

Legislative Report #3, February 10, 2013

The General Assembly was in session Monday, February 4th – Friday, February 8th. The House convenes at 1:00pm on Monday, Feb. 11 and the Senate convenes at 10:00 am on Monday, Feb. 11, for the 15th day of the 40 day session.

Amended Budget - On Friday, February 8th the House passed the [HB 105](#) by a vote of 145-18. This is the state's FY 2013 Amended Budget, which is a revised spending plan for the current fiscal year that ends June 30th. The \$19 billion budget includes \$17.2 million for paying eligible private hospitals to care for indigent patients. The funding would draw down federal monies and bring the total in the Indigent Care Trust Fund up to \$51 million. HB 105 also spares the Mercer University of School Medicine a cut by earmarking \$20.6 million for the school, which is up from the \$20.3 million from the Governor proposed.

GRHA meets with Georgia's Congressional Delegation - Sallie Barker, GRHA Legislative Chair and Matt Caseman, GRHA Executive Director, recently visited congressional offices February 5th for the National Rural Health Association's annual Policy Institute. The event offered an opportunity to learn first-hand about the development and implementation of health care policy at the federal level and a chance to meet with Georgia's congressional delegation.

NRHA developed three "asks" or items that advocates took to Capitol Hill. GRHA asked Georgia's senators and representatives to support:

- 1) Modifying the Medicare sequestration process set to begin in March 2013 to avoid disproportionate harm to the rural health safety net.
- 2) The continuation and strengthening of rural Medicare programs.
- 3) Appropriate funding levels for rural health programs for the remainder of fiscal year 2013 and fiscal year 2014.

Documentation and background information for the advocacy effort can be reviewed through NRHA's Policy Institute [Action Kit](#).

In the News.....

Deal still oppose Medicaid Expansion

By Andy Miller

A few prominent Republican governors have recently broken ranks and opted for expanding their Medicaid programs.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich was the latest, becoming the fifth Republican governor to decide in favor of expansion. Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer was among the first. (Here's a Politico story on the GOP decisions.)

But Gov. Tom Corbett of Pennsylvania, another Republican, said Tuesday that he will not pursue an expansion of his state's Medicaid program, at least for now.

Georgia's governor has not budged from his opposition to Medicaid expansion. In an interview with WABE on Tuesday, Nathan Deal said Georgia can't afford the extra money it would cost the state, which he said is estimated at \$4.5 billion over 10 years.

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