

News from GATES...

Georgia Association of Training, Employment and Supports



THE GATES PORTAL

No Fuss - Session is Moving Controversy Free



By Dawn A. Randolph, MPA

We experienced one of the earliest crossover days in history. March 7th was the 30th day of the session, the deadline for bills that want to stay alive to move from one chamber to the other. The only exception to this is the budget, taken up yesterday, March 11th, the 31st day of the session. The current calendar has the legislature in Monday - Thursday this week and then back in on Wednesday, March 20th for the 35th legislative day. There are only 40 days allowed by Georgia's Constitution.

Budget Update

As expected there were no substantial changes to the Departments of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Department, Human Services, or the new Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. Any changes made were due to the federal participation rate increasing from 65.71% in FY 2013 to 65.84% in FY 2014. This means Georgia is eligible for more federal funding for qualified programs.

In Medicaid we still see no effort to expand eligibility for those who could be covered under the new provisions of the Affordable Care Act. However, the House did provide \$174 million in funding to restore cuts to home & community-based providers, hospitals, nursing homes and other community providers.

While on the one hand the House eliminated the consulting contract to Navigant, which was doing research on managed care options for the Department of Community Health (DCH), it gave approval for DCH to

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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

Noon

apply for an 1115 waiver. An 1115 waiver basically allows states to conduct a demonstration project to test new approaches to delivering Medicaid that do not comply with current federal law. You can read more about [1115 waivers in a white paper](#) from The Kaiser Family Foundation.

Overall the House Appropriations Committee passed out [HB106](#), FY 2014 Budget, which is \$512 million larger than the current fiscal year budget. You can view the tracking document for the House changes [here](#) just published online this afternoon.

Legislative update

There are only a few bills still alive that GATES is tracking.

The Ethics bills ([HB 142](#) and [HB 143](#)) passed the House by a vote of 164-4 and 167-0 respectively. They now await consideration in the Senate Rules Committee chaired by Senator Jeff Mullis (R-Chickamauga).

[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. The bill passed the House on the 30th day by a vote of 167-5. No committee assignment in the Senate yet.

[SB 62](#) - Sponsored by Sen. Judson Hill (R-Marietta) Establishes a Federal and State Funded Health Care Financing Program overview committee to review the care and protection of indigent and elderly patients. Passed the Senate 45-5 on crossover day. Has not been assigned to a committee in the House yet.

[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).

[SB 128](#) - Sponsor Sen. Millar (R-Atlanta) Allows marriage and family therapists to diagnose behavioral health issues. Passed the Senate 44-8 and now assigned to the House Regulated Industries Committee.

[SB 163](#) - Sponsor Sen. William Ligon (R-Brunswick) Requires the Department of Community Health (DCH) to study and identify options for Medicaid reform. Passed the Senate 39-10 and assigned to the House Health & Human Services Committee.

As you can see, it has been rather slow until last week when we had a few bills of any interest to our community pass from one chamber to the other.

**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*

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