

House Bill 1119

By: Representatives Gardner of the 57th, Abrams of the 89th, Hugley of the 136th, Bennett of the 94th, Buckner of the 137th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 7 of Chapter 4 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to medical assistance generally, so as to provide for the authorization of
3 appropriations for the purposes of obtaining federal financial participation for medical
4 assistance payments to providers of Medicaid expansion under the federal Patient Protection
5 and Affordable Care Act and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010; to require certain action;
6 to provide for legislative findings; to provide for certain restrictions; to provide for related
7 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 The General Assembly finds that:

- 11 (1) One in five Georgians is currently uninsured;
- 12 (2) Georgia has one of the highest rates of uninsured and one of the largest numbers of
13 uninsured in the country;
- 14 (3) Federal dollars have been set aside to pay a minimum of 90 percent of the cost of
15 allowing Georgia to offer Medicaid to some 600,000 uninsured adults with incomes below
16 138 percent of the poverty level;
- 17 (4) Four rural hospitals have closed their doors recently, due in part to the fact that so
18 many of their patients are uninsured;
- 19 (5) A number of other rural hospitals are in precarious financial condition and risk closure,
20 due in part to the fact that so many of their patients are uninsured;
- 21 (6) Opening Medicaid enrollment to adults who are not eligible under current rules would
22 improve their access to health care, make it possible for them to receive preventive care
23 and timely treatment, and protect their families from ruinous medical costs;
- 24 (7) More than 140,000 uninsured Georgians residing in 109 rural counties would stand to
25 gain Medicaid coverage with the expansion;

- 26 (8) Expanding Medicaid would reduce recidivism by enabling recently released inmates
 27 to receive needed health care, including mental health services, as they re-enter our
 28 communities seeking work and housing;
- 29 (9) Expanding Medicaid coverage would pay for court-ordered treatment for offenders
 30 diverted to drug courts, increasing the likelihood of that initiative's success;
- 31 (10) Turning uninsured patients into insured patients with Medicaid expansion would
 32 improve the financial health of rural hospitals, making it less likely that additional rural
 33 hospitals will be forced to close;
- 34 (11) Medicaid expansion would free up portions of dollars currently appropriated for
 35 treatment of adults in our state mental health system, in our trauma network, and in other
 36 programs, significantly offsetting the state share of expansion costs;
- 37 (12) Over the next ten years, expanding Medicaid would bring more than \$33 billion in
 38 new federal spending into Georgia's health care system and boost state-wide economic
 39 activity by more than \$65 billion;
- 40 (13) Up to \$8 billion in federal funds, yielding \$14 billion in new economic activity,
 41 would go to our rural communities; and
- 42 (14) Medicaid expansion would support 56,000 jobs, 63 percent of which would go
 43 outside the ten-county metropolitan Atlanta region.

44 SECTION 2.

45 Article 7 of Chapter 4 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
 46 medical assistance generally, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

47 "49-4-158.

48 (a)(1) Appropriations shall be authorized for the purposes of obtaining federal financial
 49 participation for medical assistance payments to providers on behalf of Medicaid
 50 recipients pursuant to this article and funding the state's portion of the cost to expand the
 51 Medicaid program under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public
 52 Law 111-148), as amended by the federal Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act
 53 of 2010 (Public Law 111-152), and any regulations or guidelines issued under such acts.

54 (2) Such appropriations authorization shall not be required in the event the federal
 55 government does not provide a minimum of 90 percent of such funding.

56 (b) The Governor shall take or direct the appropriate state official or agency to take all
 57 necessary steps to expand the Medicaid program under the federal Patient Protection and
 58 Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148), as amended by the federal Health Care and
 59 Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-152), including the submission of
 60 any amendment to the state plan to effectuate such expansion."

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SECTION 3.

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