

March 7, 2003

The Henry Toll Fellowship Committee
Allison Spurrier, Program Coordinator
The Council of State Government
2760 Research Park Drive
Lexington, Kentucky 40511

Dear Ms. Spurrier:

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Rica Lewis-Payton to participate in the Council of State Government's 2003 Henry Toll Fellowship Program. As the Executive Director of Mississippi Division of Medicaid, Rica works tirelessly to protect critical healthcare services to our most vulnerable citizens. Under her leadership, the Medicaid Program is now providing benefits to one in every four citizens, or twenty-five percent of the State's population.

Because of the national recession and the increased cost of healthcare it has been a challenge to maintain an adequate level of coverage. Rica and her staff have initiated multiple cost-containment measures with minimal loss of services. Under her leadership, administrative costs at the Division of Medicaid have been maintained at 2.1% of total budget, the second lowest in the nation.

In recognition of her outstanding leadership ability and dedication to the provision of quality healthcare services, she has received a number of honors and awards. I nominated her for the 2001 Good Housekeeping Award for Women in Government, and she has received awards from the Mississippi Medical and Surgical Association, the Mississippi Primary Care Association, and the Magnolia Bar Association.

Rica has an outstanding working relationship with State Legislators, State Agency Heads, and her colleagues in other states. I can think of no one more deserving and it is without hesitation that I nominate her for this prestigious program.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE