

MEDIA ADVISORY

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HEALTH EXPERTS, SOUTHERN GOVERNORS WILL EXAMINE IMPACTS AND COSTS OF THE REGION'S OBESITY EPIDEMIC

*Annual Meeting of Southern Governors' Association will Provide Forum
to Look at Trends and Develop Strategies to Promote Wellness in the South*

WASHINGTON, DC (August 20, 2007) – The increasing rate of obesity in the South raises grave concern because of the implications for increased medical costs to states and a lack of productivity among the region's citizens. Recent reports site nine of the ten fattest states as being in the South, where over 25 million people have diabetes.

On August 25, Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour will host a panel of leading health experts to discuss Obesity and Wellness in the South at the 73rd annual convening of the Southern Governors' Association (SGA) at the Beau Rivage Resort in Biloxi, Mississippi. Joining the panel will be former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, a national advocate for addressing the obesity crisis, and a published author.

Speakers:

- **The Honorable Mike Huckabee, former Governor, State of Arkansas**, has been a leader in the effort to implement state policies to promote healthy lifestyles, driven in many ways by his own personal battle with obesity. While serving as the Governor of Arkansas, he lost over 100 pounds through diet and exercise, and implemented the Healthy Arkansas initiative.
- **Dr. William Rowley, Senior Futurist, Institute for Alternative Futures** has completed forecasts of the incidence of obesity and diabetes in many Southern states, including the costs associated with these trends.

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- **Susan R. Cooper, MS, RN, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Health; Director, *Project Diabetes***, has assumed leadership of Tennessee Governor Bredesen's *Project Diabetes*, which was created to address the threat of Type 2 diabetes facing young people; and she has helped facilitate the creation of the Governor's GetFitTN Initiative.
- **Dr. Marshall Bouldin, Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Mississippi Medical Center**, focuses on creating a system of cost-effective clinics throughout the Mississippi Delta to bring diabetes care up to the national standard and help prevent some of the complications of the disease. He will discuss how this system of care delivery can be replicated in regions where physicians are scarce.
- **John Miall, Special Consultant, American Pharmacists Association Foundation; former Director, Risk Management, City of Asheville, North Carolina**, was one of the visionaries behind The Asheville Project, an effort of the City of Asheville, North Carolina, which is a self-insured employer, to provide education and personal oversight for employees with chronic health problems, including diabetes, asthma, hypertension and high cholesterol.

Times:

3:45 – 5:30 pm Plenary 2: Obesity and Wellness

5:30 – 5:45 pm Press Conference, Magnolia Promenade

Location:

Magnolia Ballroom, Beau Rivage Resort & Casino
875 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, MS 39530

Media:

Media must register in order to attend.

Media registration can be found online at: www.southerngovernors.org

About SGA:

Since 1934, the Southern Governors' Association has represented the common interests of its members' chief executives and provided a mechanism for advancing them. As the oldest – and historically the largest – of the regional governors' associations, SGA provides a bipartisan forum to exchange ideas, explore common issues, address pressing problems, coordinate regional collaborative initiatives, promote regional accomplishments and help shape and implement national policy. The association's membership is composed of the governors of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Virginia and West Virginia.

Southern Governors' Association uses the power of connection, collaboration and communications in a bipartisan manner to solve regional problems, improve quality of life and secure an economically vibrant and prosperous American South.

Visit SGA on the Web at www.southerngovernors.org