Health and Behavioral Health

**SB 296** (Halpern-39th)  **Bill Link**
Relating to the Department of Public Health, so as to provide for the appointment of a state surgeon general.
Status: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

**HB 76** (Powell-33rd)  **Bill Link**
Revises the requirements for an associate marriage and family therapist license to allow the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education to determine the coursework requirements and the type, and minimum amount of hours, of clinical experience applicants must have. The bill also revises the clinical experience requirements for those currently licensed as an associate marriage and family therapist, those with a qualifying master's degree, and those with a qualifying doctorate degree. The bill adds a provision stating that any Governor-appointed seat of an executive branch board, commission, or council shall be filled by appointment of the Governor as provided by law when the seat becomes vacant upon term expiration or when declared vacant by the Governor pursuant to this Code section.
Status: **PASSED HOUSE**. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Children and Families Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

**HB 82** (Jackson-128th)  **Bill Link**
Relating to tax credits for rural physicians, the bill subsequently creates a tax credit of up to $5,000 for rural healthcare professionals, defined as physicians and dentists operating in a rural county. The tax credit may be claimed for up to five years for eligible professionals, provided that the healthcare professional continues operating in a rural county. The aggregate amount of the tax credit is limited to $2 million per year.
Status: **PASSED HOUSE**. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Finance Committee. The bill rests in Senate Rules Committee.

**HB 85** (Cooper-45th)  **Bill Link**
Requires health benefit policy coverage for biomarker testing if supported by medical and scientific evidence.
Status: **PASSED HOUSE, PASSED SENATE**. Awaits consideration by the governor.

**HB 143** (Mathis-149th)  **Bill Link**
Requires the Department of Community Health to cover continuous glucose monitors through Medicaid as a pharmacy benefit. Eligibility for coverage includes a diagnosis of diabetes mellitus and patient or caregiver training. Additionally, a patient must have use of daily insulin or a history of problematic hypoglycemia to receive the benefit. An in-person or telehealth visit is required within six months prior to and every six months after initial prescription.
Status: **PASSED HOUSE**. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

**HB 181** (Townsend-179th)  **Bill Link**
Adds the compound 7-hydroxymitragynine to the definition of "kratom". The bill limits the methods that kratom can be ingested and requires that the sale of kratom be only behind the counter in stores. Anyone violating this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. The bill requires all kratom products to be derived from the natural kratom plant. A kratom processor cannot sell or distribute a kratom product that is adulterated or contains certain compounds or substances within it. An entity that manufactures, distributes, sells, or delivers kratom must maintain a registered agent in the state. A processor who knowingly or recklessly commits an act in violation will be guilty of a high and aggravated misdemeanor as a first offense and a felony on a second or subsequent offense, with a penalty of imprisonment between one to 15 years; a maximum fine of $100,000; or both. A processor who negligently commits an act in violation of O.C.G.A. 16-13-122 will be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum fine of $1,000. A person who suffers injury or damages as a result of a violation of this Code section can also bring a civil action for actual damages, which are presumed to be at least $250, together with court costs.
Status: **PASSED HOUSE**. Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).