



# NEWS RELEASE    Mobile County Health Department

## Aug. 17, 2010

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Rep. Jo Bonner to read to kids at Mobile County Health Department's Eight Mile Clinic in support of literacy program**

Rep. Jo Bonner (R-Ala.) will show his support of the Mobile County Health Department's participation in the Reach Out and Read–Alabama literacy program when he reads to a group of four- and five-year-old children Thursday, Aug. 19, at 10 a.m. at the department's Eight Mile Clinic, which is located at 4555 St. Stephens Rd. in the Eight Mile Shopping Center.

The purpose of the Reach Out and Read program is to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care so that children grow up with books and a love of reading, and become better prepared to succeed in school.

As part of the program, each time a child six months to five years old is brought in for a well-child checkup at one of the six Health Department clinics participating in Reach Out and Read, he or she receives a free, brand new, age-appropriate book provided through support from the Reach Out and Read organization. Bilingual books are available in 12 languages.

According to Dr. Bernard Eichold, Health Officer, the Mobile County Health Department's participation in Reach Out and Read is based on the program's record of success in improving language development, a critical component of school readiness.

“Studies show that parents who get books and literacy counseling from their doctors and nurses are more likely to read to their young children, read to them more often, and provide more books in the home,” Dr. Eichold says. “We encourage parents to read to their children every day.”

In addition to its Eight Mile Clinic, the Health Department's downtown facility and its Newburn, Eight Mile, Semmes, Calcedaever, and Citronelle clinics participate in the Reach Out and Read literacy program. To schedule an appointment, call 690-8889.

There are 12 Reach Out and Read sites in Rep. Bonner's district. Altogether, they provide books to more than 13,000 children annually. Throughout Alabama, there are 58 Reach Out and Read locations, reaching more than 80,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year.

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