



## GAHU

### Under the Gold Dome Report

April 2, 2010

The first week after the cross-over day saw revenue and budgetary items take first position as the legislators have 10 legislative days left to conclude the state's business for another year. Thursday was day 33 of 40. Next week the General Assembly will take off for Easter and reconvene on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### What happened this week:

- The biggest thing that happened late on Thursday was the passage of [HB 307](#). This bill is a hospital tax of 1.45% of net revenue for hospitals that is estimated to raise \$170 million in taxes per year. This bill is supposed to help shore up the \$600 million in Medicaid shortfall. There is a provision in the bill for insurers to stop paying premium taxes once the shortfall reserve is at \$500 million. With the expansion of Medicaid under the federal legislation and our shortfall already at \$600 million, this is like digging a hole in the sand at the beach. And where do you think the hospitals will turn to collect this new tax?
- [SB 316](#) passed out of the House insurance sub-committee on Wednesday with some substitute language from Rep. Tom Knox and the Department of Insurance Assistant Commissioner, Ron Jackson. It was reported that 27 other states have similar legislation that would allow Medigap type policies to be sold to eligible individuals under the age of 65 who qualify for Medicare due to end-stage renal failure or other such diseases.
- [SB 411](#) also passed out of the House insurance committee on Wednesday. Our member, Mark Mixer testified on behalf of this bill. The bill would allow wellness or health improvement plans to provide incentives for healthy behavior.

#### What's happening week after next:

- [House Bill 1268](#) This is the ARRA "fix" bill for continuation for terminated employees that are not eligible for COBRA. It will be heard in the Senate insurance committee the week of April 12<sup>th</sup>

- The two cross-state line selling bills: [HB 1184](#) and Senator Judson Hill's bill, [SB 407](#) will also be heard by the respective committees when the General Assembly meets the week of April 12<sup>th</sup>.

We will continue to work with the legislators and lobbyists in following the bills that impact our business and consumers. We will also work with these same people to work through the job of crafting the Georgia response to the federal legislation.

If you are interested in coming downtown to work with me, please let me know  
- I would love to have your support!

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Wetherton