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CON Commission Meets for Two-Day Retreat to Build Consensus on Issues Facing the Committee

St. Simons Island, GA - The State Commission on the Efficacy of the Certificate of Need (CON) program met November 27 and 28, 2006 to finalize its proposed recommendations for Georgia's CON laws. These recommendations will be presented in a final report to the Governor and the Georgia General Assembly by December 2006.

The co-chairs of the four subcommittees reported their recommendations to the full commission. Votes were taken on whether to incorporate suggestions for submission to the final report. The subcommittees cover the subject areas of Legal and Regulatory, Acute Care, Long Term Care, and Special Programs (which includes ambulatory care centers). The CON Commission reached consensus on 28 recommendations yesterday.

As requested by the Department of Community Health Commissioner, Dr. Rhonda Medows, a matrix of CON Reform recommendations was created and commission members were asked to vote on each option.

At the meeting, Dr. Medows outlined five goals for Georgia's health planning process and CON Program:

1. **Access:** To assure adequate distribution of health facilities to meet the needs of communities across Georgia via health planning;
2. **Quality:** Interject for the first time efforts to incorporate review of quality measures and performance monitoring of health care facilities;
3. **Indigent Care:** Provide a mechanism for the provision of uncompensated care for the poor by CON regulated facilities;
4. **Affordability for consumers and support the financial stability of the health care community:** The previous goal of controlling the costs of health care via control of additional or duplicative facilities via CON has questionable effectiveness. Health plans and the advent of managed care have had an impact; and
5. **Transparency of Quality and Cost to the health care consumer.**

Since June 27, 2005, the CON Commission has studied and evaluated the effectiveness and efficiency of Georgia's CON program. The discussions of the commission have focused on the larger issues of health care financing, provider reimbursement rates by the

private and public sector payors, the costs associated with the uncompensated care of the uninsured, and proposing emerging models of care delivery to ensure the interests of new entrants to the health care market.

During the 2005 legislative session, the Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 390. This law and its ensuing code, O.C.G.A 31-6-90 through 95, created the State Commission on the Efficacy of the Certificate of Need Program. The Commission's purpose is to study and collect information and data relating to the effectiveness of the CON program in Georgia. The CON program primarily regulates where hospitals and other healthcare facilities are built and which services are provided.

According to the statute, the Commission must issue a final report which will include any proposed legislation to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before June 30, 2007. The Commission has set a goal of sending a recommendation to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 2006. The Commission stands abolished on June 30, 2007.

Members of the CON Commission are:

- Daniel W. Rahn, MD –President, Medical College of Georgia
- Richard L. Holmes – Chairman, The Board of Community Health
- Dan Maddock – President, Taylor Regional Hospital & Healthcare Group
- Senator Don Balfour – Chair, Senate Rules Committee
- Rhonda M. Medows, MD – Commissioner, Department of Community Health
- Melvin Deese, MD – Orthopedic Surgeon, Summit Sports Medicine
- Ronnie Rollins – President & Chief Executive Officer, Community Health Systems
- Donna Johnson, ESQ. – President, Donna L. Johnson, P.C.
- Joseph R. Ross, ESQ. – Senior V.P. & General Counsel, Memorial Health
- Representative Austin – Chair, Government Affairs Committee

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About the Department of Community Health

The Georgia Department of Community Health champions:

ACCESS to affordable, quality health care in our communities

RESPONSIBLE health planning and use of health care resources

HEALTHY behaviors and improved health outcomes

Equal Opportunity Employer