MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2023

By: Representatives Creekmore IV, Lancaster, Thompson
To: Drug Policy

HOUSE BILL NO. 231
(As Passed the House)

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE AND STATEWIDE FENTANYL AND DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION, PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAM THAT IS BASED ON SCIENTIFIC DATA AND RESEARCH; TO REQUIRE THAT THE PROGRAM INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM COMPONENTS: THE USE OF MASS MEDIA TO DISCOURAGE THE USE OF FENTANYL AND ABUSE OF OTHER DRUGS AND TO EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT THE HEALTH HAZARDS FROM THE USE OF FENTANYL AND ABUSE OF OTHER DRUGS; MATERIALS, CURRICULA AND PROGRAMS THAT MAY BE USED OR IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER LOCATIONS TO EDUCATE YOUTH ABOUT FENTANYL AND OTHER HARMFUL DRUGS AND TO DISCOURAGE THE USE OF FENTANYL AND ABUSE OF OTHER DRUGS; LOCAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS THAT DISCOURAGE THE USE OF FENTANYL AND ABUSE OF OTHER DRUGS AND INVOLVE COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN FENTANYL AND DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION, PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAMS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES; AND PROGRAMS TO ASSIST AND HELP PEOPLE TO STOP USING FENTANYL AND/OR ABUSING OTHER DRUGS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The State Department of Mental Health shall develop and implement a comprehensive statewide fentanyl and drug abuse education, prevention and cessation program that is based on scientific data and research that have been shown to be effective at accomplishing the purposes of this section. At a minimum, the program shall include the following components:
(a) The use of mass media, including paid advertising and other communication tools, to discourage the use of fentanyl and abuse of other drugs and to educate people, especially youth, about the health hazards from the use of fentanyl and abuse of other drugs, which shall be designed to be effective at achieving these goals and shall include, but need not be limited to, television, radio and print advertising, as well as sponsorship, exhibits and other opportunities to raise awareness statewide;

(b) Materials, curricula and programs that may be used or implemented in schools and other locations to educate youth about fentanyl and other harmful drugs and to discourage the use of fentanyl and abuse of other drugs, including, but not limited to, materials, curricula and programs that involve youth, educate youth about the health hazards from the use of fentanyl and abuse of other drugs, help youth develop skills to refuse fentanyl and other harmful drugs, and demonstrate to youth how to stop using fentanyl and abusing other drugs;

(c) Local community programs, including, but not limited to, youth-based partnerships that discourage the use of fentanyl and abuse of other drugs and involve community-based organizations in fentanyl and drug abuse education, prevention and cessation programs in their communities;

(d) Programs to assist and help people to stop using fentanyl and/or abusing other drugs; and
(e) A surveillance and evaluation system that monitors program accountability and results, produces publicly available reports that review how monies expended for the program are spent, and includes an evaluation of the program's effectiveness in reducing and preventing the use of fentanyl and abuse of other drugs, and annual recommendations for improvements to enhance the program's effectiveness.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2023.