

July 16, 2003

Inside Address  
Inside Address  
City/State/Zip

Dear (Agency):

In October 2001, Mississippi embarked on a precedent-setting journey. Through a cooperative agreement with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), Mississippi was awarded a nine million-dollar State Incentive Grant, often called SIG, to be dispersed annually in increments of three million dollars over a three-year period. SIG calls upon governors to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide substance abuse prevention strategy to optimize the use of all State and Federal substance abuse prevention funding. Mississippi is in the fifth cohort of states funded through the SIG and joins 36 other states that are working to strengthen their statewide prevention systems.

The Office of the Governor serves as lead agency for the Mississippi Alliance for Prevention (MAP) initiative administered by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and implemented by DREAM, Inc. As part of the MAP initiative, Mississippi will assess the extent and nature of funding already dedicated to prevention in Mississippi. The attached survey will be used to determine where strengths and gaps exist in relation to prevention funding. In addition, results of the survey will enable SIG administrators to assist statewide efforts to sustain programs that are so badly needed. Our ultimate destination, among others, is to significantly reduce substance abuse among Mississippi youth between the ages of 12-17.

The nature of violence, alcohol, tobacco, and other substance abuse prevention often makes it difficult to assess resources in any one agency. Programs may be spread

out over several divisions or districts. As co-chair of the Mississippi Alliance for Prevention Advisory Council, I am asking each agency director to appoint one person to assure the completion and return of the enclosed survey. Please work with your fiscal director and program director to assure the completeness of this information you provide. Having a good understanding of the current resources will help all of us compete for additional resources and sustain existing programs that are working. If your agency does not currently fund substance abuse programs, please write non-applicable and return the survey.

The investments we make in our children today will pay great dividends tomorrow, and this initiative is part of our investment strategy. Substance abuse is a serious issue among our young people. By taking action now, we can stop abuse before it starts and save those children already affected by it. This survey is a first step in improving Mississippi's ability to compete for resources that will enable communities to implement effective prevention programs.

The communities funded by MAP share a solid commitment to the lives of Mississippi's children, and we're going to work closely with them to achieve our common goals. One of those goals must be to secure the necessary resources. The partnership between the Governor's Office, the Department of Mental Health and DREAM is strong, and extends to each of these communities across Mississippi.

Thank you for your time and effort completing the survey. **Please return the survey directly to me at P.O. Box 139, Jackson, Mississippi 39205 by August 14, 2003.** If you have questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (601) 359-9228 or Ellen Jones at (601) 540-6310.

Sincerely,

Wanda Smith  
Health Care Policy Advisor-Governor's Office  
Co-Chair, MAP Advisory Council

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