



Client Alert

Contact Attorneys Regarding
This Matter:

Hedy S. Rubinger
404.873.8724 - direct
404.873.8725 - fax
hedy.rubinger@agg.com

Jessica T. Grozine
404.873.8526 - direct
404.873.8527 - fax
jessica.grozine@agg.com

Arnall Golden Gregory LLP
Attorneys at Law
171 17th Street NW
Suite 2100
Atlanta, GA 30363-1031
404.873.8500
www.agg.com

Georgia Legislation Proposes the Reorganization of Health and Human Services Agencies

On January 29, 2009 Representative Mark Butler introduced House Bill 228 to reorganize and reestablish various state health and human services agencies in Georgia in an effort to improve efficiency and promote effective delivery of mental and public health services. The legislation is based on findings of the Health and Human Services Task Force. This Task Force, comprised of nine legislative and executive branch appointments, was charged with drafting a plan to restructure the Department of Human Resources and create a new health and human resources delivery model.

Under the proposed legislation, the current functions of the Department of Community Health and the Department of Human Resources would be assigned to new agencies. Specifically, the legislation would establish the newly created Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Department of Behavioral Health.

The Department of Health would result from the merger of the current Department of Community Health with the public health and regulation programs of the Department of Human Resources. This means that effective July 1, 2009, all matters relating to the licensure and regulation of hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and related institutions that are regulated by the Department of Human Resources would be transferred to the Department of Health.

The Department of Behavioral Health would focus solely on mental health and addictive disease programs. These programs are currently housed within the Department of Human Resources, but under the new structure the Department of Behavioral Health would report directly to the Governor.

Remaining social services, such as Developmental Disabilities, Aging, Division of Family and Children Services, and Child Support, would be housed under a reconstituted Department of Human Services.

The legislation also provides for the creation of a new board for each agency and the elimination of the Board of Community Health and the Board of Human Resources. Additionally, the legislation would establish the position of State Health Officer and the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council.

If the legislation is adopted, the transition to the new agencies would begin on July 1, 2009.

Arnall Golden Gregory LLP serves the business needs of growing public and private companies, helping clients turn legal challenges into business opportunities. We don't just tell you if something is possible, we show you how to make it happen. Please visit our website for more information, www.agg.com.

This alert provides a general summary of recent legal developments. It is not intended to be, and should not be relied upon as, legal advice.