







GNA 2009 Legislative Wrap-Up

The General Assembly adjourned Sine Die at midnight on Friday, April 3. As usual, Day 40 was a hectic, exciting rush to the final gavel with several bills seeing final passage. In the last few days of the Session, there was action on several bills that the Georgia Nurses

Association has been focusing on throughout 2009. GNA also achieved progress on much of its 2009 Top Legislative Issues.

List of GNA's 2009 Top Legislative Issues

-  **GNA will address the nursing shortage through its support of traditional & non-traditional nursing education programs.**
-  **GNA will address the nurse faculty shortage by supporting incentives for retired faculty to return to teaching.**
-  **GNA supports the creation of an RN license plate for which a portion of the proceeds will fund nursing scholarships and workforce planning & development.**
-  **GNA will continue to work with other stakeholders to study the need for legislation to implement ANA's Safe Staffing Principles in Georgia.**

In support of traditional nursing education:

GNA legislative efforts have resulted in the introduction of an important bill addressing Georgia's ongoing nursing faculty shortage. Senate Bill 259, introduced by Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford), would allow retired nurse faculty to return to work after one year, and could have an immediate, positive effect on Georgia's faculty shortage.

In support of non-traditional nursing education:

A compromise has been reached on House Bill 475, which will allow graduates of the Excelsior College School of Nursing Associate Degree program to practice under a provisional permit, while pursuing RN licensure through a Board of Nursing-approved clinical preceptorship. GNA and Excelsior leaders are supportive of the compromise on HB 475; however, the statute could be revisited in the future if the implementation of HB 475 proves to be too burdensome, unreasonable and does not appear to improve the quality of nursing care in Georgia.

Other key issues:

Despite nearly \$2 billion in cuts to the Fiscal Year 2010 state budget, the school nurse program proved its viability and was funded in FY '10, after a significant public outcry at recommendations that state funding of the program be cut. In the '90s, GNA led the charge to direct tobacco settlement funds for the creation of the school nurse program in our state. This year, GNA and our new org affiliate, the Georgia Association of School Nurses led advocacy efforts which have resulted in the inclusion of \$29 million in the FY '10 budget for the continued financial support of the school nurse program.

Finally, the Georgia Nurses Foundation (GNF) is currently taking the necessary administrative steps with the Georgia Department of Revenue to create an RN license plate. Funding from the

RN tag would ultimately be used for nursing scholarships and workforce planning & development.

Here is a list of bills that GNA and our lobbyists monitored closely in the 2009 Session, representing the interests of all RNs in Georgia. Please note that all bills passed in 2009 now go to the desk of Governor Sonny Perdue and could potentially be signed into law or vetoed.

SB 45 Nurses; licensure; nursing education programs; revise requirements; definitions

By Sen. Seth Harp (R-Midland)

This bill would allow “for-profit” nursing education programs in the state of Georgia. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session (certain language from SB 45 was included in HB 475, which passed).***

SB 49 Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act; nursing education program requirements; revise certain provisions

By Sen. Lee Hawkins (R-Gainesville)

This bill would allow students of nationally accredited, high quality non-traditional nursing education programs to be licensed in the state, reversing unintended consequences of HB 1041 from 2008. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session (certain language from SB 49 was included in HB 475, which passed).***

SB 104 Cosmetic Laser Practitioners; licensing; change certain provisions; amend definitions; consulting physicians

By Sen. John Wiles (R-Kennesaw)

The bill changes requirements for cosmetic laser practice in Georgia, including licensure requirements, and in some circumstances requiring the supervision of a physician. ***Signed by Governor on May 11.***

SB 244 Ga. Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act; performance of health maintenance act by a designated caregiver shall not be prohibited

By Sen. Renee Unterman (R-Buford)

This bill defines the term “health maintenance activities” by a designated caregiver for an individual, and allows the performance of such activities under the Nurse Practice Act. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

SB 259 Retirement; provide University System of GA employ a retired member as a full-time instructor at a nursing school

By Sen. Renee Unterman

GNA’s efforts have led to the introduction of this important bill that attempts to address the nursing faculty shortage in the state of Georgia. SB 259 will allow retiring nurse faculty to return to work after one year, which could have an immediate, positive effect on Georgia’s faculty shortage. The measure is similar to Senate Bill 327, which passed in 2008, allowing retirees in the Teachers Retirement System to be rehired. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

SR 56 Joint Vulnerable Adult Study Committee; create

By Sen. Ron Ramsey (D-Lithonia)

This resolution creates the Joint Vulnerable Adult Study Committee. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

SR 57 Georgia Vulnerable Adult Senate Study Commission; create; membership; duties

By Sen. Ron Ramsey (D-Lithonia)

This resolution creates the Georgia Vulnerable Adult Senate Study Committee. ***Adopted on April 1.***

HB 39 Excise tax; cigarettes and loose or smokeless tobacco; increase amount

By Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah)

A proposed "cigarette tax" to add \$1 to every pack sold in Georgia. Any new revenue would be directed to the state's trauma network. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

HB 118 Supplemental appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009

By Rep. Glenn Richardson (R-Hiram)

The amended Fiscal Year 2009 budget or "little budget." ***Signed by Governor on March 13.***

HB 119 General appropriations; State Fiscal Year July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010

By Rep. Glenn Richardson (R-Hiram)

The Fiscal Year 2010 budget. ***Signed by Governor on May 11.***

HB 148 Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission; certain reports; certain funds; provisions

By Rep. Austin Scott (R-Tifton)

\$10 fee added to vehicle registration throughout the state would be directed to the state's trauma network. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

HB 160 Driver Services, Department of; increase fees; speed restrictions; provisions

By Rep. Jim Cole (R-Forsyth)

The "Super Speeders" bill. This measure sets forth fine increases for speeding, especially for repeat offenders. The additional revenue would be directed to the state trauma network, though language does not specifically earmark the funds for this purpose. ***Signed by Governor on May 5.***

HB 183 Georgia Trauma Hospital Support Act of 2009; enact

By Rep. Harry Geisinger (R-Roswell)

A bill creating a new fee on telephone and wireless service subscribers and the sale of disposable wireless telecommunications devices. The additional revenue would be directed to the state trauma network. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

HB 217 Access to Flu Vaccines Act

By Rep. Jimmy Pruettt (R-Eastman)

A bill to allow pharmacists, nurses and others administer flu vaccinations. Part of Governor Sonny Perdue's 2009 legislative package. ***Signed by Governor on April 28.***

HB 228 State health and human services agencies; reorganize and reestablish; provisions

By Rep. Mark Butler (R-Carrollton)

A voluminous bill to restructure the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR), dividing the functions of DHR and the Department of Community Health (DCH) among new state agencies. ***Signed by Governor on May 4.***

HB 307 Medicaid; federal financial participation; hospitals; impose fee

By Rep. Jim Cole (R-Forsyth)

Known as the "hospital tax" or "sick tax," the measure would assess an additional fee on all hospital's net patient revenue, not to exceed 1.5%. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

HB 337 Public health system; career track program to recruit and retain nurses; require

By Rep. Donna Sheldon (R-Dacula)

The legislation requires the state Department of Human Resources to create and maintain a career track program designed to be an employment model for nurses who work in the Division of Public Health. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

HB 457 Disabled adults and elder persons; revise definition; acts in long-term care facilities unlawful; provide

By Rep. Allen Peake (R-Macon)

This legislation will revise the definition of the term "disabled adult," providing that certain acts against disabled adults in long-term care facilities are unlawful. ***Signed by Governor on May 5..***

HB 475 Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act; nontraditional education programs; revise certain provisions

By Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta)

This legislation was amended in the latter part of the session creating a compromise between the Georgia Board of Nursing and Excelsior College School of Nursing. HB 475 will allow graduates of Excelsior College School of Nursing's Associate Degree program to practice under a provisional license, while pursuing full RN licensure through a Board of Nursing-approved clinical preceptorship. ***Signed by Governor on April 29.***

HB 509 Professions and businesses; regulation; change provisions

By Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta)

This bill changes the definitions in Georgia code sections for "physician" and "physician assistant," expanding the PA's scope of practice. Language in the bill would allow medical assistants to administer injections. The measure changes the membership and duties of the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners as well. An amendment to the bill will allow APRNs to certify death. ***Signed by Governor on May 11.***

HB 526 Board of Nursing; periodic reports to General Assembly; provide

By Rep. Bill Hembree (R-Winston)

A bill requiring the Board of Nursing to provide reports to the General Assembly regarding the state of nursing education for nursing. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

HB 610 Nurses; requirements for nursing education programs; revise

By Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta)

This legislation changes the requirements for Board of Nursing-approved advance practice nursing education programs and other nursing education programs in the state. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

HR 532 Joint Study Committee on Nursing Education in Georgia; create

By Rep. Sharon Cooper (R-Marietta)

This legislation would create the Joint Study Committee on Nursing Education in Georgia. ***Did not pass in 2009, carries over to 2010 Session.***

For more information on the 2009 Session of the Georgia General Assembly, visit www.legis.ga.gov.