



MAG Advocacy Brief

2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The Medical Association of Georgia (MAG) enjoyed another stellar legislative session in 2016. State lawmakers passed a number of bills that addressed MAG's legislative priorities for the year, including...

S.B. 158, a health insurance rental networks bill that will result in greater insurer disclosure and transparency and ensure that physicians get paid their contracted rate in the event their network is leased. This measure will require insurers to register every rental network in the state with the Georgia Department of Insurance. S.B. 158 was the result of a measure (S.R. 561) that legislators passed in 2015 that led to the creation of a study committee. This was MAG's top legislative priority for 2016.

S.B. 302, which will require health insurance companies to maintain more accurate provider directories. This measure will require insurers to update their provider lists every 30 days and maintain those lists in both electronic and paper forms. It was the result of legislation that passed in 2015, including S.R. 561 and S.B. 158.

H.B. 900, which will enhance the state's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). This measure will 1) give physicians the authority to delegate the right to access the PDMP system to staff who are licensed, registered or board-certified health care professionals and 2) allow prescribers and dispensers to communicate with each other about potential abusers and 3) allow individuals who are authorized to access the PDMP system to report instances of misuse or abuse to the patient's primary prescriber.

Lawmakers also passed a 2017 FY budget (**H.B. 751**) that includes some \$26.2 million to increase the reimbursement rate for select Medicaid primary care and OB-GYN codes, which is up from a \$23 million increase in FY 2016.

"This was one of MAG's best, most productive legislative sessions in years – one that will enhance the accessibility of care, including preserving Georgia's trauma care and Medicaid systems," says MAG President John S. Harvey, M.D. "We achieved our primary objectives in full, which says a lot about MAG's member physicians and staff and allied groups and which solidifies MAG's well-earned reputation for being the leading advocate for physicians in the state."

MAG tracked more than 300 bills in 2016.

Contact MAG Government Relations Director Marcus Downs at 678.303.9280 or mardowns@mag.org with any questions related to the 2016 state legislative session. With more than 7,800 members in every specialty and practice setting, MAG membership has increased by more than 35 percent since 2010. Contact Dawn Williams at 678.303.9261 or dwilliams@mag.org to join MAG.