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Passage of Patients First Act offers no guarantees to Georgia's uninsured

Atlanta, Georgia - Statement by Laura Colbert, Executive Director of Georgians for a Healthy Future, regarding the passage of SB 106, legislation allowing Georgia's Governor to seek an 1115 waiver and 1332 waivers.

"While we appreciate the attention that SB 106 has brought to the urgent need to extend health insurance to more individuals and families across Georgia, it offers no guarantees to un- and under-insured Georgians.

"Georgians want assurances that their state leaders will create a pathway to quality, affordable health coverage for everyone in the state. Unfortunately, SB 106 provides no information as to who will gain coverage, what changes might be made to Medicaid and private insurance, how much it will cost Georgia tax payers, or how it will impact the health and finances of Georgia families. There have been many opportunities to clarify these questions. They have not been availed.

"The only specific detail in SB 106 limits which Georgians might be able to gain coverage under the resulting waivers. While we hope all 240,000 uninsured Georgians living below the poverty line are able to gain coverage as a result of SB 106, the bill falls short of covering near-poor adults (those with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty line; \$17,236 annually for an individual and \$29,435 for a family of three). There are an estimated 200,000 uninsured Georgians making between 100-138% FPL and many will likely continue to struggle to get the health coverage and care they need.

"The approval of SB 106 by Georgia's General Assembly is the first step in a multi-step process that could significantly disrupt our current health care landscape. As the drafting of multiple waivers moves forward, we encourage state leaders to be transparent with consumers and stakeholders and provide the assurances they are looking for by guaranteeing all Georgians have a quality, affordable, comprehensive health plan to protect their health and finances."



About GHF:

With a mission to build and mobilize a unified voice, vision, and leadership to achieve a healthy future for all Georgians, Georgians for a Healthy Future provides a strong voice for Georgia consumers and communities on the health care issues and decisions that impact their lives. Georgians for a Healthy Future has a three-pronged approach which includes: 1) outreach, education, and engagement with consumers and communities; 2) coalition building and mobilization; and 3) public policy advocacy. For more information, visit www.healthyfuturega.org.