

REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MR. PRESIDENT AND MR. SPEAKER:

We, the undersigned conferees, have had under consideration the amendments to the following entitled BILL:

S. B. No. 2729: Rural Physicians Scholarship Program and Rural Dentists Scholarship Program; revise certain provisions of.

We, therefore, respectfully submit the following report and recommendation:

1. That the House recede from its Amendment No. 1.
2. That the Senate and House adopt the following amendment:

Amend by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

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

31 37-144-1. There is established the Mississippi Rural
32 Physicians Scholarship Program for the purpose of identifying and
33 recruiting qualified university and college students * * * for
34 medical or osteopathic school matriculation. The program shall
35 consist of three (3) distinct phases through which participants
36 will progress, including:

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

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



43 37-144-5. The Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship
44 Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

45 (a) Developing the administrative policy for the commission
46 and the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program;

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

51 (c) Developing and implementing strategies and activities
52 for the identification and recruitment of students and for
53 marketing the program and for the implementation of the program.
54 In developing these strategies, the board shall seek the input of
55 various organizations and entities, including the Mississippi
56 State Medical Association, the Mississippi Academy of Family
57 Physicians, the Mississippi Chapters of the American College of
58 Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American
59 College of OB-GYN, Mississippi Psychiatric Association, the
60 Mississippi Medical and Surgical Association, the Mississippi
61 Osteopathic Medicine Association and the American Psychiatric
62 Association;

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

99 37-144-7. (1) The commission shall develop and implement
100 policies and procedures designed to recruit, identify and enroll
101 undergraduate students who demonstrate necessary interest,
102 commitment, aptitude and academic achievement to pursue careers as
103 family physicians, psychiatrist, child psychiatrists or other
104 generalist physicians in rural or medically underserved areas of
105 Mississippi, and to develop and implement the programs designed to
106 foster successful entry of participants into medical school,
107 completion of medical school, enrollment into and completion of
108 family medicine or other generalist residency, and establishment
109 and maintenance of a career in family medicine, psychiatrist,
110 child psychiatry or other generalist specialty in a rural or
111 underserved area of Mississippi.

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

115 (3) The commission, in conjunction with the University of
116 Mississippi Medical Center, shall have the authority to provide



117 students selected for scholarship funding with faculty mentors and
118 other programs designed to enhance the students' likelihood of
119 admission to the medical school. The commission and the
120 University of Mississippi Medical Center will develop coursework
121 that will provide scholarship students with the skills necessary
122 for sustained and successful medical practice in rural
123 Mississippi.

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

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

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

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

138 (8) Upon the funding of sixty-one (61) or more rural
139 physicians scholarships by the Legislature and recognizing the
140 importance of balancing the needs of comprehensive primary care
141 along with a critical shortage of psychiatrists in Mississippi,



142 the commission may grant an exception for fourth-year medical or
143 osteopathic school (M4) students who demonstrate a desire to
144 practice psychiatry in rural Mississippi and who use a practice
145 model and enter the practice of medicine in a rural or underserved
146 area in Mississippi, as defined by the commission, beginning for
147 the M4 Class of 2020.

148 **SECTION 4.** Section 37-144-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
149 amended as follows:

150 37-144-13. (1) Subject to the availability of funding,
151 students in the program who successfully matriculate to medical or
152 osteopathic school are eligible for ongoing financial support in
153 accordance with policies and requirements of the commission and in
154 accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. The number
155 of students to be supported at the University of Mississippi
156 School of Medicine and at other schools will be established by
157 policy prescribed by the commission.

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

165 (3) For each year that a student in medical or osteopathic
166 school receives financial assistance, the student is obligated for



167 one (1) year of practice as a primary care physician in a rural or
168 underserved area in Mississippi. Breach of the agreement at any
169 stage of training shall invoke the repayment of all financial
170 assistance provided to the student through the Mississippi Rural
171 Physicians Scholarship Program, including assistance provided
172 during undergraduate school, as well as in medical or osteopathic
173 school, along with other penalties that may be prescribed in
174 policy by the commission.

175 **SECTION 5.** Section 37-144-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
176 amended as follows:

177 37-144-17. (1) Upon completion of residency, a participant
178 in the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program must
179 proceed to enter the practice of medicine in a rural or
180 underserved area in Mississippi, as defined by the commission and
181 consistent with generally acceptable designations. If an area
182 experiences significant changes in its medical or general
183 community which are not reflected by health professional shortage
184 area (HPSA) or medically underserved area (MUA) rural designation,
185 the commission may receive testimony and, in its discretion, may
186 qualify the area as an underserved or rural area to allow the
187 program participant to fulfill his or her practice obligation.

188 (2) Upon entering the practice of medicine, a participant in
189 the program must serve in a health professional shortage area
190 (HPSA), medically underserved area (MUA), or rural area otherwise
191 approved for practice under subsection (1) of this section for a



192 number of years which corresponds to the number of years, not to
193 exceed five (5), for which the participant received funding
194 through the program. A participant who completes residency * * *
195 who fails to enter the practice of medicine as required under this
196 section shall be deemed in breach of contract and shall be liable
197 for the immediate repayment of all financial assistance provided
198 to the participant through the Mississippi Rural Physicians
199 Scholarship Program, including assistance provided during
200 undergraduate school, as well as in medical or osteopathic school,
201 along with other penalties that may be prescribed in policy by the
202 board. Any participant who fails to complete the period of
203 practice for which he or she is obligated to provide services in a
204 health professional shortage area (HPSA) or a medically
205 underserved area (MUA) in exchange for financial assistance
206 received through the Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship
207 Program shall be liable for the repayment of all financial
208 assistance provided to the participant through the program, along
209 with other penalties that may be prescribed by the commission, an
210 amount which shall be reduced on a pro rata basis for actual years
211 of practice by the physician in the area designated by the
212 commission.

213 **SECTION 6.** Section 37-146-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
214 amended as follows:

215 37-146-1. There is established the Mississippi Rural
216 Dentists Scholarship Program for the purpose of identifying and



217 recruiting qualified university and college students * * * for
218 dental school matriculation. Such program shall be known and may
219 be cited as the Dr. G. Norris Howell Rural Dentists Scholarship
220 Program. The program shall consist of three (3) distinct phases
221 through which participants will progress, including:

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

226 **SECTION 7.** Section 37-146-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
227 amended as follows:

228 37-146-5. The Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship
229 Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- 230 (a) Developing the administrative policy for the
231 commission and the Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program;
- 232 (b) Promulgating rules and regulations, with the advice
233 and consent of the University of Mississippi Medical Center,
234 pertaining to the implementation and operation of the Rural
235 Dentists Scholarship Program;
- 236 (c) Developing and implementing strategies and
237 activities for the identification and recruitment of students and
238 for marketing the program and for the implementation of the
239 program. In developing these strategies, the board shall seek the
240 input of various organizations and entities * * *;



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



264 (iii) The status of, to include location or
265 practice, participants who have entered a dental residency
266 program;

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

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

272 **SECTION 8.** Section 37-146-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
273 amended as follows:

274 37-146-11. (1) Students in the program may apply to
275 the * * * University of Mississippi School of Dentistry.

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

281 (3) In carrying out the admissions process developed for the
282 Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program participants under
283 this section, the goal is for the program to work with the School
284 of Dentistry to enhance the capability of participants to
285 successfully enter and complete dental school and enter practice
286 in rural or underserved areas in Mississippi. To the extent
287 feasible, the early admissions process should be completed before



288 December 1 of the year preceding a student's admission to dental
289 school.

290 **SECTION 9.** Section 37-144-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
291 amended as follows:

292 37-144-3. (1) The Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship
293 Program shall be administered by a commission to be known as the
294 "Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Commission." The
295 commission shall be directed by a board composed of the following
296 members:

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

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

305 (i) Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians;

306 (ii) Mississippi Chapter, American College of
307 Physicians;

308 (iii) Mississippi Chapter, American Academy of
309 Pediatrics;

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

312 (v) Mississippi Psychiatric Association;



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

315 (* * *vii) Mississippi Osteopathic Association;

316 (c) Two (2) designees of the Dean of the University of
317 Mississippi School of Medicine whose terms are at the discretion
318 of the dean, at least one (1) of whom is a member of the
319 University of Mississippi School of Medicine Admissions Committee;

320 (d) Two (2) medical students, one (1) of whom shall be
321 selected yearly through a process developed by the Dean of the
322 School of Medicine in consultation with the Chairs of the
323 Departments of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB-GYN and
324 Pediatrics, and one (1) of whom shall be nominated for a one-year
325 term by the Mississippi Chapter of the Student National Medical
326 Association and approved by the Dean of the University of
327 Mississippi School of Medicine;

328 (e) A member of the Board of Trustees of State
329 Institutions of Higher Learning;

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

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

334 (2) The premedical advisors from the accredited four-year
335 colleges and universities in the state and the directors or
336 designees of the primary care generalist training programs in the
337 State of Mississippi shall comprise an advisory committee to the



338 commission to assist the commission in its administration of the
339 Mississippi Rural Physicians Scholarship Program.

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

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

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

360 (6) The commission may form an executive committee for the
361 purpose of transacting business that must be conducted before the
362 next regularly scheduled meeting of the commission. All actions



363 taken by the executive committee must be ratified by the
364 commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

365 (7) Members of the commission shall serve without
366 compensation but may be reimbursed, subject to the availability of
367 funding, for mileage and actual and necessary expenses incurred in
368 attending meetings of the commission.

369 (8) Funding for the establishment and continued operation of
370 the program and commission shall be appropriated out of any money
371 in the General Fund not already appropriated to the University of
372 Mississippi Medical Center.

373 **SECTION 10.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
374 and after July 1, 2024.

**Further, amend by striking the title in its entirety and
inserting in lieu thereof the following:**

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 TO AMEND SECTION 37-144-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO ADD A
5 PHYSICIAN APPOINTED BY THE MISSISSIPPI PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION AS
6 A MEMBER OF THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP
7 COMMISSION; TO AMEND SECTION 37-144-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
8 TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION
9 TO PRODUCE AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE PROVIDING CERTAIN
10 STATISTICS; TO INCLUDE THE MISSISSIPPI PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION
11 AMONG THE ORGANIZATIONS FROM WHICH THE COMMISSION SHALL SEEK INPUT
12 REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL PHYSICIANS
13 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION 37-144-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE
14 OF 1972, TO INCLUDE CHILD PSYCHIATRY STUDENTS IN THE MISSISSIPPI
15 RURAL 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 AMEND SECTION 37-146-1,
18 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE
19 MISSISSIPPI RURAL DENTISTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO ALLOW STUDENTS
20 FROM ALL AREAS OF THE STATE; TO PROVIDE THAT SUCH PROGRAM SHALL BE



21 KNOWN AND MAY BE CITED AS THE DR. G. NORRIS HOWELL RURAL DENTISTS
22 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE
23 OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL DENTISTS SCHOLARSHIP
24 COMMISSION TO PRODUCE ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATURE PROVIDING
25 VARIOUS STATISTICS; TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-11, MISSISSIPPI CODE
26 OF 1972, TO MAKE CERTAIN TECHNICAL REVISIONS THERETO; AND FOR
27 RELATED PURPOSES.

CONFEREES FOR THE SENATE

X (SIGNED)

Boyd

X (SIGNED)

Williams

X (SIGNED)

Hopson

CONFEREES FOR

X (SIGNED)

Scoggin

X (SIGNED)

Holloway (76th)

X (SIGNED)

Calvert

