

Legislative Report #1, January 19, 2014

The General Assembly convened on January 13th at 10:00 am for the 2014 Session.

State of the State address - On Wednesday, January 15th Governor Nathan Deal came before a joint session of the General Assembly in the House of Representatives Chamber to give his annual State of the State address. He spoke of his continued opposition to Medicaid Expansion under the new federal healthcare.

Here are Governor Deal's remarks concerning the Affordable Care Act: "the Affordable Care Act is anything but affordable and is costing our state \$327 million dollars this year. You should be aware that, even without expanding, currently Medicaid and PeachCare cost every Georgian through federal and state taxes nearly \$1,000 each year. Expansion would add 620,000 people to our taxpayer funded health plan, costing us even more. Now, the executive branch in Washington is trying to do what the courts deemed unconstitutional for Congress to do, but we will not allow ourselves to be coerced into expansion. Be assured, I am prepared to fight any intrusion into our rights as a state."

According to studies, this decision to not expand Medicaid will result in a net loss of \$2.86 billion in federal funding to the state by 2022.

To read the full text of the Governor's speech click [here](#).

Governor's budget – Governor Deal has proposed a budget of \$20.8 billion for fiscal year 2015 which begins July 1st of this year. This is an increase of \$920 million over the fiscal year 2014 budget.

One of the Governor's budget priorities for rural health care includes:

*More than \$12 million for life flights in southwest Georgia. The program would be a Georgia Public Safety department partnership with 14 counties. The plan will require the surrounding counties to build an estimated \$800,000 hangar capable of housing emergency staff and offices. Counties will also be required to provide five flight nurses.

To read the Governor's Amended Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Report Click [here](#).

To read the Governor's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Report Click [here](#).

Potential State Bailout for hospitals – In a recent article: Chris Riley, the governor's chief of staff, told reporters that Deal is weighing options ranging from a one-time cash injection to an ongoing commitment for hospitals that serve large numbers of uninsured patients. "It's a constant discussion with hospitals in Georgia," he said. "It's important to the governor."

Read the article [here](#).

The full General Assembly will reconvene Tuesday, January 21st for Legislative Day 6.