

A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND EXPRESSING PROFOUND APPRECIATION TO DR. THOMAS DOBBS FOR HIS INVALUABLE SERVICE TO THE PATIENTS AND PHYSICIANS OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI DURING HIS TIME AS STATE HEALTH OFFICER, ESPECIALLY FOR HIS STEADFAST LEADERSHIP OF THE STATE THROUGH THE DIFFICULT CHALLENGES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

WHEREAS, Thomas E. Dobbs, MD, MPH, Mississippi's State Health Officer, recently announced that he will be resigning from that position at the end of July of this year after leading the Mississippi State Department of Health through one of the most challenging periods in the agency's long history; and

WHEREAS, a native of Haleyville in northwest Alabama, Dr. Dobbs obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in applied physics from Emory University in May 1992, then returned to Alabama where he earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) in May 1996, and a Master of Public Health degree in epidemiology from UAB in May 2000, and completed an internal medicine residency program at UAB in June 2000, and he is board certified in both internal medicine and infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs worked as an internal medicine and infectious disease physician in Laurel and Hattiesburg before beginning his career at the Department of Health in 2008, where he served in numerous roles, including District Health Officer for Districts 7 and 8 from July 2008 to July 2012, State Epidemiologist from August 2012 to September 2016, state TB consultant in 2009, and infectious disease consultant from September 2016 to the present; and

WHEREAS, after working as Chief Medical Officer and Vice President for Quality at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel from September 2016 to June 2018, Dr. Dobbs returned to the Department of Health to serve as Deputy State Health Officer from July 2018 to December 2018, when he was appointed by the State Board of Health to head the agency as State Health Officer; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs had only been State Health Officer for a little more than a year when he was faced with dealing with the arrival of the greatest public health crisis of our generation and this century as the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 spread across the globe in a worldwide pandemic which arrived in Mississippi in March 2020 and began rapidly impacting our citizens with morbidity and mortality; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs coordinated with the state's physicians and medical leadership to address the complexities of COVID-19 in a competent and steady manner, leading a team of professionals who developed a comprehensive plan to battle the pandemic on multiple fronts and in every community, which lessened the severity of its massive impact on the health care system and the people of the state; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs and his Department confronted numerous logistical and messaging challenges of the pandemic and worked diligently through multiple waves of massive COVID-19 cases and deaths, and Dr. Dobbs focused the medical community on patient advocacy and public health, remaining calm and centered on a consistent message about the best strategies and protocols to limit disease spread, and utilize the most effective therapeutics; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs has long served the people of our state and its physicians as a public health champion in earlier health campaigns prior to COVID-19, leading his fellow physicians in the best treatment of infectious disease over many years and clinically caring for individual HIV patients in an exemplary manner; and

WHEREAS, the Family Physicians of Mississippi, on behalf of their patients, thank Dr. Dobbs for being the right person at the right time to lead in a superlative manner during the most difficult days of a worldwide pandemic; say that his medical background and temperament have made him superbly well

suited for his role as the leading public health voice in the state, being someone who is well-spoken and has the courage of his convictions, and who collaborates instead of dictates as a manager, persuades instead of criticizes as a leader, is an exceptional listener whether talking to a patient or a peer, is open to ideas from others and builds consensus while staying on task; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs is blessed with a responsive and calm temperament, sterling integrity and ethics, courage, stellar leadership as a team player and a consensus builder who listens to others, and brilliant intellect and wisdom which elevated his tenure at the Department of Health, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs is recognized by his physician peers as a consummate physician who has exceptional skills with patients, who used these abilities to communicate with the people of Mississippi during the Pandemic, gaining the trust of the physicians and citizens by his actions and words; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has been the defining event of Dr. Dobbs's tenure as State Health Officer, and he has been the public face of the Department of Health while leading Mississippi through the pandemic, but at the same time he was working tirelessly to ensure that the Department effectively carried out its many other duties and responsibilities to the public, and he is leaving the agency and our state in a better place than when he arrived; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs's passion has always been infectious disease treatment, and he has served in various roles related to that field, including medical director for the AIDS Healthcare Foundation clinic in Jackson, clinical consultant for the Southeastern National TB Center in Florida, and infectious disease consultant for several hospitals in Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, before joining the Department of Health, Dr. Dobbs held numerous faculty positions at colleges and universities throughout the Southeast, including at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, UAB, and the University of Southern Mississippi, and after two intense years of leading Mississippi through the pandemic, he plans to return to the clinical side of medicine, particularly the communicable disease treatment of patients, and also step back into academia and teach and train health care professionals about public health and infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Dobbs has been a wonderful asset to the State of Mississippi and its citizens during his service and leadership as State Health Officer, a class act and a steady voice who guided us during our time of crisis, a true public servant who devoted himself to the safety and health of all Mississippians and did about ten years of work during the past two years, and his many contributions to public health are greatly appreciated by the physicians and people of this state and he will be missed at the Department of Health, but we know that he will continue serving the citizens of Mississippi in other valuable ways as he moves into the next phase of his life and career:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MISSISSIPPI ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS, That we warmly commend and express our profound appreciation to Dr. Thomas Dobbs for his invaluable service, dedication, commitment, and work for the patients and physicians of the State of Mississippi during his time as State Health Officer, especially for his tireless and steadfast leadership throughout the COVID-19 public health crisis, and we extend to him our sincere wishes for the best in all of his future endeavors, including having more time to spend with his wife, Dr. Kim Dobbs, and their two sons, who have been his rocks of support as he was devoting so much of his time to the people of our state during his service as State Health Officer.