HB 441  (Dempsey-13th)  Bill Link
Prevents licensed dentists from providing teledentistry unless the dentist has been issued a permit by the Georgia Board of Dentistry. Permits will only be issued after a licensed dentist proves there is an established referral relationship with a dentist who practices in a physical dental office in Georgia within 50 miles of where the teledentistry interaction will occur. The teledentistry permit allows a dentist to authorize a licensed dental hygienist to perform dental hygiene functions; prescribe medications that are not controlled substances; authorize digital scans; and authorize the transmittal of patient records. The bill includes conditions for providing dental care through teledentistry as well as insurance coverage requirements. The bill allows dental assistants to perform coronal polishing on a patient under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist.
Status: Recommended Do Pass by the House Health Committee. The bill rests in House Rules Committee.

HB 448  (Schofield-63rd)  Bill Link
Prohibits insurers from denying, restricting, refusing to authorize or approve, failing to cover, or reducing payment to a participating healthcare provider for a provider administered drug or the administration of a provider administered drug in certain circumstances.
Status: House Insurance Committee

HB 487  (Newton-127th)  Bill Link
Expands enhanced punishment for aggravated assault and aggravated battery committed upon emergency health workers to all healthcare workers in a hospital or healthcare facility.
Status: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee. The bill will be heard in committee today (MONDAY).

HB 510  (Barnes-86th)  Bill Link
Provides for breakfast and lunch programs for all public school students in this state, and for such meals to be offered at no cost to students who qualify for reduced price meals under federal and state guidelines. The bill also provides for school breakfast programs under the Quality Basic Education Act regarding funding, and encourages the use of Georgia grown products in school breakfast and lunch programs.
Status: House Education Committee

HB 520  (Jones-25th)  Bill Link
Authorizes the Department of Community Health (DCH) to collaborate with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) to study the psychiatric treatment residential facilities referral processes with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and Department of Human Services (DHS). The bill prohibits health benefit plans from implementing step therapy protocol for medications prescribed to treat severe mental illness. DBHDD is authorized to work with certain other agencies to create guidance for standardized terminology such as the definition of serious mental illness. Definitions for homeless individuals, recidivism, and other terms may also be developed. DBHDD will also work with individuals to provide county-based coordinators to work with criminal justice and behavioral health providers to reduce jail admission of those in a mental health crisis that do not pose a public safety risk. A state-wide public-private partnership will be established by DBHDD to serve as a clearinghouse for best practices, information, and resources to support "familiar faces". These are individuals with serious mental illness that have frequent contact with criminal justice, homeless, and behavioral health systems. Subject to appropriations, DBHDD will develop a pilot program to assist jails in implementing behavioral health screening programs and protocols and create a grant program to create or expand jail in-reach and reentry programs which will focus on "familiar faces" and connect individuals with community resources. A comprehensive study on the public behavioral health workforce will be conducted by DBHDD to understand recruitment and retention issues, and target solutions to help with shortages. The bill adds certain members to the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission (BHRIC). BHRIC, with DBHDD, is required to develop a common definition of "serious mental illness" and include "familiar faces" to initiative coordination. BHRIC is tasked with creating a multi-year plan to expand the use of forensic peer mentors. BHRIC is required to establish a task force to build a continuum of care. The task force will comprehensively study access to inpatient behavioral health beds, and make recommendations on needed capacity building, youth specific care, and autism spectrum-related care. The task force will also formally review competency evaluation and restoration challenges, and forensic laws and regulations that affect those interacting with the behavioral health and criminal justice systems. This task force will study increased capacity of