

STATEMENT OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF
SOUTH CAROLINA, TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC
HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONVENTION AT MYRTLE BEACH,
S. C., MAY 30, 1949. READ TO THE CONVENTION
BY DR. BEN F. WYMAN, STATE HEALTH OFFICER

It is a great pleasure to extend heartiest greetings and good wishes to the members of the South Carolina Public Health Association. I regret that previous commitments make it impossible for me to attend your convention in person, for I have always felt rewarded when I had the opportunity to mingle with those who are dedicated to improving the health of our people.

Public health is one of the basic problems with which we as citizens must deal firmly and intelligently, if we expect to reach our goal of economic prosperity and social welfare here in South Carolina. Better health means higher production and greater prosperity for all.

The public health situation in South Carolina today is not the comparatively simple one it was when the colonial legislature named its first public health officer in 1712. Health problems are changing every day, and to solve them, we must be constantly changing and improving our methods.

One such change which I would like to mention briefly here is that of the needed reorganization of our State Board of Health.

The contribution of the medical profession to public health work in South Carolina has been outstanding, ever since the State Board of Health was created and placed in charge of the South Carolina Medical Association in 1879. Our progress since that time has been due in large measure to the encouragement and assistance of our physicians. Today, however, the State is in need of a Health Board which is subject to the people's control, and which will include

representation from agriculture, industry, labor, and other lay groups. The Medical Association itself has wisely voted to support this improvement. Nearly all states now have health boards which include lay members and which are strictly a part of the State Government, subject to the people's will.

I have recommended this change to the General Assembly, and I now urge you, as members of the South Carolina Public Health Association, to give your support and influence to a reorganization plan which will greatly improve our public health machinery.

It is no less important that every effort be made to create county health boards in every county, in order to provide a unified system of public health services. This system would permit the solution of localized health problems on a local level, while the adoption of major policies and general supervision remain with the State Board. It would thus make possible a maximum of local self government and democratic representation.

Having adopted this system, we will be able to attack our major health problems in a more unified and a more efficient manner.

As workers in the field of public health, you are in a position to know the necessity for these improvements, and I suggest that you call them to the attention of the general public and our public officials at every opportunity.

Please accept my best wishes for a most successful and enjoyable annual convention.