



healthy mothers, healthy babies

**HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES**

Coalition of Georgia

## **Keeping Current @ the Capitol March 9, 2009**

Legislators have completed 27 of 40 legislative days. Monday, March 9 will be Day 28. Legislators will be in session on Tuesday, adjourn on Wednesday and return on Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> for the 30<sup>th</sup> legislative day, known as “Crossover Day.” That is the last day for a bill to pass from one chamber to the other. Bills that do not pass in the originating chamber are most likely dead for this year. Legislative leaders have also revised the schedule for the rest of the session. The 40<sup>th</sup> and final day is currently set for Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **BUDGET UPDATE**

The Senate passed their version of the Amended FY 2009 budget last week. House and Senate budget negotiators have been working to reach agreement and a final version is expected early this week.

Highlights of the Amended FY 2009 budget to date:

#### **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH**

- \$2 million restored for community health centers by House. Senate agreed.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

- \$3.2 million restored to Grant-In-Aid for county health departments. *Senate amount is \$1.2 million.*
- \$100,000 restored for Sexual Assault Centers (total cut \$535,000). Senate agreed.
- \$200,000 restored for Family Violence Shelters (total cut \$615,000) Senate agreed.

On the FY 2010 budget, Governor Perdue lowered his revenue estimate again last week by an additional \$1.6 billion. The Governor also presented a revised FY 2010 budget that uses over \$1 billion in federal stimulus funds, but calls for more spending cuts. Of particular concern to advocates are major cuts in Medicaid payments to doctors, hospitals and other providers. Governor Perdue had proposed legislation (**HB 307**) to broaden an existing provider fee for Medicaid managed care organizations to all commercial HMOs in Georgia and to hospitals. He included projected income of \$336.7 million from the fee in his original version of the FY 2010. The legislation has faced strong opposition and seems unlikely to pass, so Gov. Perdue removed the projected funds from the budget and cut fees for Medicaid providers.

## **PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**SB 92** (Sen. Judson Hill, 32<sup>nd</sup>) seeks to implement a “premium assistance” program in Georgia’s existing Medicaid and PeachCare programs. The state would pay premiums to enroll members in commercial health plans such as employer sponsored health plans. UPDATE: *SB passed Senate Insurance and Labor on 3/3. Without further impact studies by the state, HMHB does not support this bill.*

**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.*

## **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.
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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:rashadtaylor@gmail.com">rashadtaylor@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 reorganize and restructure the Departments of Human Resources and Community Health. UPDATE: *House Appropriations Governance Subcommittee recommended passage of a substitute that would put Public Health with a new Department of Public and Behavioral Health.* The original bill put Public Health with the Department of Community Health to create a new Department of Health. This week Sen. Renee Unterman (45<sup>th</sup>) introduced **SB 222**, which would put Public Health with the Department of Community Health. Assigned to Senate Governmental Operations

**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 an annual fitness assessment approved by the State Board of Education.

UPDATE: *Passed Senate Education & Youth on 3/5.*

**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. Passed House Judiciary. Assigned to House Rules.

**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**

**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. Passed Senate on 2/26. Assigned to House 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. Passed Senate Finance. Assigned to Senate Rules.

**SB 69** (Sen. Renee Unterman, 45<sup>th</sup>) expands the definition of child abuse to include sexual exploitation by any person who allows, permits, encourages or requires a child to engage in prostitution or any sexually explicit product. Also expands the mandate for reporting child abuse beyond the responsibility of the parent or caretaker to include any person. *Status: Passed Senate. Assigned to House Judiciary Non-Civil.*

**SB 91** (Sen. Jack Murphy, 27<sup>th</sup>) would create a \$5.00 surcharge on adult entertainment to fund services for sexually exploited youth. *Status: Passed Senate Finance 3/5.*

Prepared by Mary Frances Williams, HMHB Advocate.

Feedback, questions, or concerns can be directed to the HMHB Public Affairs Committee, c/o Merrilee Gober, Chair at [magober@bellsouth.net](mailto:magober@bellsouth.net)