



HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES
Coalition of Georgia

HMHB Legislative Update February 11, 2008

This was a busy week for legislators and Governor Perdue. On Monday, the Governor announced the creation of a commission to consider restructuring DHR. The panel will issue a report by July 2, 2008 recommending whether to combine or separate divisions to improve services and cost-effectiveness. The restructuring may involve the Department of Community Health and the State Personnel Administration, as well, possibly moving public health to DCH.

On Friday, the House passed their version of the Amended FY 2008 budget. The House FY 2008 budget made no major changes to the Governor's recommendations for DHR or DCH. The Senate will now begin their work on the FY 2008 budget.

In other news, state revenue figures released on Friday show a slowing of state revenue growth, as January 2008 figures were 7.1% lower than those from January 2007. This may mean total growth will be insufficient to support the FY 2008 amended budget the House passed this week, and it also may have implications for the FY 2009 budget.

The House and Senate have agreed on a joint calendar for the next few legislative days. They will be in session Monday through Thursday of this week. They will be in recess Friday, Feb. 15 and Monday, Feb 18 (President's Day) and will reconvene on Tuesday, Feb. 19, which will be the 19th of 40 legislative days.

Update on HMHB Legislative Agenda

- **Oppose legislation that threatens health insurance benefits such as mammograms, pap smears, and childhood immunizations.** As in recent years, several bills touting high deductible health plans and health savings account have been introduced. **Of particular concern is SB 404 (Sen. Tommie Williams, 19th) which is titled the Georgia Health Marketplace Act.** SB 404 would create a new agency attached to DCH to operate a health insurance comparison shopping website for consumers. The bill also authorizes state funds to promote the sale of individual high deductible health policies and unregulated, discount prepaid packages of medical services based solely on a contractual agreement between the insurer and the consumer. **Simply stated, such plans would have no mandatory coverage requirements (mammograms, pap smears, etc.) as currently required in Georgia. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services.**

This update was prepared for HMHB by Mary Frances Williams. If you have questions, email her at mfwilliams@speakeasy.net