

Improving Health Requires Building Trust

By Marshall J. Bouldin, IV, M.D.

Mississippi has many claims to fame. Until now, access to high-quality, affordable health care has not been among them.

Our state is known far and wide for music and books, hospitality and beauty. Mississippians look after one another, doing whatever it takes to care for family and friends. For these reasons and more, our great state keeps people rooted and pulls them home.

Yet for many hardworking Mississippians, getting trusted and affordable health care has been beyond challenging. For a state known for warmth and generosity, we can – and we must – do better for our neighbors. It's our responsibility to one another, and to the future of our state, to pursue creative solutions to persistent dilemmas.

Together with other Mississippi physicians and health care executives, I have been working on those solutions for decades. As a physician with deep roots in the state, much of my practice has been focused on turning the tide on “unsolvable” health care dilemmas. Through this work, I've learned that when excellent care meets grounded trust, we can do great things together.

Most recently, I've been working to create health care and insurance solutions for working people in Mississippi who need access to better, more affordable care. First, we provide affordable health insurance through Ambetter from Magnolia Health, a Marketplace Insurance Plan under the Affordable Care Act. We supplement that more affordable insurance with superior, community-based care for people with Ambetter policies through Vigilant Health clinics and services.

This combination of the right, most affordable insurance and the best, most accessible care is a powerful antidote to health care deserts in Mississippi. A key to our success is that Vigilant Health collaborates with existing community physicians and providers to augment their practices in underserved Mississippi communities.

Local municipalities and the Mississippi Municipal League have been partners in this powerful approach. Vigilant recently launched the Mississippi Community Health Advisers initiative in partnership with the Mississippi Municipal League and Ambetter from Magnolia Health to facilitate care and coverage in communities statewide.

Knowing their people will have coverage they can count on and care from providers who know their names and remember their stories has been an obvious win for Mississippi's mayors and community leaders. We are proud to share that this coverage is available beyond municipalities to private business employees and local citizens seeking better health care.

We are working together toward our shared vision of a healthier Mississippi, one person at a time.

Marshall Bouldin, IV, M.D., is Chief Medical Officer, Vice Chairman, and Co-Founder of Vigilant Health. Previously, Dr. Bouldin was Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, where he was Director of the University of Mississippi Diabetes and Metabolism Center.