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Sent: Friday, January 29, 2021 4:31 PM
To: Lyly Trinh
Subject: Georgia Legislative Session Update - Legislative Day 8



Legislative Day 8

Returning to the House and Senate chambers for the first time since January 14, legislators were back to business this week following last week's budget hearings. With presentations on Governor Kemp's proposed Amended Fiscal Year 2021 spending plans to the Joint House and Senate Appropriations Committee complete, House Appropriations Subcommittees began their own meetings to conduct deep dives into the propositions.

Legislators set their calendar through Day 13 of the session as follows:

- ~~Tuesday, January 26th—Legislative Day 5~~
- ~~Wednesday, January 27th—Legislative Day 6~~
- ~~Thursday, January 28th—Legislative Day 7~~
- ~~Friday, January 29th—Legislative Day 8~~
- Monday, February 1st - Legislative Day 9
- Tuesday, February 2nd - Legislative Day 10
- Wednesday, February 3rd - Legislative Day 11
- Thursday, February 4th - Legislative Day 12
- Monday, February 8th - Legislative Day 13

[Click here](#) to see the latest Senate Office Assignments
[Click here](#) to see the latest House Office Assignments

Fiscal Year 2021 Amended Budget

Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Terry England, outlined the \$26.5 billion in state fund budget proposal for the FY 2021 Amended year ending on June 30, 2021. The House aligned with many of the Governor's proposals but made a few changes to the proposed spending plan contained in **HB 80**.

The Committee Substitute on HB 80 can be found by **clicking here**. The Committee Tracking Report can be found **here**, showing differences between the Governor's and the House's versions of the proposed FY 2021 Amended Budget.

A few highlights of the Fiscal Year 2021 Amended Budget:

Human Resources

- Repurpose of \$1.75 million from FMAP savings to Adult Developmental Disabilities Services for implementation of a 10-bed crisis center for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities
- Recognition of federal grant for suicide prevention work
- Restoration of funds to the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children LEADS program
- Funding for GVRA administrative director and a new website with online application functionality.

Health

- Additional funding for inspections for the state's nursing homes
- Increased funding for addressing pandemic costs to the state's nursing homes (including items such as PPE and staffing costs - 74 percent of Georgia's nursing home population is covered by Medicaid)
- Increase in Department of Public Health funding for "critical staffing" needs - including a chief medical officer for the Department and chief medical officer
- Increase of funds to update Georgia's epidemiology system, including its GRITS program
- A reduction of more than \$860,000 in the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' Adult Forensic Services program due to a delayed start date of a 40-bed unit at West Georgia Regional in Columbus
- An addition of more than \$478,000 in the Department of Community Health's Healthcare Facility Regulation program to support strategic measures for stabilizing staffing in the nursing home program
- A deeper reduction of funds regarding the Department of Community Health's Aged Blind and Disabled program's growth based on projected need to \$108 million rather than \$88 million as Governor Kemp proposed
- An addition of more than \$9.7 million in the Department of Community Health's Aged Blind and Disabled program for submitting an 1115 waiver to increase the Medicaid growth allowance for skilled nursing facilities by 5 percent for an overall rate increase of 3.5 percent effective July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020
- Another addition of more than \$9.5 million in the Department of Community Health's Aged Blind and Disabled program for funding a Medicaid increase growth allowance for skilled nursing centers by 5 percent for an overall rate increase of 3.5 percent effective January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021
- An addition of more than \$15.4 million in the Department of Public Health's Infectious Disease Control program to fund the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) to support the increased utilization during the COVID-19 pandemic

State House Appoints Committee Chairmen and Members

Late last week, House Speaker David Ralston announced the assignments of committee members and leadership for the 2021-22 Legislative Session. [Click here](#) to view the full list of committee assignments on the House website. Committee Chairs are as follows:

- Access to the Civil Justice System – Rep. Trey Kelley
- Access to Quality Healthcare – Rep. Mark Newton
- Agriculture & Consumer Affairs – Rep. Robert Dickey
- Appropriations – Rep. Terry England
- Banks & Banking – Rep. Greg Morris
- Budget & Fiscal Affairs Oversight – Rep. Lee Hawkins
- Code Revision – Rep. Timothy Barr
- Creative Arts & Entertainment – Rep. Matt Dollar
- Defense & Veterans Affairs – Rep. Heath Clark
- Economic Development & Tourism – Rep. Ron Stephens
- Education – Rep. Matt Dubnik
- Election Integrity – Rep. Barry Fleming
- Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications – Rep. Don Parsons
- Ethics – Rep. Randy Nix
- Game, Fish & Parks – Rep. Trey Rhodes
- Governmental Affairs – Rep. Darlene Taylor
- Health & Human Services – Rep. Sharon Cooper
- Higher Education – Rep. Chuck Martin
- Human Relations & Aging – Rep. Jesse Petrea
- Industry & Labor – Rep. Bill Werkheiser
- Information & Audits – Rep. Don Hogan
- Insurance – Rep. Eddie Lumsden
- Interstate Cooperation – Rep. Steve Tarvin
- Intragovernmental Coordination – Rep. Jan Tankersley
- Judiciary – Rep. Chuck Efrstration
- Judiciary (Non-Civil) – Rep. James Burchett
- Juvenile Justice – Rep. Mandi Ballinger
- Legislative & Congressional Reapportionment – Rep. Bonnie Rich
- MARTOC – Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver
- Motor Vehicles – Rep. John Corbett
- Natural Resources & Environment – Rep. Lynn Smith
- Public Safety & Homeland Security – Rep. J Collins
- Regulated Industries – Rep. Alan Powell
- Retirement – Rep. John Carson
- Rules – Rep. Richard Smith
- Science & Technology – Rep. Ed Setzler
- Small Business Development – Rep. Mike Cheokas
- Special Rules – Rep. Dave Belton
- State Planning & Community Affairs – Rep. Karen Mathiak
- State Properties – Rep. Gerald Greene
- Transportation – Rep. Rick Jasperse
- Ways & Means – Rep. Shaw Blackmon

New House Legislation

- **HB 99**, by Rep. Ron Stephens seeks to require all retail establishments with a restroom to provide access to the restroom to customers presenting a signed document from a healthcare provider that indicates the customer suffers from a

qualifying health care condition. The bill was assigned to the House Judiciary Committee.

- **HB 112**, by Rep. Trey Kelly, seeks to amend the COVID-19 liability statute (SB 359 in the 2020 Legislative Session), so as to extend liability claims until August 5, 2022. This bill was assigned to the House Special Committee on Access to Civil Justice.
- **HB 115**, by Rep. Mike Wilensky seeks to prohibit insurers from using information derived from genetic testing for any non-therapeutic use. This bill was referred to the House Insurance Committee.
- **HB 117**, by Rep. Mike Wilensky seeks to add Ulcerative Colitis to the list of conditions for which medical cannabis may be prescribed to treat. This bill was assigned to the House Regulated Industries Committee.
- **HB 119**, by Rep. Karen Mathiak, seeks to allow chiropractors to jointly own a professional organization with physicians. This bill was assigned to the House Regulated Industries Committee.
- **HB 164**, by Rep. Demetrius Douglas, seeks to require health insurers to pass along no less than 80 percent of all prescription drug rebates to the customer at the pharmacy counter. This bill was assigned to the House Special Committee on Access to Quality Healthcare.

New Senate Legislation

- **SB 31**, by Sen. Chuck Hufstetler seeks to establish a pilot program to conduct a simulated exchange for health care facilities to purchase and sell charity care credits to meet their charity care requirements.
- **SB 43**, by Sen. Matt Brass seeks to elating to amend the enumeration of unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices and penalty by health care insurers offering eye care benefit plans constitute unfair trade practices.
- **SB 46**, by Sen. Dean Burke seeks to amend language within the Department of Public Health authorizing certain medical personnel to administer vaccines during public health emergencies and certain provisions relating to the administration of vaccines under vaccine protocol agreements.

To find any bill, go to www.legis.ga.gov and use the search box at the top left of the page. There is also an advanced search option that allows you to find bills by keyword or sponsor.

Contact Your Legislators

It makes a difference if you contact your Representatives and Senators early in the session.

Discuss the issues that are important to your practice, your patients, and your community.

If you have personal relationships with any state elected officials, please help us by making us aware of these crucial relationships. If you need assistance finding your legislator, please click the link below.

Find My Legislator

Save the Date

Physicians Day 2021 is tentatively set for February 17, 2021.

Doctor of the Day

Be the "Doctor of the Day!" The Medical Association of Georgia sponsors the "Medical Aid Station" in the Capitol with a staff nurse and volunteer physician.

Keep an eye out in your email for updates on Physicians Day 2021. In the current state of affairs with COVID, we will likely be looking to move Physicians Day to a VIRTUAL event.

Each day the legislature is in session, a physician is needed to serve as the Doctor of the Day at the State Capitol. The physician is introduced in both the Senate and House Chambers. Take this opportunity to demonstrate that the House of Medicine is strong in Georgia and is willing to assist in the legislative process.

Please RSVP to Christiana Craddock at ccraddock@mag.org or call 678.303.9271.



For legislative highlights and review, watch *Lawmakers*, which airs on **Georgia Public Broadcasting** at **7PM** every night the Georgia General Assembly is in session.

More information: Please reach out to our office at 770.435.5586 or reach out to us personally via our cell phones.

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