



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

## **Keeping Current @ the Capitol** **March 23, 2009**

Legislators have completed 34 of 40 legislative days. Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> will be the 35<sup>th</sup> legislative day. Legislators will be in session Monday, Wednesday & Thursday of this week. The current schedule calls for the 40<sup>th</sup> and final day to take place on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **BUDGET UPDATE**

The House passed its version of the FY 2010 budget on Thursday of last week. The House budget restored the Medicaid provider cuts that were included in the Governor's revised budget proposal, but did not include funds for anticipated roll growth in Medicaid and PeachCare. Enrollment in Medicaid and PeachCare is expected to expand as unemployment rates increase and the Department of Community Health had revised their enrollment forecast upward to reflect this anticipated increase. Gov. Perdue sent a letter last week to House Speaker Glenn Richardson and Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle expressing his concern about this gap in the Medicaid budget.

The Senate is continuing its own work on the FY 2010 budget. Senate Appropriations Subcommittees were on schedule to finish their recommendations by last Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>. Further highlights of the House version of the FY 2010 budget include the following:

### **Department of Human Resources**

Previous versions of the FY 2010 budget included the transfer of millions in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds from Public Health and Mental Health, Addictive Diseases and Development Disabilities services and programs to programs within the Division of Family and Children's Services. The House transferred much of these TANF funds back.

- \$5 million in TANF funds was restored for family planning and youth development programs within Public Health (original cut was \$6.49 million)
- \$3 million in TANF funds and \$2.48 million in state funds was restored by Public Health grant-in-aid to counties.
- \$10 million in state funds was added for a Trauma System, for a total of \$33 million

### **Department of Community Health**

- \$25,000 was added to fund the application of a family planning waiver to provide family planning services to women at the same eligibility level as current pregnancy services (200% Federal Poverty Level)

## Department of Education

- \$29.1 million was restored for School Nurses (original cut eliminated all funding; House version cuts 3%)

## 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. *Status: Passed by Senate Insurance & Labor on. No vote in Senate by 30<sup>th</sup> day, dead unless attached to other legislation.*

**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. *Status: did not pass out of House Ways & Means.*

**HB 228** (Rep. Mark Butler, 18<sup>th</sup>) would reorganize and restructure the Departments of Human Resources and Community Health. *Status: Committee substitute that would put Public Health with a new Department of Public and Behavioral Health passed House. Assigned to Senate Governmental Operations.* The original bill put Public Health with the Department of Community Health to create a new Department of Health. The Senate version, **SB 222** (Sen. Renee Unterman, 45<sup>th</sup>) would put Public Health with the Department of Community Health. *Status: Passed Senate.* **UPDATE: A substitute to HB 228 will be debated on the Senate floor on 3/23. The committee substitute restores the Governor’s original plan to put Public Health with DCH in a new Health Department, but places Developmental Disabilities in the new Department of Behavioral Health. The House and Senate differences will be resolved in a conference committee.**

**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:** *Status: Passed House & Senate. Sent to Gov. for signature.*

**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. *Status: Did not pass committee.*

**HB 351** (Rep. Barry Loudermilk, 14<sup>th</sup>) would prohibit any family planning services for unemancipated minors. *Status: Did not pass committee.*

**HB 474** (Rep. Pat Gardner, 57<sup>th</sup>) would increase PeachCare eligibility from 235% of Federal Poverty Level to 300%. *Status: Did not pass committee.*

**HB 736** (Rep. Ron Stephens, 164<sup>th</sup>) would require public schools to provide parents or guardians of sixth grade female students information concerning the infection of and immunization against the human papillomavirus. *Status: Assigned to House Health & Human Services.*

**SB 223** (Sen. Renee Unterman, 45<sup>th</sup>) would create a Women's Reproductive Health Legislative Oversight Committee. The purpose would be to review and evaluate all women's reproductive health programs and services, including family planning, teen pregnancy prevention, and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. The committee would consist entirely of legislators. **UPDATE:** *Passed Senate. Assigned to House Judiciary.*

### **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.

**SR 277** (Sen. Greg Goggans ,7<sup>th</sup>) would amend the Constitution to earmark a \$10 fee on passenger vehicles for trauma. **UPDATE:** *Passed Senate. Assigned to House Ways & Means. To be heard in Subcommittee on 3/23.*

### **OTHER LEGISLATION**

**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. Committee hearing on 3/23.*

**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. **UPDATE:** *Passed Senate Finance. Did not reach Senate floor for a vote by 30<sup>th</sup> day.*

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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)