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## **Medicaid Long Term Care Summit Explores Opportunities for Georgia to Redesign Program**

**Atlanta (June 30, 2006)** – A Call to Action: Redesigning Medicaid Long Term Care, a day-long conference at the Loudermilk Center in Atlanta, brought together key stakeholders to explore new opportunities for Georgia’s Medicaid Long Term Care program through the federal Deficit Reduction Act (DRA).

Governor Sonny Perdue addressed the conference of approximately 200 attendees including elected officials, policy leaders, insurance and financial industry experts, health care administrators, providers, advocates, and caregivers. Joining Commissioner Rhonda Medows in speaking to issues surrounding Medicaid long term care were representatives from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices, and the AARP Policy Institute. Commissioner Patrick Flood of the Vermont Department of Aging and Disabilities also addressed the conference.

“Georgia has a strong commitment to provide for the long term care needs of our citizens,” says Governor Sonny Perdue. “Ensuring home and community based placement has always been one of my healthcare priorities. It is my hope that Georgia will continue to lead the way by providing these types of treatment alternatives.”

Conference attendees reviewed Georgia’s current system for long term care, learned of innovative reform initiatives in other states and began a strategic roadmap for redesigning the long term care programs that serve Georgia’s aged, blind and disabled Medicaid population. Following the morning session, attendees participated in six afternoon work groups that ranged from expanding insurance coverage for persons with disabilities, helping individuals with disabilities return to the workplace, exploring self-directed care services to developing a state long-term care partnership program.

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“The DRA provides us with excellent opportunities to evaluate the current challenges in providing long term care for Georgia’s Medicaid population,” says Dr. Rhonda Medows. “We must carefully and decisively consider the opportunities to expand coverage for individuals with disabilities, increase access to community supports, and promote personal responsibility.”

The insights and ideas from this diverse gathering will result in on-going workgroups that will implement strategic plans for Medicaid long term care in Georgia that incorporates best practices in care with innovative, consumer-focused initiatives.

Materials from the conference including presentations and strategic plans will be available soon at the Department of Community Health website, [www.dch.georgia.gov](http://www.dch.georgia.gov).

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### **About Georgia Department of Community Health**

The Department of Community Health champions:

- 1) access to affordable, quality health care in our communities,
- 2) responsible health planning & use of health care resources and,
- 3) healthy behaviors & improved health outcomes.

The Department of Community Health provides health care benefits to more than 2 million of Georgia’s citizens under the Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids programs and the State Health Benefit Plan.

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