

From Highways to Healing: The Power of Car Tags in Supporting Mississippi's Children

Since it first hit Mississippi roads in 2005, the Friends of Children's Hospital car tag has played a vital role in supporting Mississippi's only children's hospital. Through the simple act of choosing this specialty car tag, drivers across the state have collectively raised nearly \$3 million for Children's of Mississippi. This year, Friends is excited to introduce a refreshed tag design, adding a splash of color and hope into daily commutes across the state.



The new car tag design retains the iconic sunshine and rainbow logo, which has become a symbol of hope and support for children and families across Mississippi. This year's update brings a vibrant twist with a bright blue background, making the tags stand out more than ever. Available at all local tax collector's offices in Mississippi, the new tag design can be purchased for an additional \$53, with \$44 from each sale going directly to Friends of Children's Hospital.

Caitlin Foreman, Executive Director of Friends of Children's Hospital, shares, "While renewing a car tag might seem like a mundane task, it's actually a powerful opportunity to make a significant impact in the lives of our state's children. Many Mississippians may not realize that such a simple choice can contribute to crucial healthcare services for kids right in our own communities."

The funds generated through these car tags support a wide array of initiatives and services at Children's of Mississippi. Each purchase helps fund vital medical equipment, support cutting-edge pediatric research, and maintain state-of-the-art facilities, ensuring the hospital continues to deliver world-class pediatric care. Beyond these tangible resources, the funds also enhance the emotional and psychological support for young patients through the Child Life Services program. This program provides therapeutic activities, education, and emotional support, making hospital stays less daunting and more comforting for children and their families.

Along with the new design, Friends hopes to boost the number of specialty car tags sold across the state, directly enhancing support for Mississippi's only children's hospital—a key resource for families and children in all 82 counties. In 2023, the Friends of Children's Hospital tag ranked as the sixth highest-generating specialty tag in Mississippi, a clear indicator of the community's dedication to child health. With the presence of Children's of Mississippi clinics and providers spanning from Iuka to the Gulf Coast, Friends is eager to see a rise in statewide participation.

The Friends of Children's Hospital car tag is part of a broader initiative that includes specialty tags from the University of Alabama, Louisiana State University, and the Mississippi Wildlife Enforcement Officers'

Association. Each of these tags work together to support Friends of Children's Hospital, with proceeds from each directly enhancing the services provided at Children's of Mississippi.

As we move forward, Friends of Children's Hospital invites all Mississippi drivers to consider the new, bright blue tag at their next vehicle registration renewal. Choosing this tag over a standard one can make a meaningful difference in a child's life. It's a simple act that speaks volumes, showing that the community stands together in support of its youngest members.

When you select the Friends of Children's Hospital car tag, you're doing more than just updating your registration; you're becoming part of a movement that saves lives, supports families, and fosters healthier futures for children across Mississippi. Together, we can continue to drive significant change, one tag at a time.

About Friends of Children's Hospital

Friends of Children's Hospital, founded in 1989 by a group of dedicated volunteers from across the state, supports Mississippi's only children's hospital by driving fundraising, growing volunteerism, and building awareness. The mission of Friends is to elevate the healthcare experience for children in Mississippi to create hope, smiles, and a place where patients can be kids. Since its inception more than 30 years ago, the nonprofit organization has raised more than \$45 million to purchase state-of-the-art equipment, construct new facilities and provide vitally important services for all pediatric patients. For more information about Friends of Children's Hospital, please visit www.friendsofch.org or email friends@friendsofch.org.

About Children's of Mississippi

Children's of Mississippi, part of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, encompasses all the pediatric services available at UMMC and at clinical sites throughout Mississippi. At the heart of these services is the state's only hospital devoted exclusively to the care and treatment of sick and injured children. The Children's of Mississippi network brings specialized clinical care for children to communities across the state, making it easier for families to get the treatment they need closer to home.

About the University of Mississippi Medical Center

As the state's only academic medical center, UMMC seeks to improve the health of Mississippi's population and eliminate health disparities through education, research and patient care. UMMC encompasses seven health science schools of medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry, pharmacy, graduate studies and population health. The Medical Center includes the state's only Level I trauma center, only children's hospital, only organ and bone marrow transplant program and the only Telehealth Center of Excellence, one of two in the nation. For more information, visit www.umc.edu.