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**Legislative Wrap-Up: Medicaid Budget; Help with Attestation Issue
Are Wins; But Campus Carry,
Cannabis oil for ASD, Hydrocodone Rx-ing also Pass**

At about 12:50 am early this morning, the Georgia General Assembly adjourned its 40-day session in a flurry of last day activity, per usual. The session was a mixed bag, skewing positive though, for us. We count the Medicaid rate increases and help on fixing the Attestation issue as big wins. Three other bills which we opposed however, passed. All bills passed now sit on Governor Deal's desk and hopefully he will consider vetoes on some of these.

FY 2018 Budget:

The final Medicaid budget adds \$17M to increase to 76 additional CPT to 2014 Medicare rates/ Secondly, the budget also allocates funds and directs DCH to open a new period of Attestation for new rates effective July 1, 2017. This is intended to correct the current Medicaid policy that limits the increases to only those who attested in 2013 and 2014; and also making providers ineligible if they moved offices or opened an additional office after January 1, 2015.

Campus Carry, HB 280. Passed. Would allow students 21 or older to carry concealed handguns on campuses, with certain places being exempt. We opposed this bill and will urge the Governor to veto it, as he did a similar bill last year.

Cannabis oil & ASD, SB 16. Adds 8 new conditions to the state's current cannabis oil law, which makes possession of the oil legal if the pt has that conditions. One of the 8 added was "severe autism" in pts under age of 18, as determined by a physician.

Surprise Billing/Require Physicians to Accept Contracts: HR 71 & SB 8: Both bills failed. They both contained provisions to require transparency but first versions added requirement that physicians accept same plans that the hospital did, which we opposed.

Opioid Abuse, HB 249. Passed. One feature of the bill requires pharmacists to input data to PDMP with 24 hours of dispensing opioids or benzothiazines. Physicians (or authorized delegates) must check the database prior to prescribing these drugs for first time pts & then once every 90 days. Violations for non-compliance go to the Composite State Medical Board.

PA's & hydrocodone prescribing, SB 125. Passed. The prescription for children under 18 would be limited to a 5-day supply containing not more than the lesser of 100 milligrams or 30 pills. The bill passed the House and is now in the Senate. We opposed this bill.

Maintenance of Certification, prohibit, HB 165. Passed. Would prohibit requiring MOC as a condition of medical licensure, being on health insurance plans, or buying a med-mal policy. (Hospital privileges was struck from the early version of the bill.)

Preceptor Tax Credit, HB 301. Failed. This would have provided a tax credit to physicians who precept med students or residents. A deduction is currently given, but a tax credit would be more beneficial. This bill got caught up in a slew of other tax relief bills that did not make it.

Thanks to all who contacted their representatives and senators during the session. **It does make a difference.** Your engagement is crucial to maintain a strong voice for our patients and our specialty at the Capitol. Any questions on these matters, contact Rick Ward, at the Chapter office, 404-881-5091 or rward@gaaap.org.

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