

## Legislative Report #6, March 4, 2013

Cross over day

The General Assembly has set a schedule through the 35<sup>th</sup> day. To view the schedule click [here](#). Day 30 of the legislative session, which is scheduled for Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> is Crossover Day. Legislation that has not passed at least the House or Senate after this day is effectively dead for the session.

**State Budget** – House Appropriations Sub-Committees are beginning their work on the state budget, [HB 106](#). This is the FY 2014, \$19.8 billion state spending plan that begins July 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through June 30<sup>th</sup> of 2014.

**Dangerous concussions** - [HB 284](#), which passed the House this week 161-7, would create protocols for informing parents about the dangers of concussions and for identifying and treating players with head injuries. The bill now heads to the Senate.

**Nursing requirements** - [SB 10](#), which passed the Senate this week 51-1, would require continuing competency requirements for license renewal of registered nurses. The bill now heads to the House.

**Sequestration** – At the federal level, according to the [National Rural Health Association](#), sequestration would trigger about \$1.2 trillion in spending cuts over the next nine years. Sixty-three more rural hospitals are likely to be sent into negative profit margins, and 12,000 rural health jobs could be lost if facilities are forced to cut services or close due to sequestration cuts. NRHA's Maggie Elehwany elaborated on this rural threat during a recent Agritalk Radio show broadcast nationally.

[Listen here](#)

## Other bills to watch

**Trauma Care** – [SB 229](#) allows the governing authority of a county, municipality, or consolidated government to adopt a local ordinance authorizing the sale and use of consumer fireworks. A 10 percent excise tax collected on the sale of the fireworks would go to the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission and the Georgia Firefighter Standards.

**Temporary “conversion” policies** – As it relates to Health Insurance Exchanges under the Affordable Care Act, [HB 389](#) eliminates temporary “conversion” policies for people who have lost group health insurance coverage. The legislation would also end the current “assignment” policies that cover an estimated 2,000 Georgians with medical conditions.

- See more at: <http://www.georgiahealthnews.com/2013/02/health-exchanges-left-out/#sthash.Xf59PwZo.dpuf>

**Certificate of Need exemptions** – [HB 279](#) would allow multi-specialty physician practices to circumvent the state’s lengthy – and expensive – approval process to plan and develop new medical facilities. Currently in Georgia, single-specialty practices are exempt from what’s called the certificate of need, or CON, process. The proposed law would make building outpatient surgery centers easier for many more doctors groups that offer a range of procedures.

Right now, an orthopaedic practice can have a surgery center for knee repairs or similar services. Under the new proposal, a surgery center would be able to offer orthopaedic, pediatric, gastrointestinal or other services in one location.

- See more at: <http://www.ajc.com/news/news/bill-to-allow-bigger-surgery-centers-sparks-battle/nWfGw/#sthash.OmjQhmqv.dpuf>

### **According to the Georgia Hospital Association**

[SB 171](#) creates a certificate of need (CON) loophole for the establishment of freestanding, multi-specialty ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs) by the consolidation of multiple, single-specialty ASCs.

Under [HB 404](#), the establishment of freestanding, pediatric emergency facilities would place your hospital in greater financial jeopardy by allowing out-of-state corporations, physicians or even other hospitals to open competing pediatric emergency facilities in the more affluent areas of the community where patients are more likely to have good insurance.

[Read more](#)

**Single Dental Administrator** – [HB 461](#) passed out of the House Health and Human Services Committee. The legislation requires the Department of Community Health to use a single dental administrator for Medicaid and PeachCare rather than continue allowing the Care Management Organizations to subcontract.

## **In the News....**

### **Habersham Co. man, Buford state lawmaker named to new health benefits panel**

#### **By Staff**

ATLANTA - Gov. Nathan Deal, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and House Speaker David Ralston have announced the full list of appointments to the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits. The group's organizational meeting will be Tuesday, March 12.

The members of the commission include state Sen. Renee Unterman of Buford and Stephen Gray of Baldwin, an executive vice president with Fieldale Farms.

“The mandated benefit commission serves an important role of developing cost-benefit examinations for proposed health insurance mandates,” said Deal. “Unfortunately, the current health insurance market is largely unpredictable because of the changes required by Obamacare. It is important to analyze proposed mandates in light of the new laws in order to fully vet their impact both socially and financially. I am confident that the members of this commission will use their expertise in various fields to give all proposed mandates the proper consideration.”

[Read more](#)

## **White House releases state-by-state reports on sequester impact**

by ERIN MAHN on FEBRUARY 25, 2013

The White House released state-by-state reports detailing how sequestration would have a severe impact across government sectors and hurt jobs and middle class families. Programs facing cuts include public health, education and research.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) calculates sequestration will require an annual reduction of about 5 percent for nondefense programs and 8 percent for defense programs.

[Read more](#)