



STATE OF GEORGIA

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**Sonny Perdue**  
**GOVERNOR**

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## **Governor Perdue Creates Health Information Technology and Transparency Advisory Board**

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue today signed an executive order creating the Health Information Technology and Transparency Advisory Board. The board will advise the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) on the best practices for encouraging the use of electronic health records and establishing a statewide strategy to enable health information to be readily available and transparent.

“Transparency in the health care marketplace is essential,” said Governor Sonny Perdue. “Increased transparency in Georgia’s healthcare industry will help families make informed decisions based on the costs and the quality of the services they receive.”

“I applaud Governor Perdue for taking steps that will result in better care at lower cost for the people of Georgia. The four cornerstones of a better health care system are electronic health records, more information on the cost and quality of our care, and incentives that reward high quality at low cost,” said US Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt. “With this action today, Georgia is one of the first states in the nation to lead the way to a better health care system for its citizens.”

The board will consist of 12 members, appointed by the commissioner of DCH, Dr. Rhonda Medows. Board members will serve a term of two years, ending June 30, 2008.

“Communication in health care is essential for success,” said Dr. Rhonda Medows. “Our goals for Health Information Technology are simple: Understandable,

universal, timely, and secure communication of health information across the public and private sectors for the benefit of today's health care consumer. Let's build bridges, not barriers."

In 2005 Governor Perdue submitted to HHS a plan to modernize Medicaid in Georgia. A critical component of the plan was the concept of marketplace transparency within the health care industry. The plan gives health care consumers the opportunity to select providers and health care services based on costs and the quality of the service.

On August 22, 2006, President Bush signed an executive order to "Help Increase The Transparency Of America's Health Care System - Empowering Americans To Find Better Value And Better Care." The President's Executive Order directs federal agencies that administer or sponsor federal health insurance programs to:

1. Increase transparency in pricing.
2. Increase transparency in quality.
3. Encourage adoption of health information technology (IT) standards.
4. Provide options that promote quality and efficiency in health care.

Immediately following President Bush's Executive Order in August, Governor Perdue expressed public support for the initiative in Georgia, and pointed to actions already taken in the state to accomplish similar goals. Governor Perdue announced that state agencies responsible for the administration of health care coverage in Georgia would adopt similar measures to those announced by the President.

Text of the Executive Order is provided below:

WHEREAS: The citizens of Georgia have an overriding interest in the containment of health care costs and concern for the escalation of preventable sickness and disease; and

WHEREAS: The Institute of Medicine Report of 2000 estimated that 44,000 to 98,000 people die each year from medical errors; and

WHEREAS: In 2004, the Department of Health and Human Services estimated that the implementation of health information technology and corresponding changes in healthcare processes could reach \$140 billion in savings annually, or close to 10% of total health spending in the United States; and

WHEREAS: In 2005, I submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) a plan to modernize Medicaid in Georgia; and

WHEREAS: A critical component of Georgia's plan was the concept of marketplace transparency within the health care industry. The plan gives health care consumers the opportunity to select providers and health care services based on costs and the quality of the service; and

WHEREAS: Promotion of transparency and quality in health care is a priority for the State of Georgia; and

WHEREAS: On August 22, 2006, President Bush signed an executive order directing agencies that administer or support health insurance programs to take steps that will result in more complete and open information for consumers; and

WHEREAS: The executive order mirrors the principles articulated by the State as outlined in the 2005 Georgia Medicaid modernization plan; and

WHEREAS: There is a growing realization that health information technology has the potential to:

- improve patient safety
- improve healthcare quality
- enable population threat detection, both natural and man-made
- better inform and empower health care consumers regarding their own personal health information
- ensure care providers will have the information necessary to make informed decisions as they treat patients
- better understand health care costs; and

WHEREAS: Ensuring the confidentiality, security and privacy of each individual's health information is of primary importance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BY VIRTUE OF THE POWER VESTED IN ME AS THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA, IT IS HEREBY

ORDERED: That there is hereby created a Health Information Technology and Transparency Advisory Board to advise the Department Community Health in applying industry best practices for facilitating and encouraging the use of electronic health records and establishing a statewide strategy that will enable health information to be available across the full continuum of care.

IT IS FURTHER

ORDERED: That the Health Information Technology and Transparency Advisory Board shall consist of twelve members, who shall be appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Community Health to serve a term of two years ending June 30, 2008.

IT IS FURTHER

ORDERED: That the Health Information Technology and Transparency Advisory Board may establish by-laws for its governance, as deemed necessary, but it is under no duty to do so.

IT IS FURTHER

ORDERED: That the Health Information Technology and Transparency Advisory Board members shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled to receive reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the Advisory Board in accordance with the State's Statewide Travel Regulations.

IT IS FURTHER

ORDERED: That the Health Information Technology and Transparency Advisory Board shall:

- Provide leadership for a coordinated effort across the state to achieve health information exchange;
- Encourage the use of electronic health records, that recognize interoperability standards as identified by the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- Promote the security and privacy of health information;
- Conform with nationally recognized interoperability standards for exchanging health information;
- Promote marketplace transparency within the health care industry through the development of information to the consumer of health care regarding the cost and quality of health care; and
- In developing such information, the board shall utilize recognized quality standards developed through a multi-stakeholder initiative.

This 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2006.

(Signed: Sonny Perdue) \_\_\_\_\_  
GOVERNOR

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