

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



EXECUTIVE ORDER 1438

WHEREAS, ensuring a high quality of life for Mississippians in all areas of the state is of the utmost importance; and

WHEREAS, in Mississippi, 66 of 82 counties are considered to be rural, comprising roughly 54% of the state's population; and

WHEREAS, within these communities, rural hospitals act as a vital health care access point and often serve as the largest employer; and

WHEREAS, rural hospitals also face a number of challenges, including declining inpatient volumes, reduced reimbursement rates, and burdensome regulatory requirements; and

WHEREAS, based on independent financial projections, many rural hospitals in Mississippi are at risk of closure; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to develop financially viable and sustainable approaches that improve rural health, strengthen rural health care, and promote the success of rural hospitals while containing the total cost of care; and

WHEREAS, these transformation efforts will require input from and collaboration among policymakers, health care providers, government and private health care payers, and health care consumers.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Phil Bryant, Governor of the State of Mississippi, pursuant to the authority vested in me under the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, do hereby create the Mississippi Rural Health Care Task Force.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Mississippi Rural Health Care Task Force shall be composed of the State Health Officer of the Mississippi Department of Health, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Division of Medicaid, the Director of the Mississippi Department of Health's State Office of Rural Health, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, the Executive Director of the Mississippi Rural Health Association, the President/CEO of the Mississippi Hospital Association, the CEO of the Community Health Center Association of Mississippi, senior leadership of certain rural hospitals and rural health care facilities, and such other members the Governor deems necessary. The members shall serve voluntarily in an advisory capacity. The Governor shall designate a Chairman.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that the Mississippi Rural Health Care Task Force shall meet periodically at the call of the Chairman to study the state of rural health care in Mississippi and develop a comprehensive report of the financial outlook of the state's rural hospitals, including recommendations to prevent and mitigate threats of closure of these rural hospitals; an evaluation of reimbursement rates to each rural hospital for both inpatient and outpatient services and recommendations on fiscally responsible alternative payment models; and strategies for working with state and federal lawmakers for the purpose of improving the financial state of Mississippi's rural hospitals in order to ensure their continued viability.

BE IT FURTHER ORDERED that the Mississippi Rural Health Care Task Force shall provide to the Governor a written report incorporating the directives of this Executive Order by September 30, 2019.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, this the twenty-sixth day of April in the year of our Lord, two thousand and nineteen, and of the independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-third.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Bryant".

PHIL BRYANT
GOVERNOR

BY THE GOVERNOR:

C. Delbert Hosemann, Jr.
C. DELBERT HOSEMAN, JR.
SECRETARY OF STATE