



**Georgia Bio Legislative Report
April 2, 2018
Session Recap**

General Update:

The legislative session concluded last week with Sine Die on Thursday, March 29. All bills that successfully made it through this year will now head to the Governor's desk for his approval. He has 40 days to sign or veto legislation.

This legislative session was characterized by a highly charged political environment going into the 2018 elections. After eight years in office, Governor Deal will finish out his final year as Governor and there is a large field of candidates gearing up for the Republican and Democratic primaries on May 22. Georgia Bio will monitor election activity over the next months and keep members informed on election results. Georgia Bio will also be working with our members this year on our legislative priorities going into the 2019 session.

Budget

The House and Senate passed the final FY 2019 Appropriations Act. The budget represents total state spending of \$26 billion and total public fund spending of \$46.5 billion for SFY 2019. Governor Deal is expected to sign the legislation and it will take effect on July 1 of 2018. Please find the details of HB 684 in the conference committee report at http://www.house.ga.gov/budget/Documents/2019_FiscalYear/FY_2019_Bill_Conf_Cmte.pdf.

Bill Movement

The House and Senate voted on final approval of both HB 769 and SB 357 which Georgia Bio has been tracking this session. HB 769 authored by Rep. Rick Jasperse incorporates the recommendations of the House Rural Development Council, including clarifying the state's remote prescription ordering laws, streamlining billing and coding for state run health plans and creating the Health Systems Innovation Center. SB 357 authored by Sen. Dean Burke is designed to provide greater coordination and oversight to state healthcare policy by creating the Healthcare Coordination and Innovation Center.

Unfortunately one of Georgia Bio's legislative priorities this year failed to make final passage. Sharon Cooper's bill addressing the need to establish a process to override step therapy protocols failed to make it out of the Senate Health Committee. Despite several attempts to amend the bill to other vehicles and the overwhelming support of the policy, this issue was caught up in the politics between the House and Senate. Georgia Bio will continue to be engaged in this issue and work to pass legislation next session.

Bills of Interest

Please see below the status of the bills Georgia Bio tracked this session. Bills that failed to make it through this session will have to be reintroduced as a new bill next year.

[HB 519- Insurance; health benefit plans; utilize certain clinical review criteria to establish step therapy protocols](#)

Bill Author: Rep. Sharon Cooper-R Marietta

Bill Status: DID NOT PASS

HB 519 passed by substitute both the Life and Health subcommittee of House Insurance and the full House Insurance Committee this week. The current version of HB 519 is a compromise from all parties involved and establishes a process for when it is medically appropriate to override a step therapy protocol for patients.

Georgia Bio Position: **SUPPORT**

[HB 747- Medical assistance; Medicaid recipients receive unrestricted access to hemophilia medications](#)

Bill Author: Rep. Sharon Cooper-R Marietta

Bill Status: DID NOT PASS

HB 747 would provide that Medicaid recipients have unrestricted access to medications prescribed for hemophilia by prohibiting preferred drug list, prior 12 authorization, step edit, or other drug management requirements on any such medications approved by the Federal Food and Drug Administration. This bill did not make the Crossover deadline.

Georgia Bio Position: **SUPPORT**

[HB 873- Prescription Drug Benefits Freedom of Information and Consumer Protection Act](#)

Bill Author: David Knight-R Griffin

Bill Status: DID NOT PASS

HB 873 would provide consumer protections and freedom of information regarding prescription drug benefits. HB 873 was introduced on behalf of the Medical Association of Georgia and it requires that PBMs and insurers use a standard prior authorization form developed by the DOI with input from a committee of physicians and insurers. Further, it requires that PBMs/insurers include on their websites formulary information as well as processes for step therapy requirements. This bill did not make the Crossover deadline.

Georgia Bio Position: Monitoring

[SB 357-The Health Act](#)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Dean Burke-R Bainbridge

Bill Status: PASSED; AWAITING GOVERNOR SIGNATURE

SB 357 would establish a new Health Coordination and Innovation Council made of public and private healthcare institutions that would be charged with advising on best practices in healthcare for the state.

Georgia Bio Position: Monitoring

[SB 352-Commission on Substance Abuse and Recovery](#)

Bill Sponsor: Renee Unterman-R Buford

Bill Status: DID NOT PASS

SB 352 would create the Commission on Substance Abuse and Recovery to help combat the issue of opioid addiction in Georgia.

Georgia Bio Position: Monitoring

[SB 432 'Georgia Tax Credit Business Case Act'](#)

Sen. John Albers (R Roswell)

Bill Status: DID NOT PASS

Senate Bill 432 seeks to repeal thirty-five (35) separate exemptions from state sales and use taxes over a phased period ranging from December 31, 2019 to December 31, 2025 including exemptions related to prescription drugs and medical equipment.

Georgia Bio Position: Monitoring

[HB 769 Health; recommendations from the House Rural Development Council](#)

Rep. Rick Jasperse (R Jasper)

Bill Status: PASSED: AWAITING GOVERNOR SIGNATURE

HB 769 is a product of recommendations made by the House Rural Development Council. This bill passed House on Wednesday and will move over to the Senate for consideration. It establishes the Rural Center for Health Care Innovation and Sustainability which will conduct research to identify a postsecondary institution to educate leadership in hospitals to conduct business better. It revises provisions that dictate how pharmacists distribute medications in rural Georgia. HB 769 also streamlines and expedites the billing process for state medical plans.

Georgia Bio Position: Monitoring