For Immediate Release

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Brunson to Head Physician Group

Claude Brunson, MD, one of Mississippi's leading healthcare voices, will be the new Executive Director of the Mississippi State Medical Association, the group announced Monday.

After a nationwide search, the Board of Trustees of MSMA approved Brunson to be the full-time professional voice for Mississippi's physicians. Brunson will take over the job of Executive Director full-time on April 1, but he begins transitioning immediately.

MSMA is an organization over 160 years old with nearly 5000 physicians and medical students throughout Mississippi. Brunson made history in 2013 when he was the first African American physician elected president of the association, and he makes it again now as the first African American Executive Director. He will lead a staff focused on advocating on behalf of physicians.

"Physicians in Mississippi are on the front lines in the fight to make Mississippi a healthier state, and I am excited to be able to focus every day on supporting my colleagues through our state medical association," Brunson said. "MSMA has for decades been a vital advocate for healthcare in Mississippi, and that role is more important today as we all face a rapidly changing healthcare environment."

MSMA Board Chair Dr. Jennifer Bryan of Brandon said that Brunson's experience as a physician, an administrator, a regulator, a business executive, and his roles on multiple public policy entities made him the ideal choice. "All of the state's physicians know, today, they have one of their own at the helm. He knows medicine and he knows Mississippi," said Bryan.

An anesthesiologist, educator and today one of the most active voices in Mississippi in medical and health policy, Brunson had since 2010 been Senior Advisor to the Vice Chancellor and led the External Affairs division at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. He previously served UMMC as Director of the Office of Government Affairs from 2015 to 2018.
Brunson, the former chair of the Anesthesiology Department at UMMC, has continued to see patients even as he led the External Affairs division at UMMC, building relationships with constituencies that interact with the medical school and hospital.

He was appointed by Gov. Phil Bryant to the MS Board of Medical Licensure, the state's physician regulatory group, and he currently serves as president of the board.

A native of Auburn, Alabama, Brunson earned his B.S. degree from the University of Alabama after a four-year tour with the U.S. Navy as a Hospital Corpsman and Field Medicine Technician with the Fleet Marine Force. He completed his medical degree at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and his residency in anesthesiology at UMMC. After graduating, Brunson joined the faculty of the School of Medicine and later served as Chief of the medical staff.

Among other accomplishments, Brunson is a graduate of the leadership course for physician executives offered by Harvard University. He has consistently been listed among the Best Doctors in America for many years beginning in 1988. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of the American Society of Anesthesiologists since 2002, leading several committees including finance and scientific affairs.

He has also served on expert panels of the Food and Drug Administration. Brunson serves as one of two Mississippi Commissioners on the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Commission where he holds the position of Vice Chairman of the Commission. Dr. Brunson was also the Governor's appointee to the Emergency Medical Services Committee and the Governor's Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Abuse.

Dr. Scott Hambleton was serving as Interim Executive Director and will work with Brunson during the transition.