

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports

THE GATES PORTAL

Budget Solutions Quickly February 18, 2013



By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

With the nearly two months behind us, the question always turns to "*how long could this legislative session last?*". For the first time in memory the legislature voted on [HR 50](#) Monday, January 28th setting the first 29 days of the session until March 5th. They will be in Monday-Friday every week spanning the three months, is unprecedented. One very critical issue was tackled quickly and early, a Medicaid budget requiring \$745 million in new funds to cover increased enrollment, and a hospital bed tax worth \$689 million needed to fill that gap was passed by both Chambers and signed by Governor Deal on Wednesday, February 12th. The Hospital Provider Fee [SB 24](#) (commonly referred to as the Hospital Bed Tax) will now be under the purview of the Georgia Department of Community Health to administer for the next four years.

Of course we are constantly monitoring the budget and you can view both the FY13 Amended Budget and full FY14 Budget [here](#). There were full budget hearings the week of January 22-24 and subcommittee meetings focused on the Amended budget all month. Because the gapping hole in Medicaid has been settled the FY 2013 Amended Budget can now be completed. The State Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to pass on the Amended FY13 Budget to the full Senate Tuesday morning at 9am. Allowing the full Senate to take it up later in the week.

You are asking, what about CRP funds? There were no proposed cuts in either the FY 13 Amended or the full FY 14 Budgets to providers.

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Special
Announcements



**State Use
Council
Meeting**

March 28, 2013

10:00 AM

**Location: Sloppy
Floyd Bldg - West
Tower**

**Working
Wonders
Luncheon**
March 28, 2013

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency took all the cuts internally. As you are all aware the issue of utilizing the full contract allotments for the year is the urgent matter being addressed directly with Executive Director Greg Schmieg to ensure full use of all funds to serve those in need. GATES leadership will be meeting with the Director again this week to discuss solutions to address the issue.

In addition to the Hospital Provider Fee, which has been put to bed, there are currently two mental health bills we are tracking and may be of interest, as well one system reform piece of legislation moving through the legislative process. Since many of you serve clients with multiple needs some of these bills may be of importance to you.

[HR 107](#) - Creates a Joint Study Committee on Medicaid Reform. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Donna Sheldon (R-Dacula) and seeks to review the sustainability of the current program and recommend changes by the end of the year. While the federal climate and other states are embracing Medicaid Expansion Georgia is holding back.

[HB 205](#) - Sponsored by Rep. Edward Lindsey (R-Atlanta) and called The Psychiatric Advance Directive Act. The bill will "provide for a competent adult to express his or her mental health care treatment preferences and desires directly through instructions written in advance and indirectly through appointing an agent to make mental health care decisions on behalf of that person".

[SB 65](#) - Senator Renee Unterman (R-Buford) sponsored this bill to expand the authority of licensed professional counselors (LPCs) to certify that a person with a mental illness needs involuntary treatment. The Senate passed the legislation on February 11th by a vote of 51-2 and has been assigned to the House Health and Human Services Committee Chaired by Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta).

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Call for Information

THE PORTAL is a communication tool for GATES and GATES members. If you have stories about your organization, staff announcements, program descriptions, or other information you want to share with other GATES members, please send the info to Charles Hall, chall@asginfo.net



Noon
Location: Sloppy
Floyd Bldg - West
Tower

GATES Board of Directors Meeting

April 19, 2013

10:00 AM

Location: BDI-
South Jonesboro,
GA

THE PORTAL is a regular publication of GATES. If you have staff or others associated with your organization that you would like to receive THE PORTAL, please send their email address to: Charles Hall, chall@asginfo.net

GATES

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