

An Agenda for Recovery in Mississippi

To implement lessons learned from the unprecedented emergency caused by the spread of the coronavirus, there are numerous long-term strategies we encourage Mississippi legislators and leaders to tackle to ensure a prosperous future for all.

These aren't different than what Mississippi Center for Public Policy has long advocated. But as the current pandemic crystalized, we witnessed how government regulations often got in the way and stymied the help they are designed to provide. This was true in the past, it is true today, and will be true in the future.

HEALTHCARE

1. Repeal CON laws

Certificate of Need laws require would-be medical providers to prove — essentially to their competitors — that their community needs a new facility or service. And they are one of the reasons we see a shortage of hospital beds during a time of crisis. The Mississippi Department of Health is the central planner tasked with administering the state's CON program. The Department's CON Review program applies to "the establishment of new healthcare facilities, the offering of defined new institutional health services, and the acquisition of major medical equipment." In some cases, new CONs have not been issued for decades because of government mandated prohibitions. Healthcare facilities shouldn't have to ask the state for permission to open or expand a facility.

[Read more about Certificate of Need laws](#)

2. Expand scope of practice

Current regulations prevent nurse practitioners from practicing up to their full practice authority. Rather, they are required to enter into a "collaborative agreement" with a physician if an APRN wishes to open their own clinic. APRNs should be allowed to practice without this agreement.

[Read more about scope of practice](#)

3. Allow out-of-state medical professionals to provide telemedicine

Mississippi has been recognized as a leader in telemedicine, something that is vitally important in a rural state. But as with most healthcare regulations, they are designed to favor incumbents. The state should allow patients to access out-of-state medical professionals for telemedicine services. This was a change the Board of

Licensure temporarily made, before the regulation was updated to only allow telemedicine appointments for those who had a prior patient-doctor relationship. Mississippians should be able to access the doctor or nurse practitioner of their choosing, regardless of the state they are licensed.

4. Expand Right-to-Try in Mississippi

Right to Try laws gives terminally ill patients the ability to try medicines that have not yet been approved by the federal government for market. Mississippi enacted Right to Try legislation in 2015, part of a movement that has swept across the country. The state should expand the current list of eligible patients to an individual with a traumatic injury and to allow adult stem cells as a treatment option, as pending legislation would allow. This would expand upon the current individual freedoms for terminally ill patients who have exhausted their government-approved options and are simply looking for another option.

LICENSING & REGULATIONS

5. Require a full regulatory audit of every agency to provide regulatory relief

Pending legislation would require a regulatory audit of four agencies in the state. That should be expanded to every agency in the state to provide a full picture of our regulatory burden. As we have seen, numerous regulations hinder access to healthcare and our ability to use technology for services, ranging from medical supply delivery via drones to alcohol delivery. Additionally, going forward, for every new regulation an agency adopts, two should be removed as we work to scale down the 117,000 regulations in the state.

[Read more about government regulations](#)

6. Permit the OLRC to review, and potentially replace, all regulations

Pending legislation would allow the Occupational Licensing Review Commission to review and replace past regulations. This should be adopted to ensure overburdensome regulations that hamper economic growth and prevent competition are removed from the books. We have seen numerous state and federal regulation temporarily removed. This should be done on a regular basis and should be permanent.

7. Recognize all out-of-state occupational licenses

Professionals who are trained in another state generally have to jump through numerous hoops to work in Mississippi. If someone has received an occupational license in another state, the state should recognize that license and allow them to immediately work in Mississippi.

[Read more about occupational licensing](#)

8. Enable commercial drones for medical supply deliveries

In numerous locations around the globe, commercial drones play a key role in delivering medical supplies. This could serve a critical need in the state. But for that to happen in Mississippi we need to change multiple

regulations concerning our airspace lease laws, laws vesting air rights with landowners, and our aviation easement law.

[Read more about drones](#)

9. Modernize the DMV

Before the coronavirus outbreak, wait times at the DMV were already a major inconvenience, at the least. We should allow technology to automate the DMV and only have customer service reps to provide backup, if needed. Today, kiosks have technology to read documents containing your new address if you need to renew your license and your address has changed. If you moved from out of state, they can quickly confirm your current license from that state. If your license is suspended or you owe back fees, the kiosk will recognize that. If you are getting a license for the first time, they will be able to serve you. You could even take your exam at the kiosk. They can take pictures. They can do vision exams. They can accept cash, checks, or credit cards. When it comes to getting a driver's license, it shouldn't be a challenge. Or require a day off from work.

[Read more about modernizing DMVs](#)

EDUCATION

10. Enable online learning in Mississippi

Mississippi has a very limited public virtual school, but no full-time options for students wishing to pursue that course, emergency or not. Yet, as the education future continues to develop, we will continue to see a demand for online learning. With online learning options, students literally have the world at their fingertips. Whether it's a unique subject with hard-to-find instructors, a class they need more help with, or one that they are wishing to dive deeper into, the ability to use technology to transform education is very real. Mississippi should work to expand the current Virtual Public School to make it full-time and remove the prohibition on virtual charter schools to provide parents with more options.

[Read more about online learning](#)

In times of crisis, there is likely to be a desire among some to expand government power. But as we've seen with this pandemic, it is the overburdensome government rules and regulations that tended to get in the way. Yet, this happens every day of the year. Now is the time to roll back regulations that prevent people from earning a living, accessing the healthcare they need, or using technology to make all of our lives easier and better.

For more on our vision for Mississippi's future, read the [High Road to Freedom](#).