



**M H A P A C**  
**MISSISSIPPI HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION**  
**POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE**



**LEADERS** *of the* **PAC**  
 TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

*Chairman's Message*

Dear Colleague:

Now, more than ever, we must all recognize the important impact our elected leaders have on the hospital and health care communities. Political decisions can influence our ability to provide quality and accessible care to patients, and can even affect our personal lives. This is why it is vital to realize the significance of MHAPAC. Our PAC contributions help to elect, educate and build relationships with Mississippi officials who understand the critical role of our hospitals.

The 2009 PAC goal is \$126,000, but we really need to raise the bar to be effective. As an MHA-PAC Board member, I have seen the PAC's significance on MHA's advocacy efforts. For our state's health care community, MHAPAC is critical to accomplishing our advocacy goals. MHA lobbying efforts are important, but will not stand

alone to preserve the health care system.

Each and every PAC contribution sends a significant message to policymakers. Please encourage your staff, trustees and volunteers to make this small investment for the future. Even more importantly, make sure you are part of this tremendous effort. If every eligible person makes a small contribution, we will make a huge impact on health care in Mississippi.

We appreciate everyone who collectively works together to make MHAPAC successful.

Sincerely,

*Gerald O. Wages*

Gerald Wages  
 Chairman, MHAPAC Board of Directors

*The Capitol Perspective*

**Guest Columnist: Senator Joey Fillingane, District 41**

**Why did you decide to get involved in politics?** I decided very early on that I loved politics. I think back when I was a youngster growing up I watched the NBC Nightly News like most kids watched cartoons. President Ronald Reagan was my hero and I've followed politics since then.

**What do you see as potential priorities and expectations in the approaching Mississippi legislative session?** I think the priority will be the state budget and the mess we find ourselves in there. As your readers are well aware the nation has been in a deep recession for the past several quarters and the State of Mississippi has not escaped the downturn either. When a large portion of our taxpayers are making less money and spending less money then the state tax revenues reflect that. In fact in the first quarter of this year our state's tax revenue receipts were down approximately 12%. That means major cuts will be parceled out to all of our state agencies and departments. My expectation is that we will work very hard to be creative with how we make those cutbacks so that we can do the least amount of harm to the services our citizens

have come to expect. Of course, anytime that you speak of cuts this deep and severe the state Medicaid budget is always a concern. For me the Medicaid budget is a very high priority because that program provides vital health care to our most vulnerable citizens - our children and senior citizens - who are least able to fend for themselves.

**What do you see as the most important issues relating to health care, and what do you see as potential opportunities? Why?** I think the budgetary issues facing all of our state budgets will also have a huge impact on health care in our state. As I've already mentioned the State Medicaid budget will be impacted. Also the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services will also be affected negatively by the budget shortfalls. The opportunity that these difficult budget times provide us is that we are forced to work smarter and more efficiently with the revenues that we do have. I think if we are smart about it we can come out of this recession with a much leaner but more effective state health care system.

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2009

## Distributions

**AHAPAC Distributions for MS**

Senator Thad Cochran- \$5,000

Senator Roger Wicker- \$1,000

**MHAPAC Distributions**

Representative Walter Robinson- \$500

Representative Wilbert Jones- (District 82)- \$500

Speaker Billy McCoy- \$1,000

Senator David Baria- \$600

Mississippi House Republican Conference Golf  
Fundraiser- \$1,000

Mississippi Democratic Party- \$2,000  
(PAC Breakfast Speaker Fee)

Senator Joey Fillingane Golf Sponsorship: \$1,950

**AHAPAC Reporting**

AHAPAC Fundraising Report

Mississippi Goal: \$21,800

Amount raised for AHAPAC as of 10/01/09: \$17,322.71

**Why do you think it is important for individuals to get involved with advocacy and the political process? Why do you think it is important to be involved in the legislative process?** It is important for all citizens to be involved in the political process. The more informed and educated that our electorate is concerning the political issues of the day and of how their elected officials deal with those issues, the more likely that the voters will make smart decisions about the politicians that they vote for. I'm never afraid of people knowing what I do in Jackson because I work hard and do so with their best interests in mind. This is not to say that I always please all of my constituents because that is an impossibility but I would still rather my electorate know where I stand on issues and how I vote on them. It makes it easier when I'm running for re-election because then I could just run on my record.

**How do you think hospital employees can best communicate messages to legislators? Can you offer any advice on how hospitals can build and maintain good relationships?** I believe that I respond best when my own local health care providers communicate with me about what their concerns are related to our

legislation. I do communicate with the Hospital Association's government relations representatives but I also like to hear from my hometown doctors and medical professionals.

**What do you think hospitals could do to make sure you receive key messages important to our industry?** I would say a personal contact or phone call is much preferable to an e-mail or text message. Building relationships with people that you come to trust and depend upon for information and education related to their industry is always more effective in my opinion than having a rank stranger track me down before a key vote and try to persuade me of the merits or demerits of a bill at the last minute.

**How do you see the state legislature changing as you move forward in your career?** I have been in the legislature for ten years now but I see that it has unfortunately become much more partisan and polarized than it was when I first was elected back in 1999. I still have many friends on both sides of the political aisle but I have regrettably seen the trend toward more division on our legislative bodies forming over the past decade and I think that can be very counterproductive at times.

## Tips on Asking for Support

Any solicitation efforts, no matter how they are executed, will produce some positive outcome. However, the objective is to consistently improve the positive outcome into meaningful percentages. Increasing the PAC is what makes the real impact.

Sometimes PAC professionals think they should only get their audience to understand the facts. If so, all previous PAC contributors could provide compelling information and the PAC would have a huge following. In actuality, much more goes into the solicitation than just stating facts and making the request for money. Here are some suggestions for improving technique when presenting or soliciting information about the PAC to hospital executive staff, board members and/or trustees.

- First, senior leadership helps improve credibility. If you, as a leader are not committed to the PAC, it is difficult or impossible to get others involved.
- Second, when presenting, make it relevant to the audience. This means your presentation should include issues directly impacting the group. Directly relate how local, state or federal legislation or internal issues can affect them.
- Third, don't take yourself too seriously. Although PAC is a serious program, humor, is a great way to disarm people who are skeptical of your message.
- Fourth, you will not convince everyone on why the PAC deserved their financial support. If you get 30% to join, you are doing great! The objective is to give reasons for those who are interested to participate.
- Closing the deal. This means more than just asking people to join the PAC. It means collecting contribution forms as part of the meeting. Unless people are given the opportunity to respond at your request, your response rate will suffer greatly. If you don't ask for an immediate response, it undercuts your message and how important your message really is to the audience.

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# 2009 MHAPAC HOSPITAL GOAL ACHIEVEMENTS

ALLIANCE HEALTH CENTER

BEACHAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

CHOCTAW HEALTH CENTER

DELTA REGIONAL MEDICAL  
CENTER

DIAMOND GROVE CENTER FOR  
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

FORREST GENERAL HOSPITAL

HC WATKINS MEMORIAL  
HOSPITAL

JASPER GENERAL HOSPITAL

KILMICHAEL HOSPITAL

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST HEALTH  
SYSTEMS

PONTOTOC HEALTH SERVICES

SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL  
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WINSTON MEDICAL CENTER

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Booneville  
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Mississippi Hospital  
Association  
**Sherry Spille**  
Mississippi Hospital  
Association  
**Morgan Hemphill**  
Mississippi Hospital  
Association  
**Natalie Bolls**  
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**Belinda Boozer**  
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**Karen Hargett**  
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**Faye Thomley**  
Mississippi Hospital  
Association  
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Winston Medical Center  
**Terri Barnett**  
Mississippi Hospital  
Association

## Member Spotlight

Guest Columnist: Mr. Hank Wheeler  
Director of Facilities Services  
Hancock Medical Center

This month's member spotlight is on Mr. Hank Wheeler, director of facilities services at Hancock Medical Center. Mr. Wheeler is a PAC supporter, and has served in several MHA leadership roles. MHAPAC had the opportunity to gain his perspective, and would like to share some of his comments.

### How did you become involved in the PAC?

I became involved with the MHAPAC while serving as a member of the Legislative Committee and the Board of Governors for the MS Hospital Association. I am amazed at the amount of time these two groups spend addressing political issues that may or do affect hospital operations and the healthcare system.

### What value do you think MHAPAC offers contributors?

Based on my experience and observations, I believe the MHAPAC does an excellent job of planning and developing a unified front that is most beneficial to all MS Hospitals. They work hard to analyze all issues and develop strategies to initiate new legislation, negate, neutralize or improve legislation that has the potential to negatively impact the ability of hospitals to adequately sustain themselves and continue to provide quality healthcare to the citizens of MS. I believe they judiciously apply PAC funds to support candidates that understand the critical role our hospitals play in supporting our healthcare system.

### How do you think MHAPAC could build a stronger fundraising campaign?

MHAPAC could help further build the PAC by reaching out to the MHA Societies for support and implementing a program to provide all hospital employees with critical information regarding issues that affect their livelihood. The successful process that was initiated last year by MHA to consistently provide current and relative information in a timely manner should be expanded to include all MHA societies and all hospital employees if possible. Staff could also update the website to promote the on-line mechanism for making contributions. Finally, MHAPAC could share success stories with contributors so they might better understand the PAC process and impact that it has on our industry.

### Why would you encourage others to get involved in the PAC?

In my opinion, it's all about supporting the industry and facilities that we depend upon to make a living. It just makes sense to be aware of political actions that can and do affect each of us and support in any way possible.

*Make your  
contribution online  
with Paypal!*



Visit us on the web at  
[www.mhapac.org](http://www.mhapac.org)