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Georgia AAP Legislative Alert...

**Senate Budget Boosts Medicaid Rate to \$19.4M; Bill Heads to
Conference Committee Next Week—Keep Talking
to Your Representatives!**

Yesterday morning the Senate released its version of the FY 2016 budget, and they increased the amount for Medicaid physician practice reimbursement to \$19.4M. This includes services for pediatricians, OB's, IM's and FP's. This is a terrific gain for us and was due to your efforts in contacting your state senator and state representatives about the issue of Medicare-Medicaid parity! But we're not home yet. The budget will be approved by the full Senate Friday and then go to Conference Committee (CC). The CC is comprised of the 3 top leaders each in the House and Senate.

What to Do Now: *Especially* if you contacted your representatives this session, please contact them now (phone or email) and thank them for their interest and support. Let them know that the Senate number for this item is \$19.4M and you urge them to ask the Conferees—whether House or Senate—to **hold onto the Senate position!** That amount is needed to begin to put Medicaid rates on a path to Medicare parity, and preserve pediatric practices who serve these children. (If you had not contacted your reps yet, there's still time to do so and it **will** matter.)

In the CC process, many groups are asking for money in the budget and the budget amounts can shift rapidly. Emphasize how important these funds are to addressing an inequity of 14 years, with Medicaid rates paying so low compared to Medicare. Remember, we have Talking Points on our website at www.gaaap.org. (Click on Advocacy, and then the Legislative Page.).

Also, at the Gold Dome, HB 110: which would permit **dangerous fireworks**, like Ala., Tenn. & SC. Passed House last week, 119-49. Now in Senate Committee. Contact your State Representative or Senator and tell them that dangerous fireworks in Georgia means more burns and injuries to children. Georgia has a good, conservative fireworks law, which allows some types of fireworks, but bans the dangerous kind. It deserves to be maintained and appreciated for putting children's safety first.

More information? Contact the Georgia AAP office at 404-881-5091 or email: jrice@gaaap.org, Attn: Rick Ward. Thank you.

Melinda Willingham, MD, Chair
Legislative Committee

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