2016 Georgia Legislative Session

Budget

**H.B. 751 2017 State Budget** includes $26.2 million state funds to increase the reimbursement rate for select Medicaid primary care and OB-GYN codes. The total increased reimbursement to attested primary care physicians to include state and federal funds will be $83M.

The Georgia Physician Workforce Budget includes capitation for the 72 (66 IM) new residency slots in Georgia.

**Key bills during final days of session**

A number of important developments took place during the final week of the 2016 state legislative session.

This included **S.B. 158 by Sen Dean Burke**, which is a health insurance rental networks bill that would result in greater insurer disclosure and transparency and would ensure that physicians get paid their contracted rate in the event their network is leased, and **S.B. 302 (Sen PK Martin)**, which is a bill that would require health insurance companies to maintain more accurate provider directories.

The Senate also passed a bill (**H.B. 900**) by Rep. Sharon Cooper that would reform the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) in the state. The improvement to the PDMP include delegation to a licensed staff in a physician practice to access the PDMP and allows greater communication between prescribers and other providers.

GA ACP is encouraging members to reach out to their legislators to thank them for passing these key bills, especially the sponsors – Sens. Dean Burke, M.D. (S.B. 158) and P.K. Martin (S.B. 302) and Rep. Cooper (H.B. 900)

Link to Georgia Senators and Representatives;


**H.B. 509** passed in both the House and Senate to implement initiatives to improve quality and delivery of patient centered and family focused palliative care in the state.
H.B. 1043, which would exempt hospitals and health systems from having to follow the influenza vaccine protocol in the state. The Senate amended this bill to include language from Sen. Judson Hill’s S.B. 385, which calls for physicians to display the full name of their certifying board (i.e., the American Board of Medical Specialties or the American Board of Physician Specialties or the American Osteopathic Association) or complete a postgraduate training program that is approved by Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education or the AOA in any advertisements. The chapter provided alternative language to the sponsor for SB 385 although the bill passed in original language on Day 40 as an amendment with language from MAG. The chapter will work with the Medical Association of Georgia to correct this language next session.

HB 965 Jimmy Carter Ca Tx Access Passed in the House and senate to provide that no health benefit plan shall require an insured to fail to successfully respond to a drug or drugs for stage four advanced, metastatic cancer prior to the approval of a drug prescribed by his or her physician

H.B. 649, which would require lactation consultants to be licensed, and H.B. 1058, which would modify HIV/AIDS and STD testing protocols.

The bills that passed both chambers will now go to Gov. Nathan Deal for his consideration.

Study Committees

As a result of the 2016 Legislative Session there are several Study Committees identified;

S.R. 974, which would establish a study committee to examine the factors that lead to “surprise billing” – as well as developing ways to avoid the need for the practice.

S.R. 1154, which would establish a study committee to evaluate the effects of developing Emergency Cardiac Care Centers with certain scientifically validated protocols and procedures to increase the survivability of a cardiac event.

S.R. 1166, which would create a study committee to 1) examine the challenges that are faced by small businesses that need to obtain health insurance and 2) the potential for the state to develop and sponsor a self-insured group health insurance plan.

S.R. 1165, which would create a study committee that would look at the causes and effects of opioid use and abuse in Georgia, as well as the actions that need to be taken to save lives.