



MISSISSIPPI
HEALTH ADVOCACY
PROGRAM

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Mississippi Leaders Weigh In on Health Care Reform

New Policy Brief Outlines How Health Care Reform May Affect Mississippi

JACKSON, Miss. – Mississippi continues to lag behind the nation in health outcomes ranking first in heart disease death rate, first in obesity and first in infant mortality. Those depressingly familiar statistics may be improved upon according to a new policy brief released by the Mississippi Health Advocacy Program (MHAP). A key finding is that implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) offers the opportunity to reshape and rethink how health care is provided in Mississippi and that consumer engagement in this process is critical to the goal of producing healthier citizens.

The brief, *Implementing Health Reform: An Informed Approach from Mississippi Leaders*, is the result of a discussion of the challenges, opportunities and barriers to health care reform implementation in the state by political, civic, business and health care leaders from across Mississippi.

“Our discussion with Mississippi leaders found that health care reform has the potential to create better health outcomes and reduce the number of uninsured Mississippians,” said Corey Wiggins, MHAP project manager and one of the authors of the brief. “However, in order for health care reform to be successful, it will require a shared effort from all stakeholders involved in Mississippi’s health care system.”

Additionally, *Implementing Health Reform* includes an assessment of health care in Mississippi. It addresses Mississippi’s demographic changes, economic inequality and the political environment. Potential benefits such as patient-centered health care and the expanded use of technology are explored, while potential challenges that include an increasing physician shortage and barriers to access in rural areas are also addressed.

“The brief is being made available to encourage policymakers and others to become better informed about the issues surrounding health care reform implementation in our state,” said Tinencia Harris, the brief’s co-author. “We all want to see a Mississippi where our health care system produces better health outcomes.”

To review a downloadable version of the entire brief, or to learn more about health care reform in Mississippi, please visit www.msroadtoreform.org or facebook.com/MSRoadtoReform.

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The Mississippi Health Advocacy Program (MHAP), founded in 1992, is a non-profit, consumer advocacy program dedicated to improving health policy in Mississippi. MHAP combines research, public education and community engagement to improve health policies, practices and funding in Mississippi, especially in support of the state’s poor and underserved people.