



1. Ensure access to quality, affordable health coverage and care, and protections for all Georgians.

Changes in policy at the federal level could dramatically shift the health care landscape nationally and here in Georgia. Georgians for a Healthy Future will support policies that maintain existing coverage options, affordability provisions, and consumer protections and will oppose policies that would result in Georgians losing affordable coverage and their rights and protections as health care consumers. Georgians for a Healthy Future will oppose changes to Medicaid such as block grants and per capita caps that would shift financial risk and cost to states and result in program cuts that would harm many of our state's most vulnerable citizens.

2. End surprise out-of-network bills.

Consumers receive costly surprise bills when an out-of-network provider charges the consumer for the amount that the insurance company did not pay. In some cases consumers seek out-of-network care knowing the risk. Yet sometimes consumers end up with out-of-network bills despite making appropriate efforts to stay in network or because inadequate provider networks require them to go out of network to get the services they need. The consumer is then responsible for the excess medical costs – which can amount to thousands of dollars. Consumers may not receive advance notice that they could encounter an out-of-network provider or an estimate of what the cost of that care might be, sometimes leaving them financially impacted. Georgians for a Healthy Future supports legislation that will hold consumers harmless when consumers end up with out-of-network bills despite making appropriate efforts to stay in network or because inadequate provider networks require them to go out of network to get the services they need.

3. Set and enforce network adequacy standards for all health plans in Georgia.

When consumers enroll in a health insurance plan, they should have reasonable access to all covered services in the plan. As narrow provider networks become more common, health care consumers are at increased risk of not being able to access the medical services and providers they need without going out-of-network (which can lead to significant uncovered costs). In 2015, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners adopted a network adequacy model act for states. Georgians for a Healthy Future supports using this act as a foundation to develop standards for Georgia.

4. Prevent youth substance use disorders through utilizing Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) in Medicaid.

Screening tools like blood pressure checks and mammograms check for small problems before they become big ones, saving numerous lives each year. Substance use among young people is a common health issue that is often overlooked or ignored. Like cancer or hypertension, however, we can reduce its prevalence through prevention and early intervention. Georgia has an opportunity to enhance its commitment to reducing youth substance use disorders by activating the Medicaid codes for SBIRT. With more than half of Georgia's youth enrolled in Medicaid or PeachCare, this is a critical strategy for ensuring that youth receive the preventive services they need. In order to reimburse for these services through Medicaid, however, a state must activate ("turn on") the necessary codes. Georgia is one of only 12 states whose "SBIRT" codes are not turned on. Georgians for a Healthy Future supports activating these codes in Georgia.

5. Re-invest in public health.

Our state's public health system plays a critical role by vaccinating children, monitoring and preventing epidemics and chronic diseases, ensuring safe food and water, and providing both clinical and community-based preventive services. Despite an increasing need for these services and a growing awareness of the importance of social determinants to population health outcomes, Georgia's per capita public health spending is among the lowest in the nation, harming Georgia's ability to conduct meaningful health planning and prevention that can lead to improved population health and productivity. Georgians for a Healthy Future supports re-investment in public health and prevention.

6. Increase the tobacco tax.

Georgia has the 49th lowest tobacco tax in the country at just 37 cents per pack. This makes tobacco much more accessible to youth in Georgia and places a significant burden on our Medicaid system. Increasing the tobacco tax to the national average will reduce youth smoking, addiction, and the burden of chronic disease in our state. According to a 2015 fiscal note, increasing Georgia's tobacco tax to the national average would also bring in over \$500 million per year in new revenue which can be invested in health care coverage, access, and prevention. Georgians for a Healthy Future supports increasing Georgia's tobacco tax to the national average.

7. Advance health equity by addressing social determinants of health.

Factors outside the health system such as adequate housing, transportation, and economic opportunity impact the health of individuals, families, and communities. Left unaddressed, these and other complicating factors can inhibit the effectiveness of approaches within the health system. Georgians for a Healthy Future supports policies that aim to advance health and health equity by addressing social determinants of health.