



2018 Legislative Agenda

1. SB 11 EMT / 1013

[SB/11](#)

Relating to authorize emergency medical technicians, cardiac technicians, and paramedics to perform certain acts which physicians, psychologists, and other persons are authorized to perform regarding emergency examinations of a person for involuntary evaluation and treatment for mental illness or alcohol or drug abuse.

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/SB/11>

GACSB position: Oppose as written.

2. SB 40 Mental Health Transport / EMT/ 1013

[SB/40](#)

Relating to examination, hospitalization, and treatment of involuntary patients, so as to provide for authorization of emergency medical services personnel to transport certain mentally ill patients under certain circumstances; to provide for reporting requirements.

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/SB/40>

GACSB position: Oppose as written – concern on the ability of facilities to accept. If a physician approves an evaluation, then that facility must accept the patient.

3. SB 4 Enhancing Mental Health Treatment of Ga. Act

[SB/4](#)

To establish the Georgia Mental Health Treatment Task Force; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for the membership, duties, compensation, and expense allowances; to develop applications for a Medicaid waiver and block grant funding; to prohibit the submission of a mental health Medicaid waiver application without legislative approval; to require agencies' cooperation; to provide for the abolishment; to provide for a short title; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/SB/4>

GACSB position: Awaiting next steps and consideration of General Assembly.

4. HB 607 Psychiatric Advanced Directive

[HB/607](#)

To provide for a competent adult to express his or her mental health care treatment preferences and desires directly through instructions written in advance and indirectly through appointing an agent to make mental health care decisions on behalf of that person; to provide for construction of such form; to amend Code Section 16-5-5 and Title 31 of the O.C.G.A., relating to assisted suicide and notification of licensing board regarding violation and health, respectively, so as to include cross-references to the psychiatric advance directive and provide for consistent terminology.

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/HB/607>

GACSB position: Support as long as there is no restriction to team's ability to provide psychiatric care.

5. SB 55 Psychiatric Advance Directive

[SB/55](#)

To provide for a psychiatric advance directive; to provide for a competent adult to express his or her mental health care treatment preferences and desires directly through instructions written in advance and indirectly through appointing an agent to make mental health care decisions on behalf of that person; to amend Code Section 16-5-5 and Title 31 of the O.C.G.A., relating to assisted suicide and notification of licensing board regarding violation and health, respectively, so as to include cross-references to the psychiatric advance directive and provide for consistent terminology

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/SB/55>

GACSB position: Support as long as there is no restriction to team's ability to provide care.

6. Governor's Commission on Children's Mental Health

The recommendations outlined in the report include:

1. Increasing access to behavioral health services for Georgia's school-aged children by sustaining and expanding the Georgia Apex Program for school-based mental health.
2. Fund Supported Employment/Supported Education programs for youth and emerging adults with severe mental illness
3. Providing support for the development and implementation of additional levels of support within the behavioral health continuum of care for youth with the highest levels of need.
4. Strategically increasing telemedicine infrastructure capacity for child-serving, community based, behavioral health provider organizations in order to improve access to children's behavioral health services.
5. Investing in coordinated training for priority areas of interest and concern for the child-serving workforce, including clinical training in evidence-based practices, trauma-informed care and administrative practices that support the delivery of high-quality behavioral health services across service settings.
6. Funding expanded provider training, fidelity monitoring, technical assistance and evaluation for evidence-based High Fidelity Wraparound.
7. Supporting multi-pronged early intervention and prevention approaches to combat the opioid crisis among Georgia's youth and emerging adults.
8. Supporting a multi-pronged suicide prevention approach, including the expansion of prevention programming and expansion of Georgia Crisis and Access Line hours, to reduce rising suicide rates among Georgia's youth and emerging adults.

GACSB position: Support

7. Health Care Reform Task Force [Lt. Gov. Cagle]

GACSB position: Awaiting legislation and budget language for consideration.

8. SR 188 Senate Committee on Barriers to Georgians' Access to Adequate Health Care
Based on the foregoing findings, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. The Committee agrees that at a time of critical need, the underserved rural areas in Georgia require an innovative approach to healthcare to improve access to care. Therefore, legislation should be introduced to grant APRNs full practice authority in the counties identified as the lowest ranking in health factors and outcomes.

2. The Committee agrees that the Preceptor Tax Incentive Program should be expanded to allow Physician Assistants and APRNs to serve as preceptors and receive a tax credit for such service.
3. In order to promote the governance of Georgia hospitals, the Committee supports efforts to ensure hospital board members receive education and training relevant to their responsibilities.
4. The Committee recommends that the Centering Pregnancy model utilized in Albany, Georgia should be expanded to Department of Public Health facilities statewide, and the state should provide additional funding for such expansion.
5. The Committee supports the expansion of telemedicine and allowing APRNs to be utilized in facilitating and providing patient care through the use of telemedicine.
6. The Committee supports efforts to improve Georgians' access to mental health services by improving the practice environment for mental health providers and working on recruitment efforts to counties without a mental health provider.
7. In order to ensure APRNs receive reimbursement in those areas with full practice authority, a Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) code should be created to allow APRNs to serve as a primary care provider and properly bill health insurance providers, such as Medicaid. Additionally, state agencies should examine policies that create barriers to delivering services to patients.

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/.Display/20172018/SR/188>

GACSB position: Oppose findings and recommendations, awaiting legislation for further consideration.

9. HB 240 House Committee on Barriers to Georgians' Access to Adequate Health Care

Based on the foregoing findings, the Committee makes the following recommendations relative to mental health issues and care:

Medicaid / Suspension of Benefits for Prisoners

- In keeping with Georgia's criminal justice reform, propose policy that postpones the termination of Medicaid benefits, moving towards suspension rather than termination, especially in county jail systems. DCH is working towards a solution on the prisoners in the state prison system, we expect progress early in 2018.
- Continuing Medicaid benefits, provide a framework for continuity of care and improve inmate transitional plans.

Mental Health

- Expand core funding for community service boards in keeping up with the long-term objectives of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.
- Additional funding for 24 psychiatric residency slots to expand mental health treatment.
- Before enacting any legislation, review analysis of the Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program until July 1, 2018.
- Support e-prescriptions for opioid medications in order to reduce fraud and abuse of opioid medications.

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/InjectSession.aspx?BillType=HR&BillNum=240>

GACSB position: Supportive of findings. Would like to see an independent agency check on PDMP process. GACSB will continue to work towards a suspension status for Medicaid prisoners.

10. SR 352 Senate Study Committee on Homeless

Based on the testimony and findings previously provided, the Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. The Committee recommends that the Department of Community Health explore opportunities to leverage state funds by accessing federal Medicaid funds to support individuals who are currently or at risk of homelessness.
2. The Committee recommends an increase in state funding to the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homelessness (SHTF) in order to enable DCA to expand existing homelessness programs as well as to explore additional options and opportunities to maximize federal funds to address homelessness in Georgia.
3. The Committee recommends allocating funding to support DCA's expansion of the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Demonstration Program and mixed income properties in high density counties.
4. The Committee recommends increasing funding for the availability of supported housing placements for Georgia Housing Voucher Program participants.
5. The Committee recommends allocating funding for DBHDD to expand the Georgia Housing Voucher and Bridge Program to include non-settlement criteria individuals with a substance use diagnosis.
6. The Committee recommends allocating funding to DBHDD for PATH, ACT, CST, and ICM services to support the provision of replacement state-issued identification for enrolled individuals transitioning from correctional facilities.
7. The Committee recommends the creation of a statewide public-private partnership to serve as a clearinghouse of best practices, information, and resources that supports developing and sustaining local re-entry case planning collaboratives in every county. Such re-entry collaboratives should be designed to engage law enforcement, community service boards, legal services, the faith community, local non-profit organizations, and behavioral health providers to provide case planning for individuals exiting correctional facilities, with the goal of ending the expensive and ineffective cycle of individuals being admitted to the hospital, incarcerated, and released to homelessness.
8. The Committee recommends increasing state funding for private and/or nonprofit homeless shelters to provide increased educational and psychosocial supports for homeless youth.
9. The Committee appreciates the working relationship with the Georgia Apartment Association and would like to pursue new options of best practices that have worked successfully in other states. While the apartment rentals in the Metro Atlanta area are in short supply and higher costs, the Committee feels that vouchers are still a realistic option and will aid in solving the issue of adequate temporary housing for the homeless. Further, the Committee recommends that the state continue this ongoing relationship in a dedicated manner to continue to diminish homelessness in Georgia.

Link:<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/SR/352>

GACSB position: Watchful and cautious, but overall supportive of findings.