



**HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES**  
Coalition of Georgia

## **HMHB Legislative Update February 23, 2009**

Legislators have completed 21 of 40 legislative days. The plan for the schedule is still to meet Tuesday through Thursday of each week until late March and reconvene in late June for the final 5 days, but this is expected to change due to the recent passage by Congress of the federal stimulus package.

Gov. Perdue announced last week that he was lowering the state's revenue estimate for FY 2009 by \$450 million. The budget shortfall for FY 2009 has grown to \$2.65 billion. Gov. Perdue directed state agencies to cut another \$130 million from the FY 2009 budget. With only four months left in the current fiscal year, it will be difficult to make these additional cuts.

Last week President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which will bring an estimated \$1.7 billion in increased Medicaid match to Georgia between FY 2009 and FY 2011. Georgia will also receive over \$1.26 for an education block grant and \$280 million in a flexible block grant. Gov. Perdue has proposed using some of the Medicaid match funding to free up enough state funds to proceed with the Homeowner Tax Relief Grants in FY 2009, which will require \$428 million.

### **BUDGET UPDATE**

Work is proceeding on the FY 2009 budget. Most of the House Appropriations Subcommittees, including those that deal with funding for the Departments of Community Health and Human are meeting Monday to finalize their recommendations for FY 2009. The House is expected to vote on the FY 2009 budget sometime this week.

### **LEGISLATION**

**SB 92** (Sen. Judson Hill, 32<sup>nd</sup>) would effectively dismantle current Medicaid and PeachCare programs and instead allow low-income families to receive assistance to purchase private sector health insurance plans. This bill was assigned to Senate Insurance & Labor Committee. *Discussion of SB 92 was Tuesday, 2/24.* It appears that this bill does not have support from the Capitol's leadership and is not likely to progress out of committee.

**HB 39** (Rep. Ron Stephens, 164<sup>th</sup>) would increase tobacco tax by \$1 per pack of cigarettes and generate an estimated \$335 million in new revenue. The increased price for a pack of cigarettes would also be a **major deterrent to teen smoking**. *Assigned to House Ways & Means. The Ways and Means Public Finance Subcommittee will hold a hearing on HB 39 at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 2/25 in Room 341 of the Capitol.*

### **ACTION NEEDED ON HB 39:**

#### **Contact Members of the Ways and Means Public Finance and Policy Subcommittee.**

We need you to contact these lawmakers and urge them to pass HB 39. You can find talking points at [www.PasstheBuckGeorgia.com](http://www.PasstheBuckGeorgia.com).

### **WAYS AND MEANS PUBLIC FINANCE AND POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE**

Rep. Chuck Martin, Co-Chair	<a href="mailto:chuck@martinforgeorgia.com">chuck@martinforgeorgia.com</a>	Capitol: 404.463.2247
Rep. Tom Rice, Co-Chair	<a href="mailto:tqgrice@aol.com">tqgrice@aol.com</a>	Capitol: 404.656.5912
Rep. David Knight, Alt Co-Chair	<a href="mailto:david.knight@house.ga.gov">david.knight@house.ga.gov</a>	Cap: 404.656.0152 Rep.
Rick Austin	<a href="mailto:rick.austin@house.ga.gov">rick.austin@house.ga.gov</a>	Cap: 404.656.0287
Rep. Sharon Beasley-Teague	<a href="mailto:Sharon.beasley-teague@house.ga.gov">Sharon.beasley-teague@house.ga.gov</a>	Cap: 404.656.0220
Rep. Ellis Black	<a href="mailto:blackellis@bellsouth.net">blackellis@bellsouth.net</a>	Cap: 404.656.0287
Rep. Mike Glanton	<a href="mailto:mikeglanton@mikeglanton.com">mikeglanton@mikeglanton.com</a>	Cap: 404.656.0202
Rep. Allen Peake	<a href="mailto:allen@allenpeake.com">allen@allenpeake.com</a>	Cap: 404.656.0188
Rep. Jay Powell	<a href="mailto:jpowell@camillaga.net">jpowell@camillaga.net</a>	Cap: 404.656.0177
Rep. Austin Scott		Cap: 404.656.5132
Rep. Mickey Stephens	<a href="mailto:mickeystephens@gmail.com">mickeystephens@gmail.com</a>	Cap: 404.656.0117
Rep. Willie Talton	<a href="mailto:willie.talton@house.ga.gov">willie.talton@house.ga.gov</a>	Cap: 404.656.0254
Rep. Rashad Taylor	<a href="mailto:rashadjtaylor@gmail.com">rashadjtaylor@gmail.com</a>	Cap:404.656.0220
Rep. Roger Williams	<a href="mailto:roger.williams@house.ga.gov">roger.williams@house.ga.gov</a>	Cap:404.656.3904

**HB 228** (Rep. Mark Butler, 18<sup>th</sup>) would restructure DHR by moving the Division of Public Health to DCH and create a new Department of Health and by moving the Division of Mental Health and Addictive Diseases to a newly created Department of Behavioral Health. A House Special Appropriations Subcommittee on DHR Governance chaired by Rep. Mickey Channell has been appointed to oversee consideration of the legislation by the House. *Status: Assigned to Subcommittee on DHR Governance.*

**HB 229** (Rep. Brooks Coleman, 97<sup>th</sup>) would create the SHAPE (Student Health and Physical Education) Act. Beginning in 2011-12, students in grades 1-12 enrolled in physical education would have to have an annual fitness assessment approved by the State Board of Education. *In House Rules awaiting placement on House calendar for a vote in the House.*

**HB 337** (Rep. Donna Sheldon, 105<sup>th</sup>) would instruct Public Health to create, career track, recruit and retain nurses. Implementation dependent on funding. House Health & Human Services.

**HB 351** (Rep. Barry Loudermilk, 14<sup>th</sup>) would prohibit any family planning services for unemancipated minors. House Judiciary.

**HB 474** (Rep. Pat Gardner, 57<sup>th</sup>) would increase PeachCare eligibility from 235% of Federal Poverty Level to 300%. Assigned to House Appropriations.

### **TRAUMA CARE SYSTEM**

**MONDAY, February 23<sup>rd</sup> was Trauma Day at the Capitol**, where several hundred Georgians, whose lives have been impacted by trauma care, or a lack of it, urged lawmakers to pass legislation that would adequately fund a statewide trauma system. Trauma survivors, families of trauma victims, doctors, EMS providers, hospital representatives and others were on hand to lend their support.

**SB 156** ( Sen. Cecil Staton, 18<sup>th</sup>) would establish a State Office of EMS/Trauma (under policy direction of the Ga. Trauma Care Network Commission) as the lead agency for trauma network development, operations, and evaluation and as the regulatory and administrative authority for the trauma network. It shifts the Commission's priority from compensating providers of trauma services to maintaining and expanding the trauma network, particularly in regions with the greatest need. *Assigned to Senate Health & Human Services.*

Several other bills address trauma funding:

**HB 148** ( Rep. Austin Scott, 153<sup>rd</sup>) would charge a \$10 fee on passenger vehicles. Ways & Means. **HB 183** (Rep. Harry Geisinger, 48<sup>th</sup>) would charge fees to telephone and wireless subscribers. Ways & Means. **SR 277** (Sen. Greg Goggans ,7<sup>th</sup>) would amend the Constitution to earmark a \$10 fee on passenger vehicles for trauma. Senate Finance.