

From: Devin Krecl <kimberly@associationstrategygroup.ccsend.com> on behalf of Devin Krecl <devin@gapsychiatry.org>
Sent: Friday, February 5, 2021 2:55 PM
To: Lyly Trinh
Subject: Georgia Legislative Session Update - Legislative Day 12



2021

capitol watch

Legislative Day 12

12 Legislative Days down....28 to go. In the news this week, Governor Kemp unveiled his plan for a 'Teacher Pipeline' legislative package. The package is expected to include a number of initiatives aimed at “recruiting, retaining, and mentoring” teachers in Georgia. Among the initiatives are reading and differentiated teaching instruction for new teachers, enhanced pathways to attract teachers from HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) and the armed forces, and support for mentoring and coaching in the classroom. The legislative package is expected to be introduced in the General Assembly soon.

At this time, the legislative calendar only takes us through Monday, February 8th. As COVID still remains a major issue, legislators are seemingly setting their calendar on a week-to-week basis.

- ~~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~~

Fiscal Year 2021 Amended Budget

We anticipate final adoption of the Amended Fiscal Year 2021 Budget by the beginning of next week.

Senate Health and Human Services Committee Update

Chairman Ben Watson, MD and the Health and Human Services Committee met twice this week. The Committee introduced its three newest members:

- Sen. Michelle Au, MD
- Sen. Bo Hatchett
- Sen. Sonya Halpern

Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, MD presented **SB 5** which amends Title 43 relating to sedation in non-hospital settings. The bill directs the Georgia Composite Medical Board to establish rules regarding the use of sedation in “office based surgeries,” which are defined as “any surgery or invasive medical procedure requiring sedation, when performed in a location other than a hospital, hospital associated surgical center, or an ambulatory surgical facility, including, but not limited to, physicians' offices and medispas.” **SB 5** received a 'do pass' recommendation to move to the Senate Rules Committee

SB 4, also authored by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, MD relates to substance abuse treatment programs. The bill seeks to prohibit substance abuse providers from receiving referral fees or reimbursement related to patient referrals. The bill also amends code to prevent unfair billing practices for drug testing in substance abuse programs.

SB 4 received a 'do pass' recommendation to move to the Senate Rules Committee.

House Special Committee on Access to the Civil Justice System Update

HB 112, by Rep. Trey Kelley, seeks to amend multiple Code sections to extend COVID-19 liability protections for one year after the August 5, 2020 effective date of the original legislation (SB 359 in the 2020 Legislative Session). The legislation received a 'do pass' recommendation to move onto the House Rules Committee.

New House Legislation

- **HB 209**, by Rep. Donna McLeod, seeks to provide a Medicaid expansion program for individuals ages birth through age 64, using fee-for-service Medicaid benefits. This program proposes coverage for eligible persons with (1) incomes up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level; (2) Subsidies to pay for coverage under the program or through the exchange for uninsured eligible persons with incomes between 151 percent and 500 percent of the federal poverty level, in an amount up to 5 percent of such person's income; (3) A fee-for-service Medicare plan option, available for eligible persons in counties where there are less than three exchange plan options from which to choose; (4) Coverage for eligible persons who are eligible to buy coverage on the exchange; (5) Reimbursement to health care providers at 105 percent of the prevailing Medicare allowable rate for specific office visit codes; (6) An option for small businesses to allow eligible persons employed by the small business to buy coverage under the program; and (7) An option for eligible persons between and including the ages of 45 through 64 to buy into fee-for-service Medicare at premium rates consistent with such rates in his or her geographic area. This bill was referred to the House Health and Human Services Committee.

- **HB 213**, by Rep. Mary Robichaux, seeks to provide full practice authority for advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). Specifically, the bill would allow APRNs to order any pharmacological agent, medical device, medical treatment, diagnostic study, or radiographic imaging test; receive and distribute professional samples; pronounce death; and sign any form which a physician is required to sign by law. The bill was referred to the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **HB 214**, by Rep. Mary Robichaux, seeks to allow individuals to buy-in to the state's Medicaid plan. The bill provides for premiums based on an affordability scale and enrollment periods that are no less extensive than those provided under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The bill was referred to the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **HB 215**, by Rep. Mary Robichaux, seeks to require the Department of Community Health to take efforts to extend the temporary use of telehealth options during the pandemic emergency to a permanent status. The bill also requires the Department to develop a system of certification, recertification, and training of providers of medical assistance via telehealth options. The bill was referred to the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **HB 234**, by Rep. Lee Hawkins, seeks to provide an option for self-funded healthcare plans, exempt from state regulation under federal law, to opt in to Georgia's Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act. The bill was assigned to the House Special Committee on Access to Quality Healthcare.
- **HB 239**, by Rep. Shelly Hutchinson, seeks to add a new code section to require that the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities conduct or “directly coordinate all audits of behavioral health providers to prevent duplication with other agencies.” The bill was assigned to the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **HB 245**, by Rep. John LaHood, seeks to require that individuals seeking to have their license to practice podiatry reinstated submit to a criminal background check. It removes the requirement for renewals. This bill was referred to the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **HB 257**, by Rep. Ed Setzler, seeks to provide for registration of maternity supportive housing residences to provide housing for pregnant women. The bill also bars any county, municipality, or consolidated government from constraining the establishment or operation of maternity supportive housing residences or placing occupancy requirements on such residences that would not apply to a single family living in the residence. This bill was referred to the House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **HB 261**, by Rep. Todd Jones, seeks to provide for the establishment of 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. This bill was referred to the House Human Relations and Aging Committee.
- **HB 304**, by Rep. Jodi Lott, seeks to provide for a tax credit for medical equipment and supplies manufacturers and pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturers. Specifically which are engaged in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals or medicine in this state.

- **HB 307**, by Rep. Sharon Cooper, seeks to codify the "Georgia Telehealth Act" to mimic the current Public Health Emergency Executive Orders. Specifically, 1) authorize health care providers to provide telemedicine services from home; 2) to authorize patients to receive telemedicine services from their home, workplace, or school; 3) allow for audio-only care under certain circumstances; 4) prohibit requirement that patient have in-person consultation before receiving telemedicine services; and 5) prohibit more stringent utilization review requirements.

New House Resolutions

- **HR 61**, by Rep. Kim Schofield, calls on the state to support any legislation that provides protections for essential workers. This resolution was read and adopted.

New Senate Legislation

- **SB 80**, by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick, MD seeks to create the "Ensuring Transparency in Prior Authorization Act." The bill seeks to require all 'utilizing entities' to make any prior authorization requirements and restrictions readily available on its website to enrollees, healthcare providers, and the general public. This publicly available information must include, but not be limited to, all written clinical criteria. Additionally, any planned change to prior authorization requirements or restrictions must be communicated to healthcare providers of enrollees no less than 60 days before the change takes place. All adverse determinations must be made by a physician that is 1) licensed to practice medicine in the state; 2) of the same specialty for which the authorization determination is made; and 3) have experience treating patients with the medical condition for which the service is being requested. This bill was referred to the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.
- **SB 82**, by Sen. Michelle Au, MD, seeks to revise the definition of "emergency medical services," "emergency care," and "emergency condition" to ensure that any instance of the prudent layperson standard is not affected by the final diagnosis given to the patient. This bill was referred to the Senate Insurance and Labor Committee.
- **SB 92**, by Sen. Randy Robertson, seeks to prohibit the sale to and by minors of drug products containing dextromethorphan. Additionally instituting penalties for those products sold to minors without proper identification.

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

Doctor of the Day

Virtual Physicians' Day
Wednesday, February 17, 2021
6:30 pm – 7:30pm via Video Zoom

Hear from key leaders in the House and Senate. Following their remarks, registrants will be sent to their fireside break-out rooms by region to continue discussion with their legislators from their surrounding area.

Discussions will cover a variety of topics, from COVID-19 relief and vaccines to rural healthcare.

Staff will be moderating region breakout rooms throughout the entirety.

Please [click here](#) to login to MAG's membership portal and register. A zoom link will be sent prior to the day of the event.

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.

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.

Travis Lindley
404.886.5058
travis@capitolstrategy.us

Devin Krecl
770.655.9545
devin@capitolstrategy.us

GA Psychiatric Physicians Association | 2700 Cumberland Parkway, Suite 570, Atlanta, GA 30339

Unsubscribe_ltrinh@shpllc.com

[Update Profile](#) | [Customer Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by devin@gapsychiatry.org