

A Message from the Executive Director

I am sure that everyone is aware that the Plaintiffs recently filed a contempt motion with the federal court regarding the Olivia Y. lawsuit.

I am not at liberty to discuss any ongoing litigation but as your Executive Director I need to assure you of two things.

First, we will have our day in court where we will be able to present our responses to any and all allegations.

The second, and most important point that I have to make, is for you in the field to continue to concentrate on your tasks and not be deterred from your mission in any way.

We have a team of people here in the State Office and competent outside counsel that are dedicated solely to Olivia Y. They will handle all of the details with the court. I need for each of you to remain confident, focused and dedicated to your mission of protecting our children.

Self-development guru and motivational speaker Brian Tracy once said, "Between you and every goal that you wish to achieve, there is a series of obstacles, and the bigger the goal, the bigger the obstacles. Your decision to be, have and do something out of the ordinary entails facing difficulties and challenges that are out of the ordinary as well. Sometimes your greatest asset is simply your ability to stay with it longer than anyone else."

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Mississippian Among List of Presidential Scholars



Joint program between four presidential centers to foster growth in diverse group of young leaders. Deputy Administrator for Administration Will Simpson among list of those chosen for inaugural class.

The Presidential Leadership Scholars program, a unique leadership development initiative that draws upon the resources of the presidential centers of Lyndon B. Johnson, George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush, announced the 60 scholars invited to participate in the program's inaugural class.

These diverse leaders selected from over 900 applicants were chosen because of their desire and capacity to take their leadership strengths to a higher level in order to help their communities and our country. The program began February 24, 2015.

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and updates.

We will continue to work as hard as we can for the children of Mississippi. I am reminded of what Winston Churchill said during the dark days of World War II, "Never, never, never give up." We are making progress. Do not be discouraged!

I would like to add my congratulations to Deputy Administrator Will Simpson for his selection to participate in the Presidential Leadership Scholars program. This is quite an honor of national significance to be selected to such an elite program.

We are entering the final weeks of the 2015 legislative session. There is really nothing to report at this time regarding pay issues or our budget. I will be working the Capitol more and more over the next couple of weeks to ensure that our needs are heard. I will report back to you with results next month.

We are off to a great start for Federal Fiscal Year 2015. Child support collections are up, and the TANF Work Program Participation Rate and all the SNAP program indicators look very good. We have to remain on task keeping up the good work. Our mission is a marathon not a sprint.

Each and every client that enters our doors is special and has an array of needs. They would not be in our office if they did not have challenges in one or more areas of their life. We must remain committed to our mission to serve.

Thanks again to all of you that put in extra effort and hours during the recent winter storms that hit different parts of our state. State office and county staff are always ready to go the extra mile, whether it is manning a shelter, working the Emergency Operations Center or coordinating with state and local officials.

I appreciate each of you and I am very proud of you and how you respond each and every time that the chips are down.

Richard Berry
MDHS Executive Director

THE PROGRAM

The six-month, executive-style program began at George Washington's Mount Vernon. Over the course of several months, scholars travel to each participating presidential center to learn from former presidents, key administration officials and leading academics. They will study and put into practice varying approaches to leadership, develop a network of peers, and exchange ideas with mentors and others who can help them make an impact in their communities.

The program is non-degree bearing, entails approximately 100 hours of informative sessions and case studies, and covers expansive approaches to leadership theory, drawing upon examples from recent presidents.

Scholars will visit the William J. Clinton Presidential Center in March, the George W. Bush Presidential Center in April, the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library in May, and the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library in June. The inaugural class will graduate at the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas in July.

THE CURRICULUM

At each Presidential Center, sessions will focus on a specific core component of leadership and will include in-depth case studies that are illustrative of the many competencies of that president. The curriculum draws from presidential center archives and other resources related to moments from each administration, and provides insight into how each president addressed pressing challenges. The curriculum also relies upon analyses of how leaders across all sectors address similar types of challenges.

Sessions and case studies include:

- Vision and Communication (Welfare Reform, William J. Clinton Presidential Center).
- Decision Making (The 2008 Financial Crisis, George W. Bush Presidential Center).
- Influence and Persuasion (Voting Rights Act, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library).
- Coalition Building (German Reunification, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library).

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The Beacon



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Presidential Scholarship Program continued

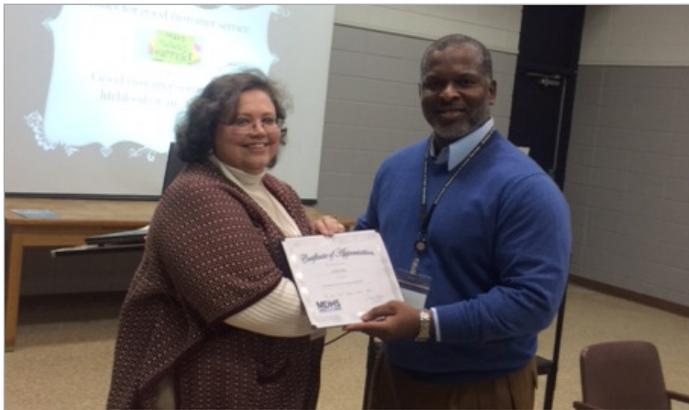
In addition to interactive faculty-led sessions, scholars will hone their personal leadership development through executive coaching. Peer learning groups will offer support and partnership as they develop personal leadership projects designed to achieve positive social impact through the application of the skills they learn through the program.

THE SCHOLARS

The first cohort of 60 Presidential Leadership Scholars includes individuals from diverse backgrounds and geographies, coming from a variety of sectors, including private, public, non-profit, military, and academia. Each scholar was selected for their leadership growth potential.

Congratulations to Deputy Administrator Will Simpson for being recognized and chosen to participate in this pursuit of excellence and leadership training.

Kemper County Presentation



Kemper County Director Janet Key was recently presented with a certificate of recognition on behalf of the Division of Field Operations for her valuable assistance serving on special projects. Janet is pictured with Region 4 North Director Ross Crawford.

Attention: Regional and County Directors

Don't forget to send your news, photos, retirements and events to mdhs. communications@mdhs.ms.gov.

Maybe next month, you'll see your county and staff featured in The Beacon!



Retirements

Mary Collier



Mary Collier retired last month from DFCS in the CQI Evaluation and Monitoring Unit after serving the state for more than 29 years. She has been an eligibility and social worker in Sunflower County, a regional FPS Advanced and EMU Liaison for Region 2 West.

Photo at left: Supervisor Sandra Panzo and Mary Collier (right). Photo at right, Collier and Region 2W Director Viedale Washington.

Cathy Norsworthy



Cathy Norsworthy retired from Wayne County DHS as County Director II effective January 30, 2015, after serving the state for 28 years. She was presented a Certificate by Region 4 South Director Jim Sims at her retirement celebration.

Healthy Homes Mississippi - Home Visitation for Pregnant or New Mothers



Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell announced \$386 million in grant awards to states, territories and nonprofit organizations to support the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (Home Visiting Program). These funds will allow states to continue to expand voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services to women during pregnancy, and to parents with young children.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services administers the grant through Healthy Homes Mississippi (HHM) in the Division of Family Foundation and Support. The program currently has 61 employees that serve families in Claiborne, Copiah, Jefferson, Wilkinson, Tunica, Coahoma, Sunflower, Issaquena, Sharkey, Holmes, Humphreys, and Tallahatchie counties. The program also maintains a Memorandum of Agreement with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians for Neshoba County.



Stacy Davis, HHM program director said, "We, as Early Childhood educators, share the responsibilities for promoting positive parent/child relationships at an early stage in life by guiding the families and taking baby steps to help them understand and achieve developmental milestones for their children. Most family cases are challenging but we have a team that is really passionate about serving others. It makes the

vision of our Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) a great success and a step closer to making a difference."

HHM serves pregnant mothers or low income families with children three months or younger, families with a history of substance abuse, tobacco use in the homes, families that are in the Armed Services, low student achievement, and domestic violence. HHM Family Support Workers (FSW's) assist families with physical and mental health issues, financial planning, parenting information, community support and services, and building healthy social support networks.

"Home visits by a nurse, social worker or early childhood educator during pregnancy and in the first years of life can make a tremendous difference in the lives of many children and their families," said Secretary Burwell. "This award gives states the flexibility to tailor their home visiting programs to address the specific needs of the communities they serve."

The Home Visiting Program currently serves approximately one-third of the counties in the country with high rates of the following indicators: low birth weight, teen birth rate, living in poverty and infant mortality rates. More than 1.4 million home visits have been conducted through the national Home Visiting Program, serving parents and children in 721 counties in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five territories. In 2014, the Home Visiting Program served 115,000 parents and children. Nearly 80 percent of families participating in the program had household incomes at or below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

"The Home Visiting Program gives parents who chose to participate, the tools they need to support healthy outcomes for their children," said Mary Wakefield, Ph.D., RN, administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). "Evidence-based home visiting services are proven to help improve maternal and child health, prevent child abuse and neglect, and enhance school-readiness."

Administered by HRSA, in close partnership with the Administration for Children and Families, the Home Visiting Program is one part of President Obama's Early Learning Initiative that focuses on both high-quality infant and toddler care through Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships and universal Pre-K to improve the essential foundations in early childhood for future healthy development and well-being.

Current authority for the Home Visiting Program expires on March 31, 2015. The President's Budget requests \$500 million for fiscal year 2016 and \$15 billion over the next 10 years to continue to expand Home Visiting for families.

For more information on HRSA's Home Visiting Program, visit <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting>.

Winter Weather Continues for Much of Mississippi

With spring just around the corner, cold weather continues to hang on in Mississippi. Our state has experienced a mild winter overall, but February has been a challenge. With lows in the single digits and highs in the 80s, the adage of, "If you don't like the weather, wait until tomorrow. It will change," rings true for the Magnolia State.

Be prepared and take appropriate precautions so that you survive the last blast of winter in Mississippi.

What's Happening Mississippi?

Events and Festivals

March 9-11: Wings of Freedom Tour, Vicksburg-Tallah Regional Airport hosts a flight experience and walk-through tours. WWII Vets get in free. For more information call 318-574-2731.

March 14: St. Patrick's Day Parade, downtown Waveland. Organized in 1964, the oldest parade for this celebration on the coast.

March 14: Turkey Season begins

March 21: Mal's St. Paddy's Parade, downtown Jackson. The event features music, floats, food and lots of fun.

March 28, April 3: Catfish Dinner with the Easter Bunny at **Cedar Hill Farm** in Hernando. Enjoy a family dinner, Easter egg hunts and farm activities for the kids.

April: Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 11 & 25: Eagles Nest Dirt Kart Racing, Horn Lake. For more information call 662-393-4544.

April 2-June 25: Spring Hootenanny Hoedown, Olive Branch. Listen to down home music in front of the Olive Branch Pickers Music Store. Call 662-893-0888 for more information.

April 3-4, April 11-12: KidFest, Ridgeland. Features an Easter egg hunt, Paddington Bear, exhibits and amusement rides.

April 3-5: 3rd Annual Gulf Coast Auto Show. Classic cars, hot rods, motorcycles and trucks, along with music and entertainment for the family. For more information call 228-596-0664.

April 3: Jackson Zoo's 8th Annual Zoo Brew. Enjoy samples from 50 craft beers, live entertainment.

April 4: Southern Miss Jazz & Blues Festival, Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach. Features jazz and blues musicians, local artists and craftsmen, food and fun for the family.

April 9-12: 12th Annual Juke Joint Festival, Clarksdale. Lots of music, fun and food in the heart of the Delta.

April 9-12: Amory Railroad Festival. Since 1979, attracting railroad enthusiasts from across the U.S. Includes entertainment, a car show, food and family fun.

April 10: New Albany Home & Garden Show. Talks by Felder Rushing and other garden experts, vendors and exhibits. Call 662-534-1047 for more information.

April 11-12: Art in the Pass, Pass Christian. 100 artists from across the U.S. Free family event

April 11: 35th Annual Alcorn State University Jazz Festival, Vicksburg Convention Center. Enjoy music, workshops and performances. Call 601-877-6261 for more information.

April 16-19: Crawfish Music Festival, Gulf Coast Coliseum. Food, music and loads of family fun. For tickets, call 228-594-3700.

April 17-18: Riverfest Music and Arts, Vicksburg. Live music, arts & crafts.

April 17-19: Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, Southaven. Performances, amazing animals and superhuman stunts. Go to **Ticketmaster** for event information and tickets.

April 18: Sante' South Wine Festival, Ridgeland. Event features wine, fine food and entertainment. Festival benefits the Alzheimer's Association, Mississippi Chapter.

April 21-25: Southaven 35th Annual Springfest. Entertainment, carnival midway, food and fun. Also scheduled is the State Barbecue Championship and includes a youth cooking competition. Go to **Southaven.org** for more information.

April 24-25: Double Decker Arts Festival, Oxford. Festival showcases the town, arts and music in the Courthouse Square.

April 26: 2015 Spring Mid-South Wedding Show, Olive Branch. Meet the Mid-South's leading wedding experts and learn everything a bride and groom need to know to plan the perfect wedding. Features a fashion show, seminars, games, prizes. Visit **midsouthweddingshow.com** for more information.

Hope you get out and enjoy some area events.

Note: During April, many MDHS offices across the state will host or participate in Child Abuse Prevention events. Support our local MDHS, DFCS staff.

SUPPORT PROTECTION OF MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN

The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) of Mississippi has developed a car tag to support efforts to prevent child abuse, neglect and exploitation in Mississippi.

For the state to go forward with plans for the car tags, 300 tags must be pre-sold at \$31 each prior to production. For every \$31 purchase, \$24 will go directly to the CTF to promote child abuse prevention efforts.

For more information on the car tag, call 601-359-4999 to speak with the DFCS Prevention Unit or go to: <http://www.mdhs.ms.gov/family-childrens-services/programs/child-abuse-preventionprotection/childrens-trust-fund/ctf-car-tag/>.



Tips for Quitting Tobacco: Help for the First Hard Days



By now, each of us who are enrolled in the State Health Insurance Plan has received the Tobacco Use Attestation Form to be completed and returned to our supervisors by May 1, 2015.

Though the February 1, 2015, deadline to quit and avoid the additional \$50 premium surcharge beginning July 1 has

passed, it's not too late to make the change to kick the habit for the rest of your life.

Tips from *WebMD*

Sip Cold Water and Eat Small Meals

Sipping cold water through a straw can help replace the act of sucking on a cigarette. It also releases dopamine, a feel-good brain chemical that can help ease bad moods, research shows.

Eating small meals can also help you get past the urge to smoke. Choose lean, healthy foods to avoid weight gain.

Note Instant Rewards

You don't have to wait long to begin enjoying the benefits of a smoke-free life. Keep a written list of the good things as you begin to notice them. They might include feeling in control, saving money, smelling better, tasting food more vividly and feeling more energetic. When the urge to smoke strikes, look at your list as a reminder of what you've gained from quitting.

Brush Your Teeth Often

One of the instant perks of quitting is that your mouth tastes better and your breath smells better. Brush often. That way, you'll be less inclined to light up a cigarette and foul that clean, fresh mouth.

Avoid Alcohol

Drinking it is one of the most common things that makes people go back to smoking. Here's why. Alcohol breaks down self-restraint and that can erode your commitment to quitting. Many people also associate the act of drinking with smoking so it may trigger you to light up.

Find Your Own No-Smoking Zones

When the urge to smoke strikes, go somewhere you can't light up -- a movie, the library or a store for example. The more distracting the place is, the easier it will be to ride out cravings.

Remember Your Reasons for Quitting

Write down a list of all your reasons to stop smoking. Make copies and post them wherever you spend time -- in the kitchen, at the office, beside the bathroom mirror. Put them where they are easy to see so you're reminded wherever you go. Some ex-smokers say they found it useful to put photos of family and loved ones alongside their reasons.

Be Active Every Day

Exercise offers a powerful distraction from cravings. When your body is active, it sends out natural chemicals that help your mood and ease your stress. Walking is one of the easiest exercises for most people. Choosing a few different activities might help you stay motivated, though. Set aside time to be physically active every day -- especially in the first month after you've quit smoking.

Fill Your Calendar

During the first few weeks after you kick the habit, fill your days with things you want or need to do. Make plans

to eat meals with family or friends and try to steer clear of smoking temptations. The busier you are, the more distracted you'll be from the urge to smoke.

Put Something Else in Your Mouth

Part of the urge to smoke is having something in your mouth. In place of a cigarette, pop in sugar-free chewing gum, hard candy or a healthy snack when you feel like you want to light up. Be sure to have something with you at all times. If you're concerned about gaining weight, stick with low-calorie options.

Secure a Lifeline

Ask someone to be there for you when you need support. The best choice is a friend who is also a former smoker. But anyone who cares for you and wants you to quit smoking can help when times get tough.

Limit Caffeine

Caffeine helps some people get going in the morning and stay alert when they're tired. But it makes others feel tense, jittery and stressed. Breaking your nicotine addiction can boost those effects. If caffeine makes you jumpy or anxious, cut back on it.

Be Alert to Bad Moods

Negative emotions -- stress, anger, frustration -- are another common reason people go back to smoking. Bad moods happen to everyone and chances are you'll feel more than your fair share of them during the first few weeks of quitting. Find ways to distract yourself. Get together with friends or do something else you really enjoy.

Avoid Troublemakers

Although friends and family should be supportive, they aren't always. Some people might feel threatened by your decision to quit. They might even try to undermine your best efforts. If you sense that there are people like this in your life, avoid them. If that isn't possible, sit them down and tell them why quitting is so important to you. Ask for their support.

Be Patient and Stay on Track

Once you make it through the first two weeks, you're on your way to a lifetime free of nicotine addiction. But be prepared in case you falter. Remember: One lapse doesn't mean you've failed. Just consider what went wrong. Then think up ways to prevent the same problem from happening again.

<http://www.webmd.com/smoking-cessation/ss/slideshow-tips-quit-smoking/>

For additional information and assistance, call the MS Tobacco Quitline at 1.800.QUIT.NOW. You can also go online to www.QuitlineMS.com, www.Act2Quit.com or to knowyourbenefits for more information and help.

Make 2015 the year you stop smoking and start repairing.

Feedback

We'd like to hear from you, our MDHS readers. Do you have a success story about quitting smoking? Did you choose to quit because of the new premium surcharge? If you quit the nicotine habit, what are some tips you'd like to share?

To give some feedback, email me at mdhs_communications@mdhs.ms.gov. We'll share some of your ideas next time as we get healthy together at MDHS.