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**Georgia AAP Legislative Alert...**

**State Legislative Session Adjourns; Budget Adds \$17M to Increase Medicaid Physician Payments; Autism & Medical Cannabis Also Gain Passage; But So Does Fireworks Bill**

The Georgia Legislature completed its 2015 session last night at midnight. The session produced several key victories for pediatrics, including a provision in the state Medicaid budget to add \$17.2M to increase reimbursement to physician practices. With the federal match, this amounts to \$53M for these increases which will bring selected codes to 90% of Medicare. The Georgia AAP, along with our colleagues in the other primary care specialties, advocated strongly for this much over-due increase. This is a tremendous victory for us. Thanks to all of you who contacted your state representatives on this critical issue—we were heard.

Among the other key bills we followed and their final status:

1. **FY 2016 Budget: Increase reimbursement for physician practices in Medicaid program to Medicare levels.** \$17.2M in state funds or \$53M total, added to the final budget. It awaits Governor Deal's signature. If you contacted your representative on this issue, make sure you go back **thank them** for this important support.
2. **HB 1: Medical cannabis**, would de-criminalize possession of cannabis oil for treatment of 9 disorders, including "seizure disorders." Passed.
3. **HB 110:** Would permit sale of all dangerous **fireworks**, like Ala., Tenn. Passed.
4. **HB 504:** Allows **pharmacists right to give** pneumococcal, meningitis disease, and zoster vaccine to those over 18 years: and would require entering college students to show proof of meningococcal immunization within 5 prior years. Passed.
5. **SB 1:** Would require **insurance plans to cover autism services** for children 6 and under; and for ABA services to a \$30,000 annual cap. Passed
6. **HR 641:** Creates Study Committee on **Children's Mental Health**. Passed.
7. **SB 126:** Permits schools to **stockpile supplies of epinephrine and albuterol sulfate** for children who may need in in urgent situations. Passed.

For a **complete list of bills we followed** visit the [www.gaaap.org](http://www.gaaap.org) and click on Advocacy/Legislative tab. More information? Contact the Georgia AAP office at 404-881-5091 or email: [jrice@gaaap.org](mailto:jrice@gaaap.org), Attn: Rick Ward. Thank you.

*Melinda Willingham, MD, Chair*  
Legislative Committee

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