

By: Senator(s) McLendon

To: Public Health and Welfare

SENATE BILL NO. 2867

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-144-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
 2 TO ADD A BOARD-CERTIFIED CHILD PSYCHIATRIST AS A MEMBER OF THE  
 3 MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION; TO AMEND  
 4 SECTION 37-144-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO INCLUDE THE  
 5 MISSISSIPPI PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION AMONG THE ORGANIZATIONS FROM  
 6 WHICH THE COMMISSION SHALL SEEK INPUT REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION  
 7 OF THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO AMEND  
 8 SECTION 37-144-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO INCLUDE CHILD  
 9 PSYCHIATRY STUDENTS IN THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS  
 10 SCHOLARSHIP RESIDENCY PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

12 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-144-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
 13 amended as follows:

14 37-144-3. (1) The Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship  
 15 Program shall be administered by a commission to be known as the  
 16 "Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Commission." The  
 17 commission shall be directed by a board composed of the following  
 18 members:

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



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

27 (i) Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians;

28 (ii) Mississippi Chapter, American College of  
29 Physicians;

30 (iii) Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of  
31 Pediatrics;

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

34 (v) \* \* \* Mississippi Psychiatric Association;

35 ( \* \* \*vi) Mississippi Medical and Surgical  
36 Association;

37 ( \* \* \*vii) Mississippi Osteopathic Association;

38 (c) Two (2) designees of the Dean of the University of  
39 Mississippi School of Medicine whose terms are at the discretion  
40 of the dean, at least one (1) of whom is a member of the  
41 University of Mississippi School of Medicine Admissions Committee;

42 (d) Two (2) medical students, one (1) of whom shall be  
43 selected yearly through a process developed by the Dean of the  
44 School of Medicine in consultation with the Chairs of the  
45 Departments of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB-GYN and  
46 Pediatrics, and one (1) of whom shall be nominated for a one-year  
47 term by the Mississippi Chapter of the Student National Medical



48 Association and approved by the Dean of the University of  
49 Mississippi School of Medicine;

50 (e) A member of the Board of Trustees of State  
51 Institutions of Higher Learning;

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

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

56 (2) The premedical advisors from the accredited four-year  
57 colleges and universities in the state and the directors or  
58 designees of the primary care generalist training programs in the  
59 State of Mississippi shall comprise an advisory committee to the  
60 commission to assist the commission in its administration of the  
61 Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program.

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

64 (4) All appointments to the commission must be made no later  
65 than September 1, \* \* \* 2024. After the members are appointed,  
66 the Chair of the Department of Family Medicine shall set a date  
67 for the organizational meeting that is mutually acceptable to the  
68 majority of the commission members. The organizational meeting  
69 shall be for the purposes of organizing the commission and  
70 establishing rules for transacting its business. A majority of  
71 the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum at all  
72 commission meetings. An affirmative vote of a majority of the



73 members present and voting shall be required in the adoption of  
74 rules, reports and in any other actions taken by the commission.  
75 At the organizational meeting, the commission shall elect a chair  
76 and vice chair from the members appointed according to paragraphs  
77 (a) through (d) of subsection (1). The chair shall serve for a  
78 term of two (2) years, upon the expiration of which the vice chair  
79 shall assume the office of chair.

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

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

87 (7) Members of the commission shall serve without  
88 compensation but may be reimbursed, subject to the availability of  
89 funding, for mileage and actual and necessary expenses incurred in  
90 attending meetings of the commission.

91 (8) Funding for the establishment and continued operation of  
92 the program and commission shall be appropriated out of any money  
93 in the General Fund not already appropriated to the University of  
94 Mississippi Medical Center.

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



97           37-144-5. The Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship  
98 Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

99           (a) Developing the administrative policy for the  
100 commission and the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship  
101 Program;

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

106           (c) Developing and implementing strategies and  
107 activities for the identification and recruitment of students and  
108 for marketing the program and for the implementation of the  
109 program. In developing these strategies, the board shall seek the  
110 input of various organizations and entities, including the  
111 Mississippi State Medical Association, the Mississippi Academy of  
112 Family Physicians, the Mississippi Chapters of the American  
113 College of Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the  
114 American College of OB-GYN, Mississippi Psychiatric Association,  
115 the Mississippi Medical and Surgical Association, the Mississippi  
116 Osteopathic Medicine Association and the American Psychiatric  
117 Association;

118           (d) Establishing a budget, with the advice and consent  
119 of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, to support the  
120 activities of the program and periodically reviewing and if



121 appropriate, revising, the scholarship and other stipends offered  
122 through the program;

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

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

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

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

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

140 37-144-7. (1) The commission shall develop and implement  
141 policies and procedures designed to recruit, identify and enroll  
142 undergraduate students who demonstrate necessary interest,  
143 commitment, aptitude and academic achievement to pursue careers as  
144 family physicians, child psychiatrists or other generalist  
145 physicians in rural or medically underserved areas of Mississippi,



146 and to develop and implement the programs designed to foster  
147 successful entry of participants into medical school, completion  
148 of medical school, enrollment into and completion of family  
149 medicine or other generalist residency, and establishment and  
150 maintenance of a career in family medicine, child psychiatry or  
151 other generalist specialty in a rural or underserved area of  
152 Mississippi.

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

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

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

168 (5) In selecting participants for the program, the board may  
169 only accept an applicant if his or her academic record and other  
170 characteristics, if given consideration by the University of



171 Mississippi School of Medicine Admissions Committee, would be  
172 considered credible and competitive.

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

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

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

189 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
190 and after July 1, 2024.

