

**Legislative Days 33 - 35**  
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# Session Week 9 Legislative Report



Georgia Society  
of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

# 2024

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GOVERNMENT  
RELATIONS

# Week 9, Legislative Days 33-35

The Georgia General Assembly met this week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, which were session days 33 through 35. This week, there were several committee meetings each day, each covering a wide range of topics. This week's committee meetings covered bills still alive after Crossover day, with the Senate covering House bills and the House dealing with Senate bills. Pertinent issues this week included certificate of need reform, consumer data privacy, and surprise substitutions and amendments on a myriad of topics. As the session approaches Sine Die, legislators are all working hard to ensure their bills get across the finish line and pass the other chamber, all with the end goal of getting Governor Kemp's signature to become Georgia law.



# Healthcare Legislation

## *Senate Regulated Industries Committee*

The Senate Regulated Industries Committee convened on March 11th to discuss and vote on HB 1339, a certificate of need reform bill. Introduced by Representative Parrish, the bill aimed to revise various aspects of CON regulations and exemptions. The discussion highlighted significant changes made to the original bill, with five out of fourteen sections being altered. The Senate's primary focus lay on the management of capital projects, particularly emphasizing the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates, as well as expediting the appeals process. Key amendments included the removal of thresholds for capital expenditures, reverting to the House's initial version. Additionally, changes were made to accommodate multi-specialty surgical centers, allowing different practices to share office space while retaining the concept of single-specialty surgical centers. Minor exemptions were introduced for obstetrics. Additional specific exemptions were tailored for reopening a rural hospital closed for over 12 months and for the Morehouse School of Medicine. During the meeting, two amendments were proposed and passed. Senator Dolezal's amendment introduced a birthing center exemption, while Leader Butler's amendment added two non-legislative members to the Comprehensive Health Coverage Commission. One member would be appointed by the minority Senate leader, and the other by the minority House leader. Ultimately, with the amendments incorporated, the bill successfully passed the committee. **HB 1339 was heard on the Senate floor on March 14th and passed with a vote of 43 to 11.**

During the Senate Regulated Industries meeting on March 14th, various bills were discussed and a favorable consideration was passed unanimously on one notable legislative proposal. HB 1046, presented by Representative Clark, focused on authorizing advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to order home health care services. This bill had a major addition to it, with SB 460 being attached to it, a move to which Rep Clark consented.

## *House Regulated Industries Subcommittee*

During the House Regulated Industries Occupational and Professional Licensing Subcommittee, several bills were discussed and passed. Most notably related to healthcare, SB 449, presented by Sen. Walker, aims to exempt certain military medical personnel from a nursing aid examination requirement. This bill passed unanimously after inserting an amendment to add HB 215 language related to the APRN License bill.

## *House Regulated Industries Committee*

On March 14th, the House Regulated Industries Committee convened to discuss SB 495, a bill concerning the Low THC Oil Patient Registry. The bill aimed to establish the term of validity for registration cards and facilitate the delivery process of these cards. The discussion revolved around the necessity of defining the duration of validity for registration cards and streamlining the delivery procedures to ensure efficient access for patients. After thorough consideration, the committee passed SB 495.

## *House Health Committee*

The House Health Committee convened on March 11th to address several healthcare-related bills and amendments. HR 1231, which proposed the creation of a House Study Committee on maternal, prenatal, and pediatric care access and funding was introduced by Rep. Mark Newton. An amendment introduced by Rep. Newton to include trauma in the group of critical needs was passed, with the committee solely hearing this bill and not taking a vote. Next, SB 455 focused on revising provisions of medical assistance to comply with federal

law, presented by Sen. Brian Strickland. The chairman's amendment passed, leading to its overall passage. Following SB 455, SB 505 was discussed, which aimed to revise provisions regarding the required publication of certain financial documents by hospitals on their websites, led by Sen. Blake Tillery. Sen. Trey Kelley proposed an amendment to strike the community benefit definition, although there was disagreement from the bill author as it could potentially blur the lines between marketing and healthcare in terms of their community benefit. Despite this, the amendment passed, and the bill was subsequently approved. The committee then addressed SB 515, introducing a two-year pilot program to provide additional ambulances to specific areas of the state, presented by Senator Bo Hatchett of the 50th district. Two minor amendments were passed, leading to the bill's approval by the committee.

### *Senate Health Committee*

On March 11th, the Senate Health Committee convened to address several legislative proposals. One notable bill discussed was HB 1170, introduced by Representative Hawkins. This bill, concerning the Department of Public Health, aimed to mandate that certain state government buildings, courthouses, and university buildings maintain and make accessible opioid antagonists. Additionally, a contentious amendment to this bill was proposed, which involved outlawing the treatment of gender dysphoria or gender transitioning for minors by banning the administration of puberty blockers to anyone under 18 years of age. After deliberation, HB 1170 passed with an 8-5 vote, indicating a divided response from committee members. Another bill considered was HB 1072, presented by Representative Cooper. This legislation focused on the drug repository program, aiming to establish pharmacist to pharmacy technician ratios within the program and requiring reverse drug distributors to make diligent efforts to donate drugs rather than destroy them. HB 1072 passed without opposition. Additionally, the committee discussed HB 1326, sponsored by Representative Stephens. This bill addressed provisions related to Schedule I, Schedule III, and Schedule IV controlled substances. Following discussions, HB 1326 also passed without significant opposition.

During the Senate Health committee on March 13th, several bills and resolutions were discussed and subsequently passed. House Bill 143 which was substituted to deal with data collection of Georgia Board of Healthcare Workforce passed. Similarly, House Bill 215 was substituted to create a healthcare worker certification commission. Additionally, Senate Resolution 658, introduced by Senator Anderson, sought to recognize April as Minority Health Month and encourage cholesterol screening initiatives. This resolution also received committee approval, highlighting efforts to promote awareness and proactive healthcare measures within minority communities.

### *Senate Insurance Committee*

During the Senate Insurance subcommittee on March 13th, several bills were discussed and voted on. HB 984, presented by Representative Lumsden, aimed to update practices within the Department of Insurance's Office of the Safety Fire Commissioner. A substitute bill, LC 52 0528S, was passed unanimously. HB 1049, introduced by Representative Williamson, proposed the enactment of the Insurance Business Transfer Act, which received unanimous approval following Ethan Stiles' support from the Insurance department. HB 1114, presented by Representative Wade, sought to enact the Data Analysis for Tort Reform Act, and this bill passed committee unanimously. Representative Cooper's HB 1125 aimed to phase out subminimum wage payments to individuals with disabilities, and the bill passed with a 5-1 vote. Lastly, HB 935, introduced by Representative Vance, aimed to provide standards for convictions using speed devices for motor vehicles, and it passed unanimously.

# **GSDDS Legislation**

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
<b>HB 502 (Rep. Deborah Silcox)</b>	Georgia Cosmetic Laser Services Act; revise a definition; revise a provision	House passed, Senate Health and Human Services Committee favorably reported
<b>HB 1046 (Rep. David Clark)</b>	advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to order home healthcare services; substitute introduced with language from SB 102 (that died in committee) allowing CRNAs to administer anesthesia without direct physician oversight in rural hospitals	House passed, Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee favorably reported by substitute
<b>HB 1264 (Rep. Ron Stephens)</b>	Professions and businesses; establish a professional health program to provide for monitoring and rehabilitation of impaired healthcare professionals; authorize	House passed, Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities
<b>HB 1322 (Rep. Chas Cannon)</b>	Georgia Hemp Farming Act; regulate consumable hemp products	House passed, Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities
<b>HB 1326 (Rep. Ron Stephens)</b>	Crimes and offenses; Schedule I, Schedule III, and Schedule IV controlled substances; provide certain provisions	House passed, Senate Health and Human Services Committee favorably reported
<b>SB 495 (Sen. Sam Watson)</b>	Low THC Oil Patient Registry; term of validity of a registration card; provide	Senate passed, House Regulated Industries Committee favorably reported