

**HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES COALITION OF GEORGIA
2008 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

- **Increase funding for the Babies Born Healthy Program.** Babies Born Healthy is the only government program that pays for prenatal care for low income pregnant women who do not qualify for Medicaid and in recent years the program has consistently run out of funds before the fiscal year ends. Current funding allows the program to serve approximately 5000 women. Women who are eligible but are not served due to lack of funds usually end up appearing at a hospital to deliver their baby having had no prenatal care. Since their babies are Medicaid eligible, Medicaid bears the cost of any disabilities or health conditions that these babies may have. HMHB recommends an appropriate increase in funding for Babies Born Healthy to address the need in this program because it will save Medicaid money and Georgia will have healthier babies.
- **Restore Medicaid eligibility for pregnant women and infants to 235% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).** In 2004, Medicaid eligibility was reduced from 235% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. When more women had access to early prenatal care, the results were impressive and measurable. Outcome measures in Georgia such as low birth weight and preterm births improved in the 1990s but have begun to worsen in recent years. In order to have better birth outcomes, Georgia needs to assure that women have access to prenatal care.
- **Provide funding for the Cervical Cancer Prevention Vaccine.** DHR requested but did not receive funding in FY 2008 for the new human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine. HMHB supports state funding that would allow voluntary vaccination of uninsured girls.
- **Oppose legislation that threatens health insurance benefits such as mammograms, pap smears, and childhood immunizations.** Many of the current state mandates are for services that ensure prevention and early detection of disease. Bills have been introduced in recent years that would allow health insurance to be sold in Georgia without covering such services. HMHB continues to oppose such legislation.
- **Monitor legislation and policy changes that impact services for Medicaid and PeachCare clients.** Providers, advocates and many legislators are concerned about the impact of the transition in 2006 to Care Management Organizations (CMOs) for most Medicaid and PeachCare clients. There are concerns about the impact upon Public Health programs such as Children 1st and Babies Can't Wait, and access to services has reportedly become more difficult for many clients.
- **Enhance Medicaid services for Georgia women by obtaining a federal Family Planning Waiver.** As of September 2007, 26 states have obtained a Medicaid Family Planning Waiver, which enhances services to Medicaid eligible women by providing interconceptional family planning to mothers for two years following a Medicaid birth. Currently post partum Medicaid family planning services are only provided for 60 days. The Medicaid Family Planning Waiver has been successful at lowering birth rates and saving public funds that would have been spent on prenatal and newborn care.