

By: Senator(s) Boyd

To: Universities and
Colleges; AppropriationsSENATE BILL NO. 2729
(As Passed the Senate)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-144-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO REVISE PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS
3 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO ALLOW STUDENTS FROM ALL AREAS OF THE STATE;
4 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-144-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ADD
5 A BOARD-CERTIFIED CHILD PSYCHIATRIST AS A MEMBER OF THE
6 MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION; TO AMEND
7 SECTION 37-144-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THE
8 MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION TO PRODUCE AN
9 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE PROVIDING CERTAIN STATISTICS; TO
10 INCLUDE THE MISSISSIPPI PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION AMONG THE
11 ORGANIZATIONS FROM WHICH THE COMMISSION SHALL SEEK INPUT REGARDING
12 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP
13 PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION 37-144-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
14 INCLUDE CHILD PSYCHIATRY STUDENTS IN THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL
15 PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP RESIDENCY PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTIONS
16 37-144-13 AND 37-144-17, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO MAKE CERTAIN
17 TECHNICAL CONFORMING REVISIONS THERETO; TO BRING FORWARD SECTIONS
18 37-144-7 AND 37-144-11, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, FOR THE PURPOSE
19 OF POSSIBLE AMENDMENT; TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE
20 OF 1972, TO REVISE PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL
21 DENTISTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO ALLOW STUDENTS FROM ALL AREAS OF
22 THE STATE; TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
23 REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL DENTISTS SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION TO
24 PRODUCE ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATURE PROVIDING VARIOUS
25 STATISTICS; TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-11, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
26 TO MAKE CERTAIN TECHNICAL REVISIONS THERETO; TO BRING FORWARD
27 SECTIONS 37-146-7, 37-146-13 AND 37-146-17, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
28 1972, FOR THE PURPOSE OF POSSIBLE AMENDMENT; AND FOR RELATED
29 PURPOSES.

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



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

33 37-144-1. There is established the Mississippi Rural
34 Physicians Scholarship Program for the purpose of identifying and
35 recruiting qualified university and college students * * * for
36 medical or osteopathic school matriculation. The program shall
37 consist of three (3) distinct phases through which participants
38 will progress, including:

- 39 (a) Undergraduate premedical education;
40 (b) Medical or osteopathic school and residency; and
41 (c) Post-residency entry into medical practice in a
42 rural or underserved area of the State of Mississippi.

43 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-144-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
44 amended as follows:

45 37-144-5. The Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship
46 Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- 47 (a) Developing the administrative policy for the commission
48 and the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program;
49 (b) Promulgating rules and regulations, with the advice and
50 consent of the University of Mississippi Medical Center,
51 pertaining to the implementation and operation of the Rural
52 Physicians Scholarship Program;
53 (c) Developing and implementing strategies and activities
54 for the identification and recruitment of students and for
55 marketing the program and for the implementation of the program.



In developing these strategies, the board shall seek the input of various organizations and entities, including the Mississippi State Medical Association, the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians, the Mississippi Chapters of the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of OB-GYN, Mississippi Psychiatric Association, the Mississippi Medical and Surgical Association, the Mississippi Osteopathic Medicine Association and the American Psychiatric Association;

(d) Establishing a budget, with the advice and consent of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, to support the activities of the program and periodically reviewing and if appropriate, revising, the scholarship and other stipends offered through the program;

(e) Advising the University of Mississippi Medical Center regarding hiring an executive director and support staff necessary for the commission's work. The commission shall nominate at least two (2) individuals to serve as executive director;

(f) Reviewing participants progress in the program and mentoring students and physicians participating in the program;

(g) Developing and participating in programs that provide initial practice support in collaboration with other interested professional organizations;

(h) The commission shall have the authority through use of generally applicable definitions, to designate an area of the



state as underserved or rural. The method by which these designations shall be made shall be contained in rules and regulations promulgated by the commission.

(i) The commission shall produce an annual report to the Legislature showing certain information relating to the program for the previous fiscal year, including the following:

(i) Budget, including funds provided in addition to Legislative appropriations;

(ii) Number of participants enrolled in medical or osteopathic school along with their matriculation status;

(iii) The status of, to include location of practice, participants who have entered a medicine or other generalist residency program;

(iv) The number and cause of participants who breached their obligation(s) to the program; and

(v) The status of, to include location of practice, participants who have entered into the practice of medicine in a rural or medically underserved area in Mississippi.

SECTION 3. Section 37-144-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-144-7. (1) The commission shall develop and implement policies and procedures designed to recruit, identify and enroll undergraduate students who demonstrate necessary interest, commitment, aptitude and academic achievement to pursue careers as family physicians, child psychiatrists or other generalist



physicians in rural or medically underserved areas of Mississippi, and to develop and implement the programs designed to foster successful entry of participants into medical school, completion of medical school, enrollment into and completion of family medicine or other generalist residency, and establishment and maintenance of a career in family medicine, child psychiatry or other generalist specialty in a rural or underserved area of Mississippi.

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

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

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

(5) In selecting participants for the program, the board may only accept an applicant if his or her academic record and other



characteristics, if given consideration by the University of Mississippi School of Medicine Admissions Committee, would be considered credible and competitive.

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

(7) Not less than fifteen (15) students will be admitted to the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program each year, provided that there are fifteen (15) or more qualified applicants for the program.

(8) Upon the funding of * * * sixty-three (63) or more rural physicians scholarships by the Legislature and recognizing the importance of balancing the needs of comprehensive primary care along with a critical shortage of psychiatrists in Mississippi, the commission may grant an exception for fourth-year medical or osteopathic school (M4) students who demonstrate a desire to practice psychiatry in rural Mississippi and who use a practice model and enter the practice of medicine in a rural or underserved area in Mississippi, as defined by the commission, beginning for the M4 Class of * * * 2024.

SECTION 4. Section 37-144-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, is brought forward as follows:

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



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

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

SECTION 5. Section 37-144-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-144-13. (1) Subject to the availability of funding, students in the program who successfully matriculate to medical or osteopathic school are eligible for ongoing financial support in accordance with policies and requirements of the commission and in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. The number of students to be supported at the University of Mississippi



School of Medicine and at other schools will be established by policy prescribed by the commission.

(2) Subject to the availability of funding, students enrolled at * * * a medical or osteopathic school in Mississippi may receive tuition support, funding to assist with the cost of books and a living stipend, as prescribed by policy of the commission and in accordance with applicable regulations. Preferences for ongoing funding must be given to those students admitted to the University of Mississippi School of Medicine.

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

SECTION 6. Section 37-144-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-144-17. (1) Upon completion of residency, a participant in the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program must proceed to enter the practice of medicine in a rural or underserved area in Mississippi, as defined by the commission and



205 consistent with generally acceptable designations. If an area
206 experiences significant changes in its medical or general
207 community which are not reflected by health professional shortage
208 area (HPSA) or medically underserved area (MUA) rural designation,
209 the commission may receive testimony and, in its discretion, may
210 qualify the area as an underserved or rural area to allow the
211 program participant to fulfill his or her practice obligation.

212 (2) Upon entering the practice of medicine, a participant in
213 the program must serve in a health professional shortage area
214 (HPSA), medically underserved area (MUA), or rural area otherwise
215 approved for practice under subsection (1) of this section for a
216 number of years which corresponds to the number of years, not to
217 exceed five (5), for which the participant received funding
218 through the program. A participant who completes residency * * *
219 who fails to enter the practice of medicine as required under this
220 section shall be deemed in breach of contract and shall be liable
221 for the immediate repayment of all financial assistance provided
222 to the participant through the Mississippi Rural Physicians
223 Scholarship Program, including assistance provided during
224 undergraduate school, as well as in medical or osteopathic school,
225 along with other penalties that may be prescribed in policy by the
226 board. Any participant who fails to complete the period of
227 practice for which he or she is obligated to provide services in a
228 health professional shortage area (HPSA) or a medically
229 underserved area (MUA) in exchange for financial assistance



received through the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program shall be liable for the repayment of all financial assistance provided to the participant through the program, along with other penalties that may be prescribed by the commission, an amount which shall be reduced on a pro rata basis for actual years of practice by the physician in the area designated by the commission.

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

37-146-1. There is established the Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program for the purpose of identifying and recruiting qualified university and college students * * * for dental school matriculation. The program shall consist of three (3) distinct phases through which participants will progress, including:

- (a) Undergraduate pre-dental education;
- (b) Dental school and residency; and
- (c) Initial entry into dental practice in a rural or underserved area of the State of Mississippi.

SECTION 8. Section 37-146-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-146-5. The Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- (a) Developing the administrative policy for the commission and the Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program;



(b) Promulgating rules and regulations, with the advice and consent of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, pertaining to the implementation and operation of the Rural Dentists Scholarship Program;

(c) Developing and implementing strategies and activities for the identification and recruitment of students and for marketing the program and for the implementation of the program. In developing these strategies, the board shall seek the input of various organizations and entities;

(d) Establishing a budget, with the advice and consent of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, to support the activities of the program and periodically reviewing and if appropriate, revising, the scholarship and other stipends offered through the program;

(e) Advising the University of Mississippi Medical Center regarding hiring appropriate staff necessary to work in conjunction with the Executive Director of the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program;

(f) Reviewing participants' progress in the program and mentoring students and dentists participating in the program;

(g) The commission shall have the authority through use of generally applicable definitions, to designate an area of the state as underserved or rural. The method by which these designations shall be made shall be contained in rules and regulations promulgated by the commission.



280 (h) The commission shall produce an annual report to
281 the Legislature showing certain information relating to the
282 program for the previous fiscal year, including the following:

283 (i) Budget, including funds provided in addition
284 to Legislative appropriations;

285 (ii) The number of participants enrolled in dental
286 school along with their matriculation status;

287 (iii) The status of, to include location or
288 practice, participants who have entered a dental residency
289 program;

290 (iv) The number and cause of participants who
291 breached their obligation(s) to the program; and

292 (v) The status of, to include location of
293 practice, participants who have entered into the practice of
294 dentistry in a rural or medically underserved area in Mississippi.

295 **SECTION 9.** Section 37-146-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
296 brought forward as follows:

297 37-146-7. (1) The commission shall develop and implement
298 policies and procedures designed to recruit, identify and enroll
299 undergraduate students who demonstrate necessary interest,
300 commitment, aptitude and academic achievement to pursue careers as
301 dentists in rural or dentally underserved areas of Mississippi,
302 and to develop and implement the programs designed to foster
303 successful entry of participants into dental school, completion of



dental school, and establishment and maintenance of a career in dentistry in a rural or underserved area of Mississippi.

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

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

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

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

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

(7) Up to three (3) students will be admitted to the Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program each year.



SECTION 10. Section 37-146-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-146-11. (1) Students in the program may apply to the * * * University of Mississippi School of Dentistry.

(2) Students in the program seeking admission to the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry shall be eligible for the admissions process pursuant to criteria established by the School of Dentistry Admissions Committee which will include consideration of the attributes of participation in the program.

(3) In carrying out the admissions process developed for the Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program participants under this section, the goal is for the program to work with the School of Dentistry to enhance the capability of participants to successfully enter and complete dental school and enter practice in rural or underserved areas in Mississippi. To the extent feasible, the early admissions process should be completed before December 1 of the year preceding a student's admission to dental school.

SECTION 11. Section 37-146-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is brought forward as follows:

37-146-13. (1) Subject to the availability of funding, students in the program who successfully matriculate to dental school are eligible for ongoing financial support in accordance with policies and requirements of the commission and in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. The number of students



to be supported at the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry and at other schools will be established by policy prescribed by the commission.

(2) Subject to the availability of funding, students enrolled at the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry may receive tuition support, funding to assist with the cost of books and a living stipend, as prescribed by policy of the commission and in accordance with applicable regulations. Preferences for ongoing funding must be given to those students admitted to the University of Mississippi School of Dentistry.

(3) For each year that a student in dental school receives financial assistance, the student is obligated for one (1) year of practice as a dentist in a rural or underserved area in Mississippi. Breach of the agreement at any stage of training shall invoke the repayment of all financial assistance provided to the student through the Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program along with other penalties that may be prescribed in policy by the commission.

SECTION 12. Section 37-146-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, is brought forward as follows:

37-146-17. (1) Upon completion of dental school and/or a dental residency program approved by the commission, a participant in the Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program must proceed to enter the full-time practice of dentistry in a rural or underserved area in Mississippi, as defined by the commission and



379 consistent with generally acceptable designations. If an area
380 experiences significant changes in its dental or general community
381 which are not reflected by dental health professional shortage
382 area (HPSA), the commission may receive testimony and, in its
383 discretion, may qualify the area as a dentally underserved or
384 rural area to allow the program participant to fulfill his or her
385 practice obligation.

386 (2) Upon entering the practice of dentistry, a participant
387 in the program must serve in a dental health professional shortage
388 area (HPSA) or rural area otherwise approved for practice under
389 subsection (1) of this section for a number of years which
390 corresponds to the number of years, not to exceed five (5), for
391 which the participant received funding through the program. Any
392 participant who fails to complete the period of practice for which
393 he or she is obligated to provide services in a dental health
394 professional shortage area (HPSA) or rural area in exchange for
395 financial assistance received through the Mississippi Rural
396 Dentists Scholarship Program shall be liable for the repayment of
397 all financial assistance provided to the participant through the
398 program, along with other penalties that may be prescribed by the
399 commission, an amount which shall be reduced on a pro rata basis
400 for actual years of practice by the dentist in the area designated
401 by the commission.

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



37-144-3. (1) The Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program shall be administered by a commission to be known as the "Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Commission." The commission shall be directed by a board composed of the following members:

(a) Two (2) generalist physicians appointed by and from the membership of the Mississippi State Medical Association, the term of which shall be three (3) years and may be reappointed for one (1) additional term;

(b) One (1) generalist physician appointed by and from the membership of each of the following organizations, the term of which shall be three (3) years and may be reappointed for one (1) additional term:

(i) Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians;

(ii) Mississippi Chapter, American College of Physicians;

(iii) Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics;

(iv) Mississippi Chapter, American College of OB-GYN;

(v) Mississippi Psychiatric Association;

(* * *vi) Mississippi Medical and Surgical Association;

(* * *vii) Mississippi Osteopathic Association;



428 (c) Two (2) designees of the Dean of the University of
429 Mississippi School of Medicine whose terms are at the discretion
430 of the dean, at least one (1) of whom is a member of the
431 University of Mississippi School of Medicine Admissions Committee;

432 (d) Two (2) medical students, one (1) of whom shall be
433 selected yearly through a process developed by the Dean of the
434 School of Medicine in consultation with the Chairs of the
435 Departments of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB-GYN and
436 Pediatrics, and one (1) of whom shall be nominated for a one-year
437 term by the Mississippi Chapter of the Student National Medical
438 Association and approved by the Dean of the University of
439 Mississippi School of Medicine;

440 (e) A member of the Board of Trustees of State
441 Institutions of Higher Learning;

442 (f) The Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at
443 the University of Mississippi School of Medicine; and

444 (g) A licensed psychiatrist appointed by the
445 Mississippi Chapter of the American Psychiatric Association.

446 (2) The premedical advisors from the accredited four-year
447 colleges and universities in the state and the directors or
448 designees of the primary care generalist training programs in the
449 State of Mississippi shall comprise an advisory committee to the
450 commission to assist the commission in its administration of the
451 Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program.



(3) Vacancies on the commission must be filled in a manner consistent with the original appointments.

(4) All appointments to the commission must be made no later than September 1, * * * 2024. After the members are appointed, the Chair of the Department of Family Medicine shall set a date for the organizational meeting that is mutually acceptable to the majority of the commission members. The organizational meeting shall be for the purposes of organizing the commission and establishing rules for transacting its business. A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum at all commission meetings. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting shall be required in the adoption of rules, reports and in any other actions taken by the commission. At the organizational meeting, the commission shall elect a chair and vice chair from the members appointed according to paragraphs (a) through (d) of subsection (1). The chair shall serve for a term of two (2) years, upon the expiration of which the vice chair shall assume the office of chair.

(5) After the organizational meeting, the commission shall hold no less than two (2) meetings annually.

(6) The commission may form an executive committee for the purpose of transacting business that must be conducted before the next regularly scheduled meeting of the commission. All actions taken by the executive committee must be ratified by the commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting.



477 (7) Members of the commission shall serve without
478 compensation but may be reimbursed, subject to the availability of
479 funding, for mileage and actual and necessary expenses incurred in
480 attending meetings of the commission.

481 (8) Funding for the establishment and continued operation of
482 the program and commission shall be appropriated out of any money
483 in the General Fund not already appropriated to the University of
484 Mississippi Medical Center.

485 **SECTION 14.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
486 and after July 1, 2024.

