

By: Senator(s) Hill

To: Public Health and  
Welfare

SENATE BILL NO. 2082

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-144-7, 37-144-11, 37-144-13 AND  
2 37-144-15, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ADD GENERAL SURGERY AS A  
3 POSSIBLE CAREER PATH FOR THOSE IN THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS  
4 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-144-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
7 amended as follows:

8 37-144-7. (1) The commission shall develop and implement  
9 policies and procedures designed to recruit, identify and enroll  
10 undergraduate students who demonstrate necessary interest,  
11 commitment, aptitude and academic achievement to pursue careers as  
12 family physicians, general surgeons or other generalist physicians  
13 in rural or medically underserved areas of Mississippi, and to  
14 develop and implement the programs designed to foster successful  
15 entry of participants into medical school, completion of medical  
16 school, enrollment into and completion of family medicine or other  
17 generalist residency, and establishment and maintenance of a  
18 career in family medicine, general surgery or other generalist  
19 specialty in a rural or underserved area of Mississippi.



20           (2) The commission shall have the authority through use of  
21 generally applicable definitions to designate an area of the state  
22 as underserved or rural.

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

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

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

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

42           (7) Not less than fifteen (15) students will be admitted to  
43 the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program each year,



44 provided that there are fifteen (15) or more qualified applicants  
45 for the program.

46 (8) Upon the funding of sixty-one (61) or more rural  
47 physicians scholarships by the Legislature and recognizing the  
48 importance of balancing the needs of comprehensive primary care  
49 along with a critical shortage of psychiatrists in Mississippi,  
50 the commission may grant an exception for fourth-year medical or  
51 osteopathic school (M4) students who demonstrate a desire to  
52 practice psychiatry in rural Mississippi and who use a practice  
53 model and enter the practice of medicine in a rural or underserved  
54 area in Mississippi, as defined by the commission, beginning for  
55 the M4 Class of 2020.

56 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-144-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
57 amended as follows:

58 37-144-11. (1) Students in the program may apply to any  
59 medical or osteopathic school that is accredited by the Liaison  
60 Committee on Medical Education (LCME) or the American Osteopathic  
61 Association (AOA).

62 (2) Students in the program seeking admission to the  
63 University of Mississippi School of Medicine shall be eligible for  
64 a special admissions process pursuant to criteria established by  
65 the School of Medicine Admissions Committee which will include  
66 special consideration of the attributes of participation in the  
67 program.



68 (3) In carrying out the admissions process developed for the  
69 Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program participants  
70 under this section, the goal is for the program to work with the  
71 School of Medicine to enhance the capability of participants to  
72 successfully enter and complete medical school, train in family  
73 medicine, general surgery or other generalist primary care  
74 specialty and enter practice in rural or underserved areas in  
75 Mississippi. To the extent feasible, the early admissions process  
76 should be completed before November 1 of the year preceding a  
77 student's admission to medical school.

78 **SECTION 3.** Section 37-144-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
79 amended as follows:

80 37-144-13. (1) Subject to the availability of funding,  
81 students in the program who successfully matriculate to medical or  
82 osteopathic school are eligible for ongoing financial support in  
83 accordance with policies and requirements of the commission and in  
84 accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. The number  
85 of students to be supported at the University of Mississippi  
86 School of Medicine and at other schools will be established by  
87 policy prescribed by the commission.

88 (2) Subject to the availability of funding, students  
89 enrolled at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine may  
90 receive tuition support, funding to assist with the cost of books  
91 and a living stipend, as prescribed by policy of the commission  
92 and in accordance with applicable regulations. Preferences for



93 ongoing funding must be given to those students admitted to the  
94 University of Mississippi School of Medicine.

95 (3) For each year that a student in medical or osteopathic  
96 school receives financial assistance, the student is obligated for  
97 one (1) year of practice as a primary care physician or general  
98 surgeon in a rural or underserved area in Mississippi. Breach of  
99 the agreement at any stage of training shall invoke the repayment  
100 of all financial assistance provided to the student through the  
101 Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program, including  
102 assistance provided during undergraduate school, as well as in  
103 medical or osteopathic school, along with other penalties that may  
104 be prescribed in policy by the commission.

105 **SECTION 4.** Section 37-144-15, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
106 amended as follows:

107 37-144-15. Medical and osteopathic students in the program  
108 must enter family medicine, general surgery or other generalist  
109 residency programs according to their choice of specialty.  
110 Depending upon the availability of funds, students who  
111 successfully enter residency programs which have been approved by  
112 the commission may receive further financial support from the  
113 Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program subject to  
114 applicable rules and policies of the commission. All funding for  
115 financial support from the commission to participants during their  
116 residency must be disbursed in accordance with applicable  
117 regulations.



118           **SECTION 5.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
119 and after July 1, 2024.

