

# FACT SHEET



## Georgia Department of Community Health

*Shaping the future of A Healthy Georgia by improving access and ensuring quality to strengthen the communities we serve.*

### Overview

The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), designated as the state agency for Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids®, provides access to health care for nearly two million Georgians. DCH also administers the State Health Benefit Plan, which provides health care coverage for state employees, public school personnel, retirees and dependents. Combined, these two divisions provide health insurance coverage to approximately one in four people in the state, or more than 2.6 million Georgians. Other divisions and offices within the department include Healthcare Facility Regulation and the Office of Health Planning. Frank W. Berry serves as the Commissioner of DCH.

### Divisions

DCH's **Medical Assistance Plans Division (MAP)** administers health care for nearly 2 million children, pregnant women and people who are aged, blind or disabled. MAP also oversees PeachCare for Kids (Georgia's Children's Health Insurance Program [CHIP] population). Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids members receive services through either managed care (Georgia Families or Georgia Families 360°®) or fee-for-service arrangements.

**State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP)** offers health insurance and prescription drug coverage to more than 661,000 members including state employees, retirees, teachers, school personnel and their eligible dependents. DCH serves as the state's plan sponsor and plan administrator through SHBP.

**Healthcare Facility Regulation Division (HFRD)** serves Georgia residents through the statewide oversight of health care facilities. HFRD provides ongoing monitoring of licensed healthcare facilities to ensure compliance with rules promulgated by DCH. The division reviews and issues decisions based on facility requests for waivers or variances to these rules. Furthermore, HFRD investigates reports of unlicensed facilities, complaints against licensed facilities, adverse events and incidents reported by citizens and health care facilities.

**Financial Management** is responsible for the budget, the accounting of funds appropriated to DCH, and reimbursement management of external Care Management Organizations (CMOs). Financial Management is composed of Financial and Accounting Services, Budget Services including Facilities and Support Services, Reimbursement Services, Procurement Services including Contract Compliance, and Grants Administration.



### DCH Mission

To provide Georgians with access to affordable, quality health care through effective planning, purchasing and oversight.

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## An Overview of the Georgia Department of Community Health

### Offices

**Communications** is the primary point of contact and outreach for all DCH internal and external communications. The Office handles all media and public relations for the Department, responding to the Department's diverse communications needs with tools like the DCH website, press releases, e-newsletters, digital and social media, and the Intranet.

**Continuous Program Improvement** focuses its efforts on administrative simplification and process improvement. The work ultimately leads to operational efficiencies by effectively utilizing existing resources within Medical Assistance Plans and SHBP.

**General Counsel** provides legal guidance and support to the Commissioner, the Board of Community Health, and all Divisions and Offices of the Department. This Office further supports the legal needs of the Department from preparing contracts and fulfilling open records requests to assisting with statutory, regulatory and policy implementation. Also, the Legal Services section within this Office handles administrative hearings before the Office of State Administrative Hearings and the internal Hearing Officer designated by the Commissioner.

**Government Relations** is responsible for all legislative activities with the Georgia General Assembly and the annual legislative session, and the handling of constituent issues. Government Relations serves as the liaison to government officials, lobbyists, patient advocacy groups, and health-related organizations to support departmental initiatives and programs. Also, Constituent Services consists of customer service agents who interact daily with members, providers, legislators, and others to help Georgians understand the Medicaid, PeachCare for Kids, and SHBP programs, and the Department's business functions as a whole.

**Healthcare Analytics and Reporting** drives anticipatory insights around operations, health trends, health policy, managed care performance, program outcomes and integrity, and oversees the utilization and operation of the DCH data warehouse.

**Health Planning** determines the need for facilities and services through the administration of Georgia's Certificate of Need program. Health Planning conducts architectural plan reviews and site inspections for major renovations and construction projects for hospitals, nursing homes and ambulatory surgical centers. Additionally, Health Planning administers the Patient's Right to Independent Review Program which provides members of managed care plans the right to appeal a decision denying coverage for medical services.

### DCH Vision

DCH is committed to a lean and responsive state government that promotes the health and prosperity of its citizens through innovative and effective delivery of quality healthcare programs.

### Key Goals

- Improve health by promoting healthy lifestyles, preventative care, disease management and disparity elimination.
- Improve access to quality health care at an affordable price.
- Ensure value in health care contracts.
- Move health plans administered by DCH toward being financially solvent to meet the needs of the members.
- Increase effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of health care programs.
- Ensure DCH has enough workers with the necessary skills and competencies to meet the current and future demand.

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**Information Technology (IT)** provides enterprise and systems-based technology expertise. This Office oversees the Medicaid Management Information System; the Information Technology Infrastructure Unit; the Information Security Unit; the Medicaid Information Technology Architecture Unit; and the Health Information Technology Unit.

**Inspector General (OIG)** safeguards DCH from both internal and external risks by working to prevent and detect waste, fraud and abuse in Medicaid, PeachCare for Kids and SHBP, and other organizational systems. The office operates seven units: Background Investigations Unit, Data Investigations and Analysis, OIG Legal/SHBP Fraud, Office of Audits, Program Integrity, Third Party Liability and Special Investigations Unit/Internal Investigations.

**Human Resources (OHR)** provides support to a workforce of just under 1,100 employees. OHR operates as a strategic partner in meeting the talent management needs of DCH by supporting the agency's mission, vision, and core values through the agency's most valuable resources – its employees. OHR also develops and implements training, and opportunities for employee growth and development.

**Project Management** coordinates and manages the initiation, planning and execution of large, critical projects (e.g., policy, finance, technology, etc.) which impact the agency. The Office is also responsible for enterprise-wide strategic planning and forecasting, project management and change management.

**The State Office of Rural Health (SORH)** links Georgia's 120 rural counties with state and federal resources to develop long-term solutions to address health care delivery issues and improve health status. The focus of funding continues to be on initiatives that facilitate the work of the Rural Hospital Stabilization Committee and support rural hospitals in improving financial stability, increasing the number of school-based telehealth sites, and identifying creative ways to make health care more accessible in Georgia's underserved rural and urban areas.

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## The Board of Community Health

The **Board of Community Health** is a nine-person board appointed by the governor and confirmed by the State Senate. The Board establishes general policy for the Department.

## Advisory Boards and Councils

The **Georgia Drug Utilization Review Board (DURB)** promotes patient safety through an increased review and awareness of outpatient prescribed drugs. The Board, appointed by the DCH Commissioner, recommends medical criteria, standards and educational intervention methods used in the Drug Utilization Review program. It also advises DCH about products considered to be the most clinically effective for members of the Department's plans: Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids. The Board reviews drug therapy, drug studies and utilization information, thus enabling the Department to identify the most cost-effective policies for its members.

The **Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC)** consists of board-certified physicians, other health professionals, consumer group advocates, Medicaid members, Public Health Department representatives, and additional member specialties as needed. MCAC works collaboratively to 1) provide input on Medicaid health policy; 2) cultivate a better understanding between the health care provider, payers, and consumers of care; and 3) partner with DCH to promote its goals and objectives to enhance the delivery of health care to its Medicaid members.

## Attached Agencies

The **Georgia Composite Medical Board (GCMB)** is the agency that licenses physicians, physician assistants, respiratory care professionals, perfusionists, acupuncturists, orthotists, prosthetists, auricular (ear) detoxification specialists, residency training permits, cosmetic laser practitioners and pain management clinics. The Medical Board investigates complaints and disciplines those who violate The Medical Practice Act or other laws governing the professional behavior of its licensees.

The **Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce (GBHW)** strives to identify the physician workforce needs of Georgia communities, and to meet those needs through the support and development of medical education programs. The GBHW works to see Georgia communities, especially in medically underserved areas, have improved access to needed physician generalists and specialists, thereby enhancing the health and well-being of Georgia's citizens.

The **Georgia Board of Drugs and Narcotics Agency (GDNA)** protects the health, safety and welfare of the public by enforcing Georgia laws and rules pertaining to manufactured or compounded drugs and ensuring only licensed facilities or persons dispense or distribute pharmaceuticals.

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## Independent Boards

Georgia's dental and pharmacy boards became divisions of DCH in 2013. By law, these boards are granted a high degree of autonomy with respect to operating independently. The boards are administratively attached to DCH's Financial Management office.

The **Georgia Board of Dentistry** is responsible for the protection of the public's health through the regulation of the practice of dentistry and the enforcement of standards of practice. The Georgia Board of Dentistry issues licenses to qualified dentist and dental hygiene applicants, and identifies, investigates and sanctions those licensees who practice below the accepted standards of the profession (or without the necessary qualifications). It also distinguishes between safe and dangerous dental practices through its rules and policies.

The **Georgia State Board of Pharmacy** regulates pharmacy personnel and pharmacy facilities in Georgia. The Georgia State Board of Pharmacy reviews applications, administers examinations, licenses qualified pharmacists, pharmacy interns, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy facility applicants, and regulates the practice of licensees. Complaints are investigated through its affiliated agency, the GDNA, and if warranted, disciplinary action may be taken by the Board.

## For More Information

Visit [www.dch.georgia.gov](http://www.dch.georgia.gov).