2015 GACCP Legislative Session Wrap Up

The 2015 Georgia Legislative Session concluded on April 2, 2015 this year Sine Die. GACCP had some good successes while working on many legislative and budgetary issues this year!

First, our 2016 Budget Priority was to follow up on last year’s Provider Rate Increases. As you know, we received 5% Rate increases for Home Care, ALS and ICWP, along with a 1.5% Rate Increase for DD. This year we actively and aggressively worked on a 5% Rate Increase for the remaining CCSP services that did not get increases last year and for a 3.5% Rate Increase for DD to bring them up to 5%. Unfortunately, the Governor’s Office did not put these rate increases in his budget and although your GACCP President and GACCP Legislative Committee had many meetings with House and Senate Budget Leaders, they did not add any rate increases for our providers this Session.

2016 Budget Items:

**HB 76** - General Appropriations Act.

The Legislature did add $1.7 million in at home services that will keep the elderly and disabled out of SNF’s. This will allow 917 seniors to be moved off of the HCBS waiting list. It also includes $1.6 million 8 new GBI agents to focus on elder abuse and fund $107,594 for the Alzheimer’s State Plan. $126,904 is for technology and training for the LTCO program. Finally, $693,333 was appropriated to hire 11 APS caseworkers. In total, $4.2 million in new funding was appropriate for aging.

The Legislature also added 250 DD slots to cover DOJ Settlement and another 75 new slots. They also added an additional $490,000 for Supported Employment slots.

The Legislature also added a $.50 rate increase for ICWP for direct care staff serving ICWP clients.

2016 Legislative Items:

**HB 183** regarding Private Home Care and would eliminate independent contractors and require Private Home Care providers to classify their direct care staff as employees, passed the Legislature and is awaiting signature by the Governor.

**HB 72** regarding Elder Abuse. This bill was a follow up to last year’s legislation, updating some issues identified by prosecutors to assist in prosecuting violators, passed the Legislature and is awaiting signature by the Governor.

**HB 86** regarding creating a Department of Aging by transferring it to DCH as an attached agency passed and is awaiting signature by the Governor.

**HB 342** regarding Nursing Homes- certain violations shall not constitute negligence per se. Although this bill does not pertain directly to HCBS’s it was monitored by GACCP. The bill states that some violations shall not be considered negligent. This may be something HCBS providers look to in future sessions. It passed and is awaiting signature by the Governor.
HB 511 - This bill allows pharmacy technicians to use and operate remote automated medication systems in a nursing home or hospice setting.

HR 304 urges higher education to incorporate gerontology study in all curriculum.

HR 618 - Creating the House Study Committee of Adult Day Services. The Study Committee shall consist of three House Members appointed by the Speaker, a consumer and an Adult Day Provider. The Study Committee dissolves in December 2015 and will produce a report of its findings.

HR 767 - Creating the House Study Committee Provision of Community Based Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services NOW and COMP. The Study Committee shall consist of three House Members appointed by the Speaker, a consumer and a DD Provider. The Study Committee dissolves in December 2015.

SB 109 This bill provides a clarity and uniformity to Georgia’s POLST (physician’s orders for life sustaining treatment) processes.

SB 111 regarding Continuing Care Retirement Communities passed. We worked with the House and Senate on this bill and added an amendment that assured that CCRC’s would need to be licensed as PHC Providers if they provide private home care services. It passed and is awaiting signature by the Governor.

All of the above Budget and Legislative issues were thoroughly vetted by the GACCP Legislative Committee and all will benefit GACCP and all Home and Community Based Services Programs.

The 2015 Legislative Session was the first year of a two year cycle and at this time there are no significant bills that GACCP is following that will carry over to next year’s session. The GACCP Board and Legislative Committee however will continue its efforts on behalf of the GACCP membership over the interim and will have members participating in any Study Committees over the summer and fall.

Respectfully Submitted,

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