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Georgia AAP Legislative Alert...

Fireworks Bill on House Floor on Monday; Work Still Needed on Medicaid-Medicare Payment Issue; Second Cannabis Bill Introduced

I would like to especially thank the 62 members who attended our Day at the Capitol last Thursday! I encourage all Chapter members to continue to focus on the Medicaid-Medicare parity issue as it will continue to be debated in the Senate this week. Each call and email helps. Person stories grab the attention of legislators. Please point out that there has been no increase in reimbursement rates in 14 years, a situation that places the fate of these practices that care for Georgia's children at a critical juncture. Evelyn Johnson, MD, FAAP, President

The Georgia Legislature completed its 27th Day of its 40-day session last week. Here's an update on major bills we're following.

1. **FY 2016 Budget: Increase reimbursement for physician practices in Medicaid program to Medicare levels.** If you have not already done so: **contact your state representative or state senator now** and urge them to add funds to the Dept. of Community Health budget to increase physician practice reimbursement. (We have Talking Points and a Sample Email Letter on the website at www.gaaap.org. Under the Legislative Page.). The Budget is now in the Senate.
2. **HB 1: Medical cannabis**, would de-criminalize possession for treatment of certain illnesses. Passed House. **SB 185** was introduced last week in the Senate which would restrict its use to those under 18 years old who have intractable epilepsy. Monitoring.
3. **HB 110**: Would permit all **fireworks**, like Ala., Tenn. & SC. On House Floor on Monday! Contact your representative and ask them to vote "No" on HB 110.
4. **HB 504**: Allows **pharmacists right to give immunizations** to those 18 & over, for pneumococcal, meningitis disease, and shingles: and would require entering college students to show proof of meningococcal immunization within 5 prior years. Passed House. Monitoring.
5. **SB 1**: Would require **insurance plans to cover autism services**. Passed Senate; Still in House Insurance Committee. Support.
6. **HB 362**: Would require **physicians to offer HIV/AIDS testing to pregnant women** in their 3rd trimester. Passed House HHS Committee. Support.
7. **SB 115**: Would permit PA's to write Rx prescription **for Schedule II drug hydrocodone**. (Pediatrics was removed from the bill.) Passed Senate Comm. Monitoring.

This week is critical as Day 30 is Friday; and any bill does not "crossover" to the other chamber is dead for the session. For more information, contact Melinda Willingham, MD, Chair, Legislative Committee or the Georgia AAP office at 404-881-5091 or email: jrice@gaaap.org, Attn: Rick Ward. Thank you.

For up-to-date information from the State Capitol follow us on Twitter!