



February 8, 2021

**Our 2021 legislative session has started with health care remaining a major concern in Georgia. Though we cannot be under the Dome with legislators, we will continue to voice our support for legislation that reduces barriers to care and vaccines and improves health equity for our communities of color and those most in need.**

**There are many bills that we are watching and we are lending our support to two (2) bills that we will address quickly since Committees are ready to move on passing legislation, The 2 bills are SB46 and HB 124. At the end of this update please find other actions to consider to lend your support.**

**Action Alert:** Rx in Reach GA will be initiating a robust Digital Campaign and Media Tool Kit for your participation in helping to move these vital bills. I will send a link as soon as it is available. In the meantime, **SB 46 will be heard in Senate Health Committee on Tuesday.** Please send your email and /or call the offices of committee members **today** to voice your support for SB 46. (The Senate Health Committee members list attached and below).

- 1. SB 46: Pharmacists Authorization Legislation for Covid Vaccinations;** Certain medical personnel to administer vaccines during public health emergencies under certain conditions; sponsored by Senator Dean Burke to change Georgia law to allow pharmacists to continue to administer the COVID-19 vaccine after the period of emergency (ended January 31, 2021) as well as expanding vaccines pharmacists can administer via protocol to include all ACIP recommended vaccines for adults. Pharmacists have been able to do this pursuant to U.S. HHS authorization under the **PREP Act** as well as Governor Kemp's Executive Order. Now that the EO ended, current Georgia law does not contemplate this authority for pharmacists so legislation is necessary. We are supporting the Georgia Pharmacy Association in helping to move this legislation forward. Gov. Kemp supports this legislation. Current Version: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/59079> .
  - Rx in Reach GA is creating a digital campaign to include SB46 authorizing Pharmacists to administer Covid 19 vaccinations. **Our talking points include:**
    - SB 46 legislation is a critical step toward protecting Georgians from communicable diseases. It makes it easier for people to get a range of vaccines by allowing pharmacists to administer them.
    - Making vaccines more accessible being administered at local pharmacies is an easy step that can save countless lives.
    - Many Georgians live in rural areas, where pharmacies are far more numerous than clinics, public health facilities or physicians.
    - Receiving a vaccine may only take a few seconds, but setting up an appointment, getting to the doctor's office or public health facility, and navigating the waiting room all take time. And many doctors' offices are so busy that when you call to set up an appointment, it can take weeks to get in.
    - Most people know their local pharmacists and can walk in to their community pharmacies—many of which are open at night and over the weekend—and get vaccinated.
- 2. HB 164: Prescription Drug Consumer Financial Protection Act;** Rx in Reach GA supported this language last session in SB313 however, it was **not** accepted therefore rebates went back to insurance plans. We are in full support of patients getting rebates, at point of sale that they desperately need for their prescription drugs. HB 164 states: sponsored by Rep. Demetrius Douglas and Rep. Sharon Cooper, from the Special Committee On Access to Quality Health Care; To amend Chapter 24 of Title 33 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to insurance generally, so as to require all health insurers to **pass along no less than 80 percent of all prescription drug rebates to enrollees that such insurer receives from third parties with regard to such enrollee's prescription drugs**; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for definitions; to provide for related matters; to provide for an

effective date and applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. This legislation has Bipartisan backing. <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/59086>

- Rx in Reach GA is creating a digital campaign to include supporting HB 164. **Our talking points include:**
  - The financial burden for patients who lives depend on their prescription drugs is overwhelming. Rebates may be the only relief for the chronically ill to ensure they can receive their vital medications.
  - Especially in the midst of the COVID 19 health crisis, we must ensure the needs of patients and families struggling with chronic and debilitating illnesses are supported, and barriers to care torn down.
  - Patients need to receive 80% of prescription drug rebates at point of sale to avoid high out-of-pocket costs of specialty drugs especially those with no generic equivalent. When faced with increasing costs for these medicines many patients are forced to abandon life sustaining treatment.

### Rx in Reach GA is also watching:

- **GA Dental Hygienists** have appealed to Governor Kemp to allow Licensed Dental Hygienists the authority to administer Covid vaccines at public health sites on a volunteer basis. Under the Governor's EO, Dentists were allowed to administer Covid vaccines at public health sites, however that EO expired. <https://www.votervoice.net/ADHA/campaigns/79588/respond> . In support, our **talking points**:
  - In the coming weeks and months, millions of additional COVID-19 vaccine doses will become available in GA and we will need more vaccine providers to get shots into arms.
  - Dental hygienists are educated and licensed health care providers who should be empowered to assist our communities to aid with administration of the COVID-19 vaccinations during this devastating public health crisis.
- **Senate Bill 83**, sponsor Senator Sally Harrell, which directs Georgia's Department of Community Health to develop a new public insurance option called "PeachCare Public Option" that allows ALL Georgians, regardless of age, income level, or insurance status to buy in to Georgia's Medicaid Managed Care program, the same system used for Georgia's popular PeachCare for Kids program, which has been very successful. The PeachCare Public Option would cost consumers no more or less than what it will cost the government to provide the service. In support, our **talking points include:**
  - Public insurance programs offer a comprehensive, affordable alternative to fill the gaps where private insurance fails. If allowed to stand,
  - Proposed Medicaid waiver programs may drive thousands of Georgia consumers into cheaper plans with fewer benefits.
  - SB 83, Peach Care Public Option, offers regardless of age, income level, or insurance status to buy in to Georgia's Medicaid Managed Care program with an affordable healthcare option that covers all 10 Affordable Care Act essential benefits and could cost significantly less than an equivalent private plan. <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/59272>.

### Senate Health Comm. for SB 46 Pharmacy Authorization Bill:

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- 45th
- 56th
- 4th
- 52nd
- 18th
- 48th