

By: Representative Steverson

To: Public Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 42
(As Passed the House)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ADMITTED ANNUALLY TO THE
3 MISSISSIPPI RURAL DENTIST SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FROM THREE TO SIX;
4 TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO RENAME THE
5 MISSISSIPPI RURAL DENTISTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AS THE DR. GENE
6 NORRIS HOWELL, JR., MEMORIAL MISSISSIPPI RURAL DENTISTS
7 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-146-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
10 amended as follows:

11 37-146-7. **Identification and recruitment of undergraduate**
12 **participants; designation of underserved or rural area; applicant**
13 **qualifications; maximum number of new admissions per year. (1)**

14 The commission shall develop and implement policies and procedures
15 designed to recruit, identify and enroll undergraduate students
16 who demonstrate necessary interest, commitment, aptitude and
17 academic achievement to pursue careers as dentists in rural or
18 dentally underserved areas of Mississippi, and to develop and
19 implement the programs designed to foster successful entry of
20 participants into dental school, completion of dental school, and



21 establishment and maintenance of a career in dentistry in a rural
22 or underserved area of Mississippi.

23 (2) The commission shall have the authority through use of
24 generally applicable definitions, to designate an area of the
25 state as underserved or rural.

26 (3) The commission, in conjunction with the University of
27 Mississippi Medical Center, shall have the authority to provide
28 students selected for scholarship funding with faculty mentors and
29 other programs designed to enhance the students' likelihood of
30 admission to the dental school. The commission and the University
31 of Mississippi Medical Center will develop coursework that will
32 help provide scholarship students with the skills necessary for
33 sustained and successful dental practice in rural Mississippi.

34 (4) Each applicant for admission to the program must submit
35 an application to the commission that conforms to requirements
36 established by the commission.

37 (5) In selecting participants for the program, the board may
38 only accept an applicant if his or her academic record and other
39 characteristics, if given consideration by the University of
40 Mississippi School of Dentistry Admissions Committee, would be
41 considered credible and competitive.

42 (6) An applicant for the program may be admitted only upon a
43 majority vote of the members of the commission.

44 (7) Up to * * * six (6) students will be admitted to the
45 Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program each year.



46 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-146-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
47 amended as follows:

48 "37-146-1. **Mississippi Rural Dentists Program established.**

49 There is established the Dr. Gene Norris Howell, Jr., Memorial
50 Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program for the purpose of
51 identifying and recruiting qualified university and college
52 students from rural areas of the state for dental school
53 matriculation. The program shall consist of three (3) distinct
54 phases through which participants will progress, including:

55 (a) Undergraduate pre-dental education;

56 (b) Dental school and residency; and

57 (c) Initial entry into dental practice in a rural or
58 underserved area of the State of Mississippi.

59 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
60 and after July 1, 2024.

