waive experience requirements for applicants licensed under another state that have maintained good standing in that jurisdiction for at least two years. The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists and the Georgia Board of Nursing are authorized to manage a professional health program for impaired health care professionals across the state. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) will hire a director as the executive head of the Georgia Data Analytic Center (GDAC). GDAC will serve as the central repository for Georgia from which data can be released to requesting agencies. The director will have the authority to review data sharing disputes between executive state agencies when a data request made by one agency is denied by another with the reasoning that it would violate state or federal law. If the director determines such a request does not break the law, the agency is compelled to cooperate with such request. DCH will ensure that the Medicaid program includes reimbursement for psychological diagnostic assessments and treatment and family therapy services; reimbursement for licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, and certified peer specialists; psychiatric hospitals as eligible for inpatient care for those under the age of 21 years enrolled in fee-for-service Medicaid; updates of reimbursement rates for the assessment and treatment of autism spectrum disorder in collaboration with relevant agencies and organizations; and therapeutic foster care for those under the age of 21 years. Necessary requests for Medicaid state plan amendments or waivers will be made to the United States Department of Health and Human Services by December 1, 2023. DCH is also required to take necessary steps to ensure the receipt of relevant federal funds to provide services, such as housing and employment supports and case management, for recipients and their caregivers if they are under the age of 19 years. The Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce is required to work with state licensing boards to establish the Georgia Health Care Professionals Data System to collect and share de-identified descriptive data about licensed health care professionals in Georgia. Such information will be stored in a publicly accessible repository on the board’s website. Information will include demographics and geographical distribution of licensed health care professionals across the state. Licensing boards must provide such data upon request or up to two times annually as required. Information provided by licensing boards will include age, race, gender, ethnicity, language spoken at home, practice location, and license type.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE**
Assigned to Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The bill will be heard in subcommittee today (MONDAY).

HB 557  (Stephens-164th)  [Bill Link]
Authorizes advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances in emergency situations under certain circumstances. These circumstances include good standing with the applicable medical board and at least one year of post-licensure clinical experience. The patient receiving the prescription must be at least 18 years old unless the medication is used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and the supervising physician is a pediatrician, family practice physician, internal medicine physician, or psychiatrist. The bill only allows for an initial prescription that does not exceed a five-day supply. Authorization must be included in the provider’s nurse protocol agreement and physician assistant’s job description.

Status: **PASSED HOUSE**
Assigned to Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

SB 1  (Dolezal-27th)  [Bill Link]
Makes permanent (by removing the sunset provision) the prohibition on state and local governments from requiring proof of COVID vaccination for government services.

Status: **PASSED SENATE**
Assigned to House Public Health Committee.

SB 20  (Kirkpatrick-32nd)  [Bill Link]
“Surprise Billing Consumer Protection Act“ - Ensures consumer access to quality healthcare by setting adequacy standards for network plans offered by an insurer.

Status: **PASSED SENATE**
Assigned to House Insurance Committee.

SB 47  (Hufstetler-52nd)  [Bill Link]
Provides that vaping in restricted areas is a misdemeanor punishable by fine.

Status: **PASSED SENATE**
Assigned to House Public Health Committee.

SB 76  (Merritt-9th)  [Bill Link]
Requires state health benefit plans to cover insulin medication at an amount not to exceed $35.00 per 30-day supply.

Status: **PASSED SENATE**
Assigned to House Health Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).