

Senate Bill 310

By: Senator Brown of the 26th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 18 of Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the  
2 public employees' insurance and benefits plans, so as to provide for a sliding scale premium  
3 program based upon family income to ensure access to affordable health care insurance for  
4 low-wage state employees and their dependents; to provide for legislative findings; to  
5 provide for definitions; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to  
6 provide for applicability; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Chapter 18 of Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the public  
10 employees' insurance and benefits plans, is amended by adding a new article to the end of  
11 such chapter to read as follows:

12 "ARTICLE 6

13 45-18-90.

14 The General Assembly finds and declares that a large proportion of state employees and  
15 their dependents, particularly their children, do not currently have access to adequate  
16 medical treatment and, further, that this lack of access can hinder a person's, and  
17 particularly a child's, ability to reach his or her full physical, social, professional, and  
18 educational potential. The General Assembly further finds that although the Board of  
19 Community Health is authorized to establish a health insurance plan for employees of the  
20 state, many low-wage earning state employees are not able to afford to purchase coverage  
21 for themselves and their dependents. The General Assembly further finds the provision of  
22 adequate medical coverage for employees of the state and their dependents to be in the  
23 public interest and further declares the establishment of a sliding scale premium based upon

1 family income pursuant to this article to be a desirable and economical means of fostering  
2 enrollment in the health plan by low and moderate income families.

3 45-18-91.

4 As used in this chapter, the term:

5 (1) 'Eligible employee' means an employee, as defined by paragraph (2) of Code Section  
6 45-18-1, who is not eligible for medical assistance under Medicaid or PeachCare and  
7 whose family income is below 235 percent of the federal poverty level.

8 (2) 'Medicaid' means medical assistance provided under Article 7 of Chapter 4 of Title  
9 49, the 'Georgia Medical Assistance Act of 1977.'

10 (3) 'PeachCare' means the PeachCare for Kids program created by Code Section  
11 49-5-273.

12 (4) 'PPO' means the preferred provider option health plan offered by the health insurance  
13 plan for employees of the state pursuant to Article 1 of this chapter and administered by  
14 the department.

15 (5) 'Sliding scale premium program' means the program created pursuant to this article.

16 45-18-92.

17 (a)(1) There is created within the health insurance plan for employees of the state,  
18 established pursuant to Code Section 45-18-2, a sliding scale premium program available  
19 to eligible employees to encourage the purchase of health insurance coverage for the  
20 benefit of such eligible employees and their families. Dependents of eligible employees  
21 shall include spouses and children from birth through 18 years of age who are not eligible  
22 for medical assistance under Medicaid or PeachCare.

23 (2) Eligible employees in families with income below 133 percent of the federal poverty  
24 level shall be eligible to enroll in the PPO health plan for family coverage at a premium  
25 rate equal to or less than the premium rate for single coverage for the PPO health plan.

26 (3) Eligible employees in families with incomes between 133 percent and 235 percent  
27 of the federal poverty level shall be eligible to enroll in the PPO health plan for family  
28 coverage at rates that vary between the blended premium for 1.5 children under the most  
29 current PeachCare premium rate structure.

30 (b) No entitlement to benefits for the employees or dependents covered under the sliding  
31 scale premium program or this article shall be created by the program, nor shall any rules  
32 or regulations adopted pursuant to this article be interpreted to entitle any person to receive  
33 any health services or insurance available under this program. The sliding scale premium  
34 program shall be established subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated  
35 by the General Assembly for this purpose.

1 (c) The department shall operate the sliding scale premium consistent with administrative  
2 efficiency and the best interests of eligible employees of the state and their dependents."

3 **SECTION 2.**

4 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law  
5 without such approval. This Act shall apply only to plans offered on or after July 1, 2006.

6 **SECTION 3.**

7 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.