

Legislative Days 15 - 19
Principal: Don Bolia

Session Week 4 Legislative Report



Georgia Society
of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

2024

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GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS

Week 4, Legislative Days 15-19

The Georgia General Assembly met this week from Tuesday to Friday, which were session days 15 through 19. This week, there were several committee meetings each day, each covering a wide range of topics. Monday was not a session day as the Legislature took a day off to pay their respects to the late House Rules Chairman, Richard Smith, who sadly passed last Tuesday, January 30th. To replace this Monday's session day, the Legislature will meet on Friday, February 16th. This week, major election bills altering Georgia's voting system have been highly contentious, most notably potentially taking out barcodes from use in ballot voting.



New General Bills of Interest

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 1114 (Rep. Wade Will)	Data Analysis for Tort Reform Act; enact	House Insurance Committee
SR 579 (Sen. Bill Cowsert)	Sports Betting; Georgia General Assembly to provide by general law for sports betting in this state; authorize -CA	Senate Hopper

Healthcare Legislation

House Health Appropriations Subcommittee

On February 6th, the House Health Appropriations Subcommittee convened to discuss various budget allocations aimed at improving healthcare services and addressing specific health needs within the state. The subcommittee approved \$119,000 for the Georgia Board of Dentistry, reinforcing support for dental health regulation and oversight. Additionally, \$67,000 was allocated for electronic documentation storage to modernize healthcare record-keeping practices. The subcommittee marked \$148,000 for the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), highlighting a commitment to healthcare workforce development and training. Furthermore, \$50,000 was designated for Lupus research and awareness. The allocation of \$250,000 for a federally qualified health center in Cobb County will increase efforts to expand access to primary care services, particularly in underserved areas. In a move to optimize Medicaid expenditures, the subcommittee reduced funds by \$200,000 based on projected utilization rates. Lastly, \$56,000 was allocated for nursing recruitment efforts in Southwest Georgia, addressing regional healthcare workforce needs.

Senate Regulated Industries Committee

In the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities on February 6th, HB 434, sponsored by Rep Hawkins, was discussed along with a committee substitute. The bill focuses on providing licensing for radiologist assistants through the Georgia Composite Medical Board. The bill was returned to the committee as it was reviewed with a substitute. A motion to pass the bill from committee was unanimously approved, with Senator Albers set to carry it forward through the Senate. Additionally, the Secretary of State provided an update on the licensing process, noting the stagnant budget since 2016 and the implementation of a new online licensing program aimed at enhancing security and efficiency.

Senate Health Committee

On February 7th, the Senate Health Committee convened to review and pass two significant bills aimed at regulating health-related practices and substances in the state. The first bill, HB 502, titled the "Georgia Cosmetic Laser Services Act," proposes revisions to definitions and requirements for assistant laser practitioner licenses. These revisions aim to ensure the safe and effective provision of cosmetic laser services in the state. The bill seeks to update regulations to reflect advancements in cosmetic laser technology and enhance consumer protection. After deliberation, the Senate Health Committee voted to pass HB 502, recognizing its importance in safeguarding public health and regulating cosmetic procedures. The second bill considered by the committee was HB 181, which addresses controlled substances, specifically mitragynine and hydroxymitragynine, commonly known as ‘kratom’. This bill proposes that these substances be classified as Schedule I controlled substances, indicating a high potential for abuse and limited medical use.

House Appropriations Committee

On February 8th, the House Appropriations Committee convened to review and vote on HB 991, which pertains to the Hospital Medicaid Financing Program. The bill seeks to extend the sunset provision of the program, ensuring its continued operation. The committee unanimously passed HB 991.

New Healthcare Bills of Interest

Bill	Description	Status
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HB 1154 (Rep. Park Cannon)	Medical assistance; maternal screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders; mandate Medicaid coverage	House Public Health Committee
HB 1155 (Rep. Park Cannon)	Newborn Baby and Mother Protection Act; maternal screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders; mandate coverage	House Public Health Committee
HB 1179 (Rep. Sharon Cooper)	Insurance; step therapy protocols may not be required for medications prescribed for the treatment of serious mental illness under health benefit plans; provide	House Hopper
SB 449 (Sen. Larry Walker III)	Certified Nursing Aid; certain military medical personnel from an examination requirement; exempt	Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee
SB 460 (Sen. Clint Dixon)	Advanced Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants; number that a physician can authorize and supervise at any one time; prov.; revise	Senate Health and Human Services Committee

GSDDS Legislation

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 502 (Rep. Deborah Silcox)	Georgia Cosmetic Laser Services Act; revise a definition; revise a provision	House passed, Senate Committee favorably reported

At the link below, a testimony can be seen from Dr. Gross concerning important topics.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/910976661>