



January 15, 2016

Georgia Association of Health Underwriters – Week 1 Report

The Georgia General Assembly convened on Monday, January 11th for the 2016 Legislative Session. The first day was mostly ceremonial. Legislators and lobbyists alike believe medical cannabis, casino gambling, religious liberties and education funding will take center stage as the Legislative Session moves forward. Our prediction of a fast paced session was confirmed with the passage of an aggressive schedule for the first 13 days. The schedule is as follows:

Monday, January 11 – Day 1
Tuesday, January 12 – Day 2
Wednesday, January 13 – Day 3
Thursday, January 14 – Day 4
Friday, January 15 – Day 5
Wednesday, January 20 – Day 6
Thursday, January 21 – Day 7
Friday, January 22 – Day 8
Monday, January 25 – Day 9
Tuesday, January 26 – Day 10
Wednesday, January 27 – Day 11
Thursday, January 28 – Day 12
Monday, February 1 – Day 13

On Tuesday, January 12th, the day began with the Georgia Chamber's Eggs and Issues breakfast. Senator Johnny Isakson was the special guest this year. Following Senator Isakson, Governor Deal addressed the crowd. He focused mainly on positive economic growth and the strong business environment in Georgia. Governor Deal commended the Legislature and leaders across the state for the transportation improvements resulting from the passage for HB 170 – last year.

The Governor delivered his State of the State address on Wednesday, January 13th. You can find the full text of the address [here](#). In it, he reiterated the improving economic outlook in Georgia. Governor Deal addressed Criminal Justice reform – one of his priorities – by noting that Georgia is considered a leader in the area around the Country. He thanked the members of the Criminal Justice Reform Council and praised their work.

One of the major topics discussed in the State of the State address was education reform. He announced a 3% teacher pay raise and the elimination of furlough days. In regards to the recommendations by his Education Reform Council, including the

controversial topic of teacher merit pay, Governor Deal encouraged legislators to fully review the recommendations before enacting any of them.

Many feel that the overall state of the State is strong and prosperous.

Governor Deal released his fiscal year 2017 budget on Wednesday, January 14th. Highlights are as follows:

- \$23.7 billion in total appropriations
- \$300 million in additional funding for teacher salary increases
- \$26.2 million for Pre-K teacher pay raises
- \$825 million in new state general and motor fuels for transportation
- Salary increases for state employees

The General Assembly will use the Governor’s recommendations as a starting point to develop the State’s budget, which the Governor will either sign or veto. You can find the budget, in it’s entirety, [here](#).

Next week is “budget week” at the Capitol. You can find the schedule for budget hearings [here](#). The Department of Insurance presents on Wednesday morning at 8:00 AM.

We have had many meetings during the first week with key legislators and staff regarding some important legislation. We met with Lindsay Scott at the Department of Insurance; Chairman of the House Insurance Committee, Richard Smith; and Representative Darlene Taylor.

Below you can find a tracking spreadsheet with all the bills we are currently watching. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Bill #	Title	Date	Status	Sponsor	House Com	Senate Com
HB 0047	Prescription drugs; certain refills of topical ophthalmic products under certain conditions; authorize	2/12/15 10:04	Senate Read and Referred	Cooper, Sharon 43rd	H&HS	H&HS
HB 0193	Life Insurance Consumer Disclosure Model Act; enact	2/4/15 10:49	House Second Readers	Rogers, Carl 29th	Ins	
SB 0143	Insurance; require insurer providing services under state health benefit plan to include certain trauma centers in provider network	3/19/15 9:47	House Second Readers	Hufstetler, Chuck 52nd	Ins	I&L
SB 0158	Consumer and Provider Protection Act; provide certain consumer and provider	2/24/15 10:10	Senate Read and Referred	Burke, Dean 11th		I&L

protections regarding health insurance

SB 0265	Physician Direct Pay Act; definitions; provide physician agreements are not insurance; exempt agreements from regulations as insurance	1/13/16 10:45	Senate Read and Referred	Hill, Judson 32nd	I&L
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