to mitigating or responding to the current COVID-19 public health emergency in a manner that the department determines is the most equitable and efficient to supplement the funds provided under subsections (1) through (3) of this section and to effectuate the purposes of this act.................................$ 5,000,000.00.

(5) Of the funds appropriated under Section 2 of this act, the following amount shall be expended for defraying the expenses of the department in administering the funds approved and expended under this section.................................$ 1,000,000.00.

(6) (a) As a condition of receiving premium pay under this section, each licensed/certified health care worker who accepts premium pay under this section shall receive premium pay in an amount not to exceed Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000.00) within sixty (60) days after the effective date of this act.

(b) As a condition of receiving premium pay under this section, the recipient must execute a written agreement with the department to continue employment with his or her primary current employer for five (5) months following the receipt of such premium pay. The written agreement shall be developed by the department and shall include a provision that the recipient may be required to repay to the State of Mississippi, to be deposited into the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund, the amount of premium pay funds that he or she received if the terms of the agreement are not met. The written agreement with the department shall not
create, revise or otherwise affect any contractual relationship between the employer and employee.

(7) As a condition of receiving funds under this act, each employer shall provide a report to the department of the number and type of licensed/certified health care workers and premium pay amounts they intend to distribute, and must receive approval from the department that the requirements of this act, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and any federal guidance regarding the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund are met before the employer may distribute the premium pay to their licensed/certified health care workers who are primarily devoted to mitigating or responding to the current COVID-19 public health emergency.

(8) None of the funds provided under this act may be used to provide premium pay to any licensed/certified health care workers who are working under a contract with a staffing agency to provide services for a limited duration of less than one (1) year in the State of Mississippi, such as travel nurses, as determined by the department.

(9) None of the funds provided under this act may be used to provide premium pay to any licensed/certified health care workers who have gross annual wages or salary from their primary current employer equal to or greater than One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($150,000.00).

(10) If there are any unused or otherwise unspent funds under subsections (1), (2), (3) or (5) of this section, the
department shall reallocate those funds to eligible entities under subsections (1) through (3) of this section, notwithstanding the maximum possible amount available to each eligible entity as determined under this section, to provide premium pay to their eligible licensed/certified health care workers who are primarily devoted to mitigating or responding to the current COVID-19 public health emergency. The department shall reallocate such funds in a manner that the department determines is the most equitable and efficient to effectuate the purposes of this act.

(11) For purposes of the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi, the premium pay provided under this section shall not be considered earned compensation, as defined in Section 25-11-103(k).

(12) For the purposes of this act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

(a) "Hospital" means a nonfederal medical/surgical short-term acute care hospital licensed in the State of Mississippi, and does not include long-term acute care (LTAC), rehabilitation, psychiatric, chemical dependency, or other special purpose facilities.

(b) "Long-term care facility" means a skilled nursing facility licensed in the State of Mississippi, and does not include extended care homes, intermediate care facilities, personal care homes, or boarding homes.
SECTION 4. (1) As used in this section and Section 5 of this act, the term "department" means the Department of Health.

(2) The department shall not disburse any funds appropriated under this act to any recipient without first: (a) making an individualized determination that the reimbursement sought is, in the department's independent judgment, for necessary expenditures eligible under Section 602 of the federal Social Security Act as added by Section 9901 of the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) and its implementing guidelines, guidance, rules, regulations and/or other criteria, as may be amended or supplemented from time to time, by the United States Department of the Treasury; and (b) determining that the recipient has not received and will not receive reimbursement for the expense in question from any source of funds, including insurance proceeds, other than those funds provided under Section 602 of the federal Social Security Act as added by Section 9901 of (ARPA). In addition, the department shall ensure that all funds appropriated under this act are disbursed in compliance with the Single Audit Act (31 USC Sections 7501-7507) and the related provisions of the Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Section 200.303 regarding internal controls, Sections 200.330 through 200.332 regarding sub-recipient monitoring and management, and subpart F regarding audit requirements.

SECTION 5. (1) As a condition of receiving and expending the funds appropriated to the department under this act, the
department shall certify to the Department of Finance and Administration that each expenditure of the funds appropriated to the department under this act complies with the guidelines, guidance, rules, regulations and/or other criteria, as may be amended from time to time, of the United States Department of the Treasury regarding the use of monies from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

(2) If the Office of Inspector General of the United States Department of the Treasury, or the Office of Inspector General of any other federal agency having oversight over the use of monies from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (a) determines that the department or recipient has expended or otherwise used any of the funds appropriated to the department under this act for any purpose that is not in compliance with the guidelines, guidance, rules, regulations and/or other criteria, as may be amended from time to time, of the United States Department of the Treasury regarding the use of monies from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, and (b) the State of Mississippi is required to repay the federal government for any of those funds that the Office of the Inspector General determined were expended or otherwise used improperly by the department or recipient, then the department or recipient that expended or otherwise used those funds improperly shall be
required to pay the amount of those funds to the State of Mississippi for repayment to the federal government.

SECTION 6. The money appropriated by this act shall be paid by the State Treasurer out of any money in the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund not otherwise appropriated, upon warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer; and the State Fiscal Officer shall issue his or her warrants upon requisitions signed by the proper person, officer or officers in the manner provided by law.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.