1. Preserve and Enhance Access to Health Care for All Georgians
GHA supports a healthy Georgia and advocates for proposals that help reduce the number of uninsured and underinsured patients. Statistics show that patients who have health insurance typically have better health outcomes—because those with health insurance seek the right care at the right time in the right setting; therefore, the hospital community supports access to affordable health insurance for all Georgians, particularly for those who have historically been underserved with regard to health care services.

2. Protect Current Certificate of Need Process
GHA supports Georgia’s health planning process, Certificate of Need (CON), which preserves access to health care for all Georgians, including the rural, uninsured and underinsured populations. CON helps control costs by requiring all applicants to demonstrate the need for services and facilities in order to prevent overutilization and unnecessary duplication of services, while also discouraging unfair competition from facilities that serve few, if any, Medicaid and uninsured patients.

3. Support Adequate Reimbursement for Hospitals
• GHA supports adequate state and federal funding for programs affecting hospitals and other healthcare providers.
• GHA supports mechanisms that require the state to seek and consider input from its stakeholders when making significant policy decisions impacting Medicaid, PeachCare for Kids and the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP).
• GHA supports the maintenance and growth of Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) federal funds as well as sufficient state-matching funds for DSH payments to private hospitals (preserving the state’s access to significant federal funds for all DSH-eligible hospitals).
• GHA supports maximizing federal Medicaid funds available for hospitals through the Upper Payment Limit (UPL) and Tier 2 Hospital Medicaid Financing programs.
• GHA supports Medicaid, PeachCare for Kids and SHBP policies that adequately compensate providers for the costs of care, improve long-term health outcomes and address chronic health conditions with a positive return on investment.
• GHA supports appropriate reimbursement for hospital services by commercial health plans and liability insurers and opposes efforts to place restrictions on provider participation or provider payments or to create unnecessary administrative burdens on providers that result in roadblocks to timely payments for medically necessary services rendered.

4. Enhance Behavioral Health Resources
GHA supports a full-spectrum behavioral health system, including the development of community-based services and enhancement of acute inpatient resources, which ensures access to safe, high-quality care in the most appropriate setting and according to treatment needs irrespective of patient financial ability.
Policy Positions

Credentialing & Licensure
GHA supports solutions that address the significant delays in the insurance enrollment and credentialing processes and retroactive compensation during such delays. GHA supports an appropriate, expeditious and reciprocal licensure procedure for health care professionals.

Health Information Technology
GHA supports efforts to further the adoption of electronic communications and digital health technologies, which are integral to implementing such delivery and payment approaches as Accountable Care Organizations, patient-centered medical homes, readmissions avoidance and other initiatives.

Indigent Care Mandates
Hospitals strive continuously to meet the growing needs of their communities and adhere to established federal standards and strict reporting requirements regarding community benefits for not-for-profit hospitals. GHA opposes additional mandates that limit hospitals’ ability to respond to the diverse needs of their communities.

Medical Education
GHA supports adequate funding for state programs that support medical education and clinician recruitment, including current and newly implemented graduate medical education residency programs to better improve Georgia’s health care workforce climate.

Not-For-Profit Sales Tax Exemption
Georgia receives a significant return on investment in exchange for tax exemptions for not-for-profit hospitals. GHA supports the preservation of the tax-exempt status of such hospitals and will continue to educate members of the General Assembly regarding the important community benefits provided by all hospitals.

Patient Safety Initiatives
GHA supports hospitals’ ongoing patientsafety efforts to improve health care outcomes for patients, including eradicating medication errors and hospital-acquired infections, while providing care in a safe environment. GHA opposes unnecessary and ineffective legislative and regulatory burdens that hinder the provision of quality health care.

Regulations
GHA supports public policies that provide for transparency while establishing clear and reasonable standards that protect the ability of governmental entities to carry out their duties effectively; the extension of peer-review and medical-review protections to all legally authorized committee activities; and patient-safety initiatives that enable health care professionals to deliver high-quality care according to established best practices. GHA opposes policies that are duplicative or offer little return on investment and, at great expense to the state and health care providers, do little to effectively reduce true fraud and waste.

Scope of Practice
GHA supports public policies that allow licensed health care professionals to practice to the full extent of their training and experience to ensure appropriate access to care.

Tort Reform
GHA will continue to work with other stakeholders to protect and strengthen tort reforms, which reduce unnecessary litigation costs to businesses, preserve access to care for Georgia citizens in need of high-risk services and protect the health care community’s ability to provide high-quality care to all, regardless of ability to pay.

Trauma Care Funding
GHA will continue to work to secure trauma care funding, which could save hundreds of lives each year by growing and strengthening the state’s fragile trauma system. Policymakers should seek to stabilize the existing trauma hospitals and other health care providers who offer trauma services and encourage other appropriate health care providers to enter the network.

Workforce
GHA supports additional funding and other initiatives to ensure that, as the health care workforce ages, the training-program capacity matches the needs of our community. GHA opposes staffing mandates, regulations and certifications that add significant costs to employing an adequate health care workforce.

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