

Changes in Health Care and Policy in the 2015 Georgia Legislative Session

LAURA COLBERT, MPH, CHES
COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER
GEORGIANS FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

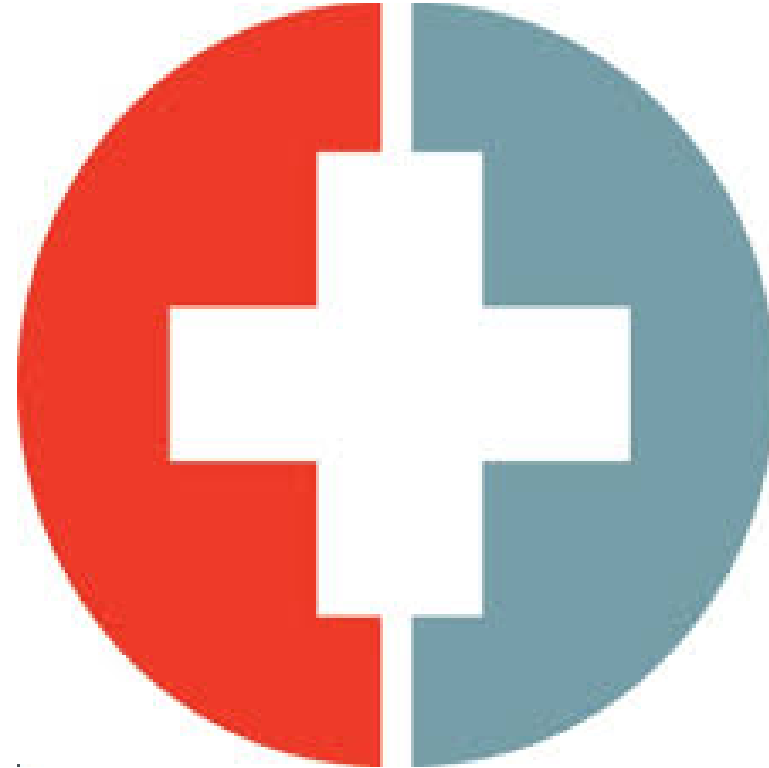
ANDY LORD
LOBBYIST

Objectives

- At the end of this presentation, you should:
 - Be familiar with bills and resolutions considered by the General Assembly that affect health care and health policy in Georgia
 - Understand themes and issues related to health care that arose during the legislative session
 - Be prepared to take action on health care policy in Georgia

Outline

- Budget
- Passed bills
- Study committees
- Bills that did not pass
- Missed opportunities
- Resources



Georgians for a Healthy Future



GHF's 2015 Policy Priorities

- Close Georgia's coverage gap by expanding Medicaid
- Ensure access to quality health care services for Medicaid and PeachCare beneficiaries
- Maximize enrollment and ensure a positive experience for Georgia consumers with private health insurance
- Increase Georgia's tobacco tax
- Re-invest in Georgia's public health infrastructure to support a healthy and prosperous state.

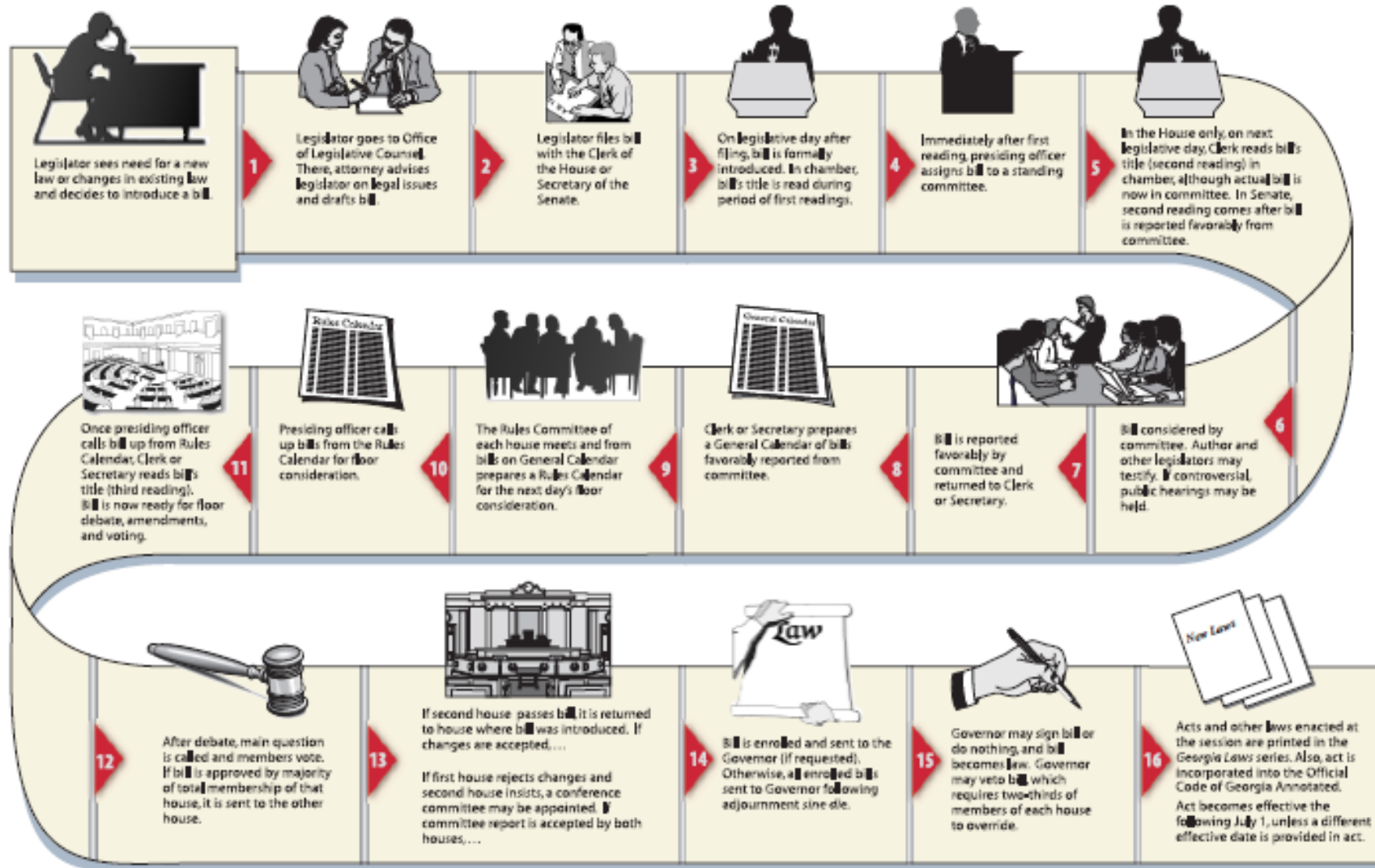
Archived webinar: <http://www.healthtecdl.org/events/details/Health-Care-Policy-and-Advocacy-for-the-2015-Legislative-Session.cfm>

Georgia's health policy environment

- Republican Governor
- 2/3 majority Republican Senate and House
 - 10 health professionals
- Evolving ACA sentiment
- Struggling rural hospital system
- Inadequate Medicaid provider reimbursement rates
- Low priority for preventive health care, public health

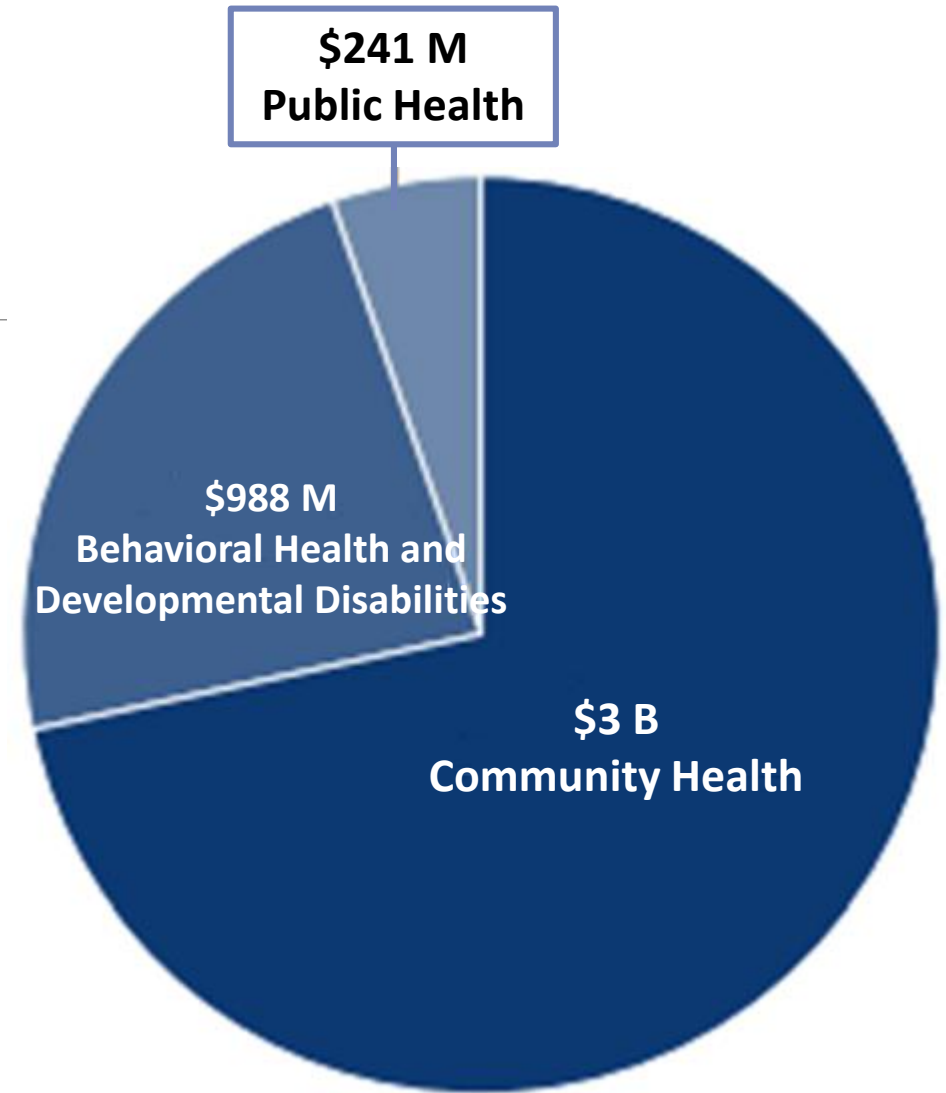
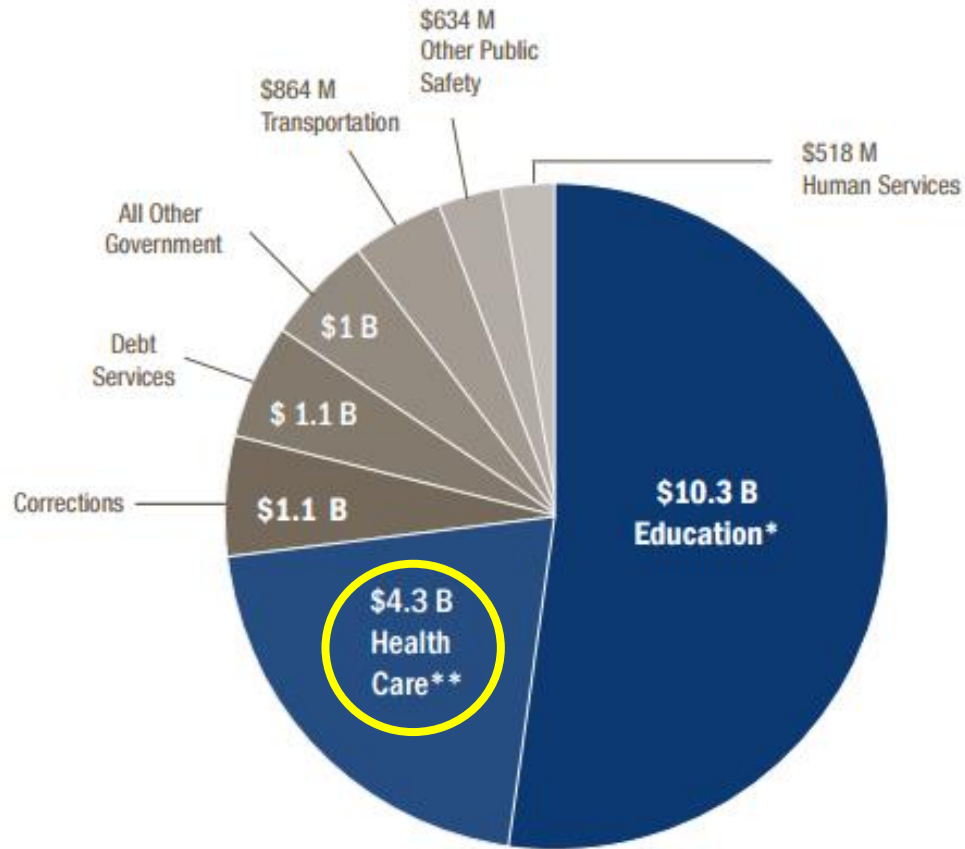


How a Bill is Passed in the Georgia Legislature



- Georgia's legislative sessions
- 2-year cycle called "biennial"
 - Off-session is important

State Budget



Source: Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, *Georgia Budget Primer 2015*

State Budget: Dept. of Community Health

- Operates Medicaid, PeachCare, State Health Benefit Plan, & other health regulatory and planning programs
- \$156 M in new federal money saves state dollars
 - \$93.6 M—↑ federal match rate for PeachCare
 - \$62.7 M—Medicaid annual adjustment
- \$89 M for projected Medicaid, PeachCare growth due to new enrollments & health care inflation (generates \$171 fed. match)
- \$23 M for partial Medicaid payment parity (\$60 M for full parity)

Source: Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, *Overview: 2016 Fiscal Year for the Department of Community Health*



State Budget: Notable Changes

- Dept. of Community Health—\$3 B total
 - \$3 M for Rural Hospital Stabilization Committee pilot program
 - \$500,000 for charity care clinics
 - \$2 M for pay increase for Direct Support Professionals
 - Task Force to submit plan to support uncompensated care as DSH payments are reduced (\$0)

Source: Georgia's FY 2016 Budget (HB 76)



State Budget: Notable Changes

- Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities—\$988 M total
 - \$19.6 M above the 2015 budget
 - \$13.6 for DOJ settlement funding
 - \$1.1 M for 75 new NOW/COMP waivers
 - \$1.4 M for 8 crisis stabilization beds in Fulton Co
 - \$1 M for increased forensic funding
 - \$490k for supported employment

- Dept. of Public Health—\$241 M total
 - \$8.8M above 2015 budget
 - \$1.4 for hold harmless funds for county grant-in-aid
 - \$288k to implement HB 1 (medical cannabis)
 - \$300k total for following – Georgiacancerinfo.org, Hep C testing, childhood cancer research, sickle cell

Passed Bills: Headliners

Bill #	Common name/purpose	Result
SB 1	Autism bill/Ava's law—requires coverage of certain autism therapies	Amended to HB 429 and passed
HB 1	Medical marijuana bill—allows for use of cannabis oil as treatment for certain chronic diseases	Passed

Passed Bills

Bill #	Common name/purpose	Result
SB 51/HB 195	Biosimilars bill	Passed as SB 51
HB 436	HIV/Syphilis Pregnancy Screening Act of 2015—Req. doctors to offer testing for syphilis and HIV to women in 3 rd trimester	Passed
HB 504	Vaccine bill—allows pharmacists & nurses to give adults vaccines for meningitis, shingles, and pneumonia	Passed
HB 416	Badge bill—health care providers must list their name and educational degree on their ID	Passed

Study Committees

Joint

- Study committee on Health, Education and School-Based Health Centers (SBHC)—HR 640
- Study committee on Children’s Mental Health—HR 641
- Rural Hospital Stabilization Committee—cont. from 2014

Senate

- Study Committee on Preventing Youth Substance Use Disorders—SR 487
- Study Committee on Consumer & Provider Protection Act—SR 561 (spin off of SB 158)
- Women’s Adequate Healthcare Study Committee—SR 560

Bills that did not pass

Bill #	Common name/purpose	Result
HB 482	CTCA bill—eliminates two req. that CTCA was subject to when they were allowed to GA as a destination hospital (loosening of CON regs.)	Tabled in House Govt. Affairs Committee
HB 34	Right to Try—allows patients with advanced illnesses, and in consultation with their doctor, to use potentially life-saving investigational drugs, biological products, and devices	Passed out of House Health & Human Services (HHS) committee. Did not crossover
HB 649	GA Lactation Consultant Practice Act—provides for the licensing of lactation consultants	Referred to House HHS committee

Bills that did not pass

Bill #	Common name/purpose	Result
HB 92/ SB 242	Family Care Act—allow individuals whose employers provide sick days the option of using up to five days to care for family members	HB 92—Referred to House Industry & Labor Committee SB 242—Referred to Sen. Industry & Labor, but moved to Sen. HHS
HR 226	House Resolution to close Georgia's coverage gap	Did not pass
SB 38	Close Georgia's coverage gap	Referred to appropriations committee. Did not receive hearing, vote.
SB 130	Smoke Free Cars for Children	Passed Senate, did not get through House

Missed opportunities

- Closing the coverage gap
- Increase Georgia's tobacco tax
- Full funding for Medicaid payment parity (& auto-escalators)
- Allow for state-run health insurance exchange

Missed opportunities: Close Georgia's coverage gap

BACKGROUND



OPPORTUNITY

- Cover 500,000 Georgians
 - Working families
 - Young people
 - Veterans
- \$200 M in new tax revenue annually & 50,000 new jobs
- Cost-neutral
- No risk!

Missed opportunities: Close Georgia's coverage gap

To let your legislators know that you think Georgia should close its coverage gap, visit:

healthyfuturega.org/issues/cover-georgia

Scroll down to the purple postcard and click the link.

Share why you support closing the coverage gap in Georgia.

Yes, I support closing Georgia's coverage gap, because:

I fall into the coverage gap.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

I do not wish to receive action alerts about Georgia's health care issues, including efforts to close the coverage gap.

Missed opportunities: Tobacco tax

BACKGROUND

- Current tax= \$0.37
- National average= \$1.54
- For every penny increase in tax, state revenue increases by \$5 million
- Every 10% increase retail price of a pack of cigarettes = corresponding ~4% decrease in cigarette consumption
 - Reductions among youth= 7%

OPPORTUNITY

- Suggested tax increase of \$1.23
- Tobacco tax increase is most effective ways to reduce smoking & other tobacco use among kids.
- Reduce cancer deaths, improve quality of life for Georgians
- Resulting annual revenue increase of up to \$585 million

Missed opportunities: Medicaid parity

BACKGROUND

- Increases provider reimbursement rates (equitable for Medicare rates) for certain services provided to Medicaid enrollees
- Reimbursement rate increase provided in ACA expired Dec. 31, 2014
- Other southern states to maintain parity: AL, MS, SC

OPPORTUNITY

- \$60 M appropriation needed for full parity
- \$23 M appropriation in final budget
- Increased reimbursement rates facilitate better access to providers, primary care services for Medicaid enrollees
- Auto-escalators

Missed opportunities: State exchange

BACKGROUND

- King v. Burwell—challenges constitutionality of tax subsidies offered through federal exchange
- GA—federal marketplace state
- HB 943 (2014)—precludes state from running its own exchange
- 90% of GA’s 500,000+ enrollees received subsidies
- No change to subsidies currently

OPPORTUNITY

- Repeal HB 707 language or introduce new language to allow Georgia to set up its own exchange
- Protect consumers from possible loss of subsidies and coverage
- Prevents insurance market “death spiral” and market uncertainty

What now?

- Contact both of your legislators
 - Thank them for their work this session
 - Ask about a missed opportunity:
 - King v. Burwell: Does GA have a plan?
 - Do you support an increased tobacco tax?
 - Would you support Medicaid payment parity?
 - Do you support closing the coverage gap by expanding Medicaid?
 - Keep in touch!
- Let GHF know what they say.

To find your legislators:

Visit healthyfuturega.org →
Advocacy Center → Contact
Your Legislators

Resources

Georgians for a Healthy Future

www.healthyfuturega.org



@healthyfuturega



facebook.com/healthyfuturega

GA General Assembly website

- legis.ga.gov

Georgia Health News

- georgiahealthnews.com

Georgia Budget & Policy Institute

- gbpi.org | @GaBudget

Thank you!

Laura Colbert
Community Outreach Manager
Georgians for a Healthy Future
Office: 404-890-5804
lcolbert@healthyfuturega.org

Andy Lord
Lobbyist
andylord@ga-lobbyist.com