

Legislative Days 26 - 28
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Session Week 7 Legislative Report



Georgia Society
of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

2024

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GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS

Week 7, Legislative Days 26-28

The Georgia General Assembly met this week on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, which were session days 26 through 28. This week, the Legislature took Wednesday to have only committee meetings, having meetings from 8 AM until around 6 PM that night. The week was also notable because Thursday, legislative day 28, was Crossover day. This day is important for bills from both the House and the Senate because bills produced from their respective chambers, either House or Senate, need to be passed out of their chamber by the end of the legislative day 28, otherwise the bill dies and will not be passed. For the House, 81 bills were placed on the calendar through three rules committee meetings, although they did not have to address all of them. In the Senate, 58 bills were placed on the calendar to be addressed, not all of these bills were heard. Any bills left in the legislatures and not passed on legislative day 28 will not be able to move forward and will have to start completely over next session. Both chambers were in session well into the night, the Senate adjourning around 9 PM and the House adjourning a little after 11pm. Through these long legislative days, the Senate was able to pass 43 bills, while the House heard 74 bills, passing 73 with one bill failing on the floor. After Crossover day, the legislative session has 12 official legislative days left, and those days are busy with attempting to pass bills from the opposite chambers. Some bills will persist all the way through, progressing to the Governor’s office for a potential signature, while others may not have enough time to make it all the way through the legislative process.



New General Legislation of Interest for the Week

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HR 1254 (Rep. Eric Bell)	General Assembly; legalization and regulation of marijuana; provide - CA	House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

Crossover, Day 28, Breakdown

On Crossover day with the Georgia General Assembly, a pivotal moment in the legislative calendar, several crucial bills made their way through the legislative process, shaping the state's policies across various sectors. Among these, SB 460 emerged as a focal point of attention. Intended to address the ratio of APRNs and PAs under the supervision of a physician at one time, SB 460 took a significant turn as it progressed through the legislative channels. An unexpected turn of events occurred when the bill was amended to incorporate language from a previously defeated bill that had failed to advance past committee discussions (SB 419). This amendment effectively granted Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) the authority to administer anesthesia without the direct oversight of a physician, with this stipulation only applying to rural counties. This effectively creates a two tiered system within the state of CRNA regulations which could have negative effects on the industry. Despite initial reservations and debates on the implications of such a provision, the amended SB 460 ultimately secured passage during crossover, marking the potential for a significant shift in healthcare regulations within the state.

In tandem with healthcare reforms, historic preservation also took center stage with the passage of HB 1116. This bill, focused on historic tax credits, seeks to extend the sunset date for tax incentives related to the rehabilitation of historic structures. By extending these tax credits, the legislature aimed to incentivize the preservation and revitalization of Georgia's rich architectural heritage, fostering economic development while safeguarding the state's cultural legacy.

Furthering the discussion on healthcare, HB 1339 addressed the complex issue of Certificate of Need (CON). This bill proposed comprehensive revisions to existing regulations, aiming to streamline the CON process while also bolstering support for rural healthcare providers. Notably, HB 1339 included provisions to increase tax credits for contributions to rural hospital organizations, acknowledging the vital role these institutions play in serving underserved communities across the state. Additionally, the bill sought to establish the Comprehensive Health Coverage Commission, tasked with exploring innovative solutions to expand healthcare access and improve outcomes for all Georgians.

Shifting focus to property taxation, HB 1031 brought about significant reforms aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability in the ad valorem taxation process. By mandating reappraisal of parcels and requiring estimated roll-back rate information on annual assessment notices, the bill aimed to provide property owners with a clearer understanding of their tax obligations while ensuring fair and equitable taxation practices across the state.

Healthcare Legislation

House Health Committee

The House Health Committee convened on February 26th, focusing on two key bills. The first, HB 1339 presented by Representative Butch Parrish, aimed to revise the certificate of need process in healthcare. A substitute bill was introduced to address technicalities aligning with departmental systems and return to the status quo in terms of ASC facilities. There was no public testimony. The committee engaged in questioning and ultimately passed the bill. The bill passed the House floor later in the week. The second bill discussed was HB 1046, presented by Representative David Clark. This bill sought to authorize advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to order home healthcare services. There was a substitute that stripped out the ability to perform direct home healthcare services and only allows the provision allowing APRNs to execute death certificates. The committee favorably reported the substitute.

On February 27th, the House Public Health Committee convened to discuss and vote on several significant healthcare-related bills, all of which received approval. Representative Matt Hatchett introduced HB 663, which aimed to enact the "No Patient Left Alone Act," ensuring patients' rights to have a designated support person present during medical procedures. Representative Ron Stephens presented HB 1326, addressing provisions related to controlled substances under crimes and offenses laws. Representative Ruwa Romman sponsored HB 1314, which sought to designate emergency medical services, including ambulance service, as essential services within the healthcare framework. Representative Scott Hilton introduced HB 1340, focusing on the credentialing of qualified behavior analysts and autism services practitioner-supervisors to enhance professional standards. Additionally, Representative Karen Bennett proposed HB 1302, advocating for mandatory maternal mental health screening for Medicaid recipients to address perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. Lastly, the committee revisited HB 1046, sponsored by Representative David Clark, which aimed to authorize advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to order home healthcare services, thereby expanding access to healthcare services. Following thorough deliberation, the committee passed all bills. HB 663, HB 1326, and HB 1314 passed the House chamber on Crossover day later in the week. HB 1046 also passed the House chamber with an amendment, see the above Crossover breakdown section for more details.

House Public Health Committee

During the House Public Health Committee meeting, held on February 27th, the committee deliberated on three important bills addressing various aspects of healthcare. The first bill, SB 375, sponsored by Senator Brian Strickland, aimed to enhance the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council by adding the commissioner of veterans services. After thorough discussion, the committee passed SB 375. The second bill considered was HB 1408, sponsored by Representative Jodi Lott, which proposed the inclusion of ulcerative colitis as a condition eligible for treatment with low THC oil within the Patient Registry. Recognizing the importance of expanding treatment options, the committee unanimously passed HB 1408, but it unfortunately did not pass the House floor in time for Crossover day. Lastly, the committee addressed HB 1409, sponsored by Representative Rob Leverett, which aimed to limit liability for mental health care providers under certain circumstances, focusing on protecting these providers from undue legal risks. After careful review, the committee passed HB 1409, and it was later passed on the House floor on Crossover day.

New Healthcare Legislation of Interest for the Week

<i>Bill</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Status</i>
HB 1390 (Rep. Eric Bell)	Crimes and offenses; sale of low THC oils; revise penalties	House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee
HB 1428 (Rep. Viola Davis)	Health; prohibit pelvic and rectal examinations on unconscious patients; provisions	House Hopper
SB 565 (Sen. Elena Parent)	Health; human egg or human embryo is not considered an unborn child, a minor child, or a person for any purpose under law; provide	House Hopper

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
HB 1264 (Rep. Ron Stephens)	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 favorably reported
HB 1302 (Rep. Karen Bennett)	Medical assistance; mandatory maternal mental health screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders for Medicaid recipients; provide	House Health Committee favorably reported by substitute
HB 1322 (Rep. Chas Cannon)	Georgia Hemp Farming Act; regulate consumable hemp products	House passed
HB 1326 (Rep. Ron Stephens)	Crimes and offenses; Schedule I, Schedule III, and Schedule IV controlled substances; provide certain provisions	House passed
HB 1332 (Rep. Mesha Mainor)	No Patient Left Alone Act; enact	House Health Committee
HB 1336 (Rep. Tyler Paul Smith)	Insurance; plan sponsor of health benefit plan to consent on behalf of a covered person to the electronic transmittal or electronic posting of such plan; allow	House Insurance Committee favorably reported
HB 1343 (Rep. Marvin Lim)	Public assistance; provide Medicaid coverage for tobacco cessation treatments	House Public Health Committee
HB 1352 (Rep. Lydia Glaize)	Pharmacists; prescribers provide certain information to patients or their representatives on Schedule II controlled substances or opioids	House Health Committee
SB 481 (Sen. Mike Hodges)	Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System; establishment; definitions; collaboration with state licensing boards; provide	Senate Health and Human Services Committee favorably reported
SB 487 (Sen. David Lucas)	Medical Assistance; Medicaid expansion; provide	Senate Health and Human Services Committee
SB 491 (Sen. Matt Brass)	Licensed Pharmacist; Georgia State Board of Pharmacy to increase the maximum ratio of pharmacists; authorize	Senate Health and Human Services Committee favorably reported by substitute
SB 495 (Sen. Sam Watson)	Low THC Oil Patient Registry; term of validity of a registration card; provide	Senate passed
SB 529 (Rep. Kim Jackson)	Physicians; certain licensure for qualifying foreign medical graduates; provide	Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee