MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Hines

To: Public Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 32

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE HEALTH OFFICER TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM TO CLOSE THE GAP IN THE HEALTH STATUS OF ALL GENDER AND RACIAL GROUPS; TO REQUIRE A STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT; TO ESTABLISH MEASURABLE OUTCOMES; TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE SELECTION OF CERTAIN ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSES OF THIS ACT; TO COORDINATE WITH OTHER PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES; TO REQUIRE EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) It is the goal of the State of Mississippi to decrease the disparities in all gender and racial groups in many diseases and preventable conditions by 2027. In order to achieve this and other measurable outcomes, the State Health Officer shall establish a program to close the gap in the health status of all gender and racial groups in the following priority areas: infant mortality, breast and cervical cancer screening, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, adult and child immunizations, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, accidental injuries and violence.

(2) The State Health Officer, in partnership with community-based organizations and partners specializing in health

disparities in all gender and racial groups, shall develop a comprehensive, coordinated plan to reduce health disparities in the health disparity priority areas identified in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The State Health Officer shall review current data to support a statewide assessment of the risk behaviors associated with the health disparity priority areas identified in subsection (1) of this section. The statewide assessment shall consist of focus groups, needs assessment surveys and key informant interviews. The statewide assessment must be used to establish a baseline to measure the effect of activities that may be funded in future legislation. To the extent feasible, the assessment shall be conducted so that the results may be compared to national data.

(4) The State Health Officer, in consultation with community-based organizations and partners, shall establish measurable outcomes to achieve the goal specified in subsection (1) of this section.

(5) The State Health Officer shall contract with an entity specializing in health disparities, which has at least four (4) years, experience and is located in the State of Mississippi, to provide the necessary expertise to ensure that the planning process is successful in reducing the health disparities identified in subsection (1) of this section. The State Health Officer shall provide Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($250,000.00) in funding to the contracting entity to conduct the

needs assessment, develop outcomes, and manage the planning process, coordination and evaluation.

(6) The State Health Officer shall identify community-based organizations and partners in all gender and racial groups, develop the criteria and procedures to select these organizations as planning partners and engage them in the process to plan to eliminate health disparities. At the time the community-based organizations and partners are selected, the State Health Officer shall inform these organizations of the intent and purpose of the outcomes to be jointly established according to subsection (4) of this section. The plan shall include sections on morbidity and mortality for the health disparity priority areas listed in subsection (1) of this section, a review and report of the statewide needs assessment process, measurable outcomes and a complete description of a community grant program for decreasing health disparities. The community grant program shall describe, but not be limited to, the funding purpose, eligibility criteria and program requirements and activities.

(7) The State Health Officer shall coordinate the closing the gap program with other projects and initiatives funded from state and federal funds in order to avoid duplication and promote complementary efforts.

(8) The State Health Officer shall conduct a biennial evaluation of the closing the gap program.

(9) The State Health Officer shall submit a biennial report to the Legislature on the closing the gap program. The report shall include information on activities that were conducted using grant funds, evaluation data, and outcome measures, if available.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.

ST: Health; State Health Officer shall develop program to close the gap in health status of gender and racial groups.