Legislators finished the fourth week of session a day early and adjourned for the week on Thursday morning. Organizing and administrative matters will begin to wrap up as both Chambers will pass the Joint Rules by next week. The Joint Rules effectively set rules, the session timeline, and provide deadlines for the committees and chambers to operate. Mississippi utilizes legislative deadlines to run an effective and efficient session. Deadlines ensure there are limited surprises as the session draws to a close.

Last Wednesday marked the start of several Senate Public Health informational meetings where various groups are being asked to speak on their role in healthcare in Mississippi. State Board of Health member, Luke Lampton spoke to the committee on the history of medicine and doctors in Mississippi, particularly rural Mississippi. Dr. Subbarao, Dean of the William Carey College of Osteopathic Medicine addressed the committee on the importance of primary care in Mississippi. Both provided exceptional information and offered a clear picture of the importance of primary care.

At the end of last week, Speaker Philip Gunn announced committee chairs and members. Barring any unforeseen events, these will remain the same throughout the four-year term. House Public Health will be chaired by Representative Sam Mims of McComb. This will begin his third session chairing House Public Health. Representative Joey Hood from Ackerman will chair the House Medicaid Committee. While not new to the Medicaid Committee, Representative Hood is new to the role of Medicaid Chairman. He served as a conferee on the Medicaid Technical Amendments Bill during the 2018 legislative session.

On Monday, Governor Tate Reeves addressed the Senate and House of Representatives in a Joint Session to give the State of the State Address. While addressing a variety of issues from prison reform to workforce development, Governor Reeves encouraged legislators to incentivize doctors to locate to rural communities in Mississippi by expanding the rural physicians scholarship program and investing in rural residency programs.

Both the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House continue to refer bills to the appropriate committee. As of Thursday, at 4:00 pm, there were 215 bills referred in the Senate and 350 bills referred in the House.

Both Chambers will reconvene on Monday at 4:00 pm.