

By: Representative Hines

To: Public Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 33

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 2030. 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 contract with an entity
40 specializing in health disparities, which has at least four (4)
41 years' experience and is located in the State of Mississippi, to
42 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. From funds
45 appropriated to the State Department of Health for that purpose,
46 the State Health Officer shall provide not more than Two Hundred



47 Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) in funding to the contracting
48 entity to conduct the needs assessment, develop outcomes, and
49 manage the planning process, coordination and evaluation.

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

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

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



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

76 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
77 and after July 1, 2024.

