

Who Shapes Health Care in Georgia?

No single elected official controls Georgia's health care system. Instead, responsibility is shared across several state and federal offices. Each plays a different role in deciding how health care is funded, regulated, and delivered.

Use this guide to learn what each office does, why it matters for health care, and questions you can ask candidates before you vote.

FIND WHO'S ON YOUR BALLOT

Georgia's official My Voter Page — registration, ballot, polling place.



GEORGIANS FOR A
HEALTHY FUTURE

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Every heading, source, and step in this guide is clickable.

PART ONE

Questions You Can Ask Every Candidate

No matter which office a candidate is seeking, these questions can help voters better understand how they approach health care issues. Each card carries background information — and its sources — that you may find helpful.

01 Do you believe that all Georgians should have quality health coverage and affordable access to care? If so, how would you make sure that becomes the reality in Georgia? If not, why?

BACKGROUND

- + Georgia's uninsured rate (ages 0–64) is about 14%, nearly double the 7.6% average in states that have expanded Medicaid.
- + If Georgia expanded Medicaid, hundreds of thousands of Georgians could gain coverage, with the federal government covering 90% of the cost. (KFF; Georgians for a Healthy Future)
- + Roughly half of Georgia voters are worried about unexpected medical bills, copays and deductibles, premiums, and prescription drug costs. ([Georgia Health Initiative](#))

03 Do you support closing Georgia's coverage gap by expanding Medicaid? Why or why not?

BACKGROUND

- + Thousands of Georgia adults could gain coverage if Georgia expanded Medicaid, and the federal government would cover 90% of the cost.
- + States that have expanded Medicaid have an average uninsured rate of 7.6%, compared to 14.1% in states that have not. (KFF)
- + As of June 30, 2026, only 18,527 Georgians are enrolled in Pathways to Coverage, Georgia's alternative to Medicaid expansion. Thousands remain uninsured in the coverage gap. ([Georgia Pathways Data Tracker](#))

02 If elected, what will you do to hold big health care corporations accountable for the high costs that Georgians pay for care?

BACKGROUND

- + More than 3 in 5 Georgia voters say that health care is not affordable. ([Georgia Health Initiative](#))
- + Over a third of Georgia voters (36%) reported skipping or delaying care in the past year due to cost. ([Georgia Health Initiative](#))
- + Georgians are twice as likely to have medical debt than Americans as a whole. ([Urban Institute](#))

04 What would you do to strengthen Georgia's public health agencies and workforce so that they can better support the health and well-being of Georgia communities?

BACKGROUND

- + Georgia's combined state and federal public health funding fell from \$97 per person in FY 2012 to \$74 per person in FY 2025. ([Georgia Budget and Policy Institute](#))
- + Georgia has more than 5,000 state and local public health workers, but almost 1 in 4 state Department of Public Health employees and 1 in 7 county health department employees are eligible for retirement within five years. ([Georgia Budget and Policy Institute](#))

05 If elected, what would you do to ensure our state continues to invest in and grow mental health services, so that all Georgians have affordable, comprehensive, and community-based access to mental health and substance use recovery care?

BACKGROUND

- + Georgia ranks 46th in the nation for access to mental health care, and nearly 35% of Georgia adults experiencing mental distress could not see a doctor because of cost. ([Mental Health America, 2025](#))
- + More than 4 in 5 Georgia adults who needed substance use treatment did not receive it in 2023–2024. ([KFF](#); SAMHSA)

06 What would you do to protect and improve the health of children and youth in Georgia?

BACKGROUND

- + Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids cover nearly half of all Georgia children, and Medicaid paid for 42% of Georgia births in 2024. ([Georgia Health Initiative](#))
- + Vaccine coverage among Georgia kindergartners is below 90% across five vaccines required to attend public schools. ([KFF](#))
- + One in ten (11%) Georgia children or youth have depression or an anxiety condition. ([Kids Count Data Center](#))

07 What is one policy that you are proposing that would improve the health and well-being of rural Georgians, people with disabilities, or another specific group?

Tailor this question to the health issue or group you think is most important to ask about — for example, people with cancer or people living with HIV.

BACKGROUND

- + About 11% of working-age Georgians (ages 19–64) live with a disability. ([KFF](#))
- + 25 Georgia rural hospitals are currently considered vulnerable to closure — the fourth-highest number of any state in the country. ([Chartis Center for Rural Health, 2026](#))

THEN GO OFFICE BY OFFICE

Seven offices shape health care in Georgia.

The pages that follow explain what each office does, how it affects health care, examples of decisions that reach Georgians, and why the race matters in 2026.

GOVERNOR

INSURANCE COMMISSIONER

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LT. GOVERNOR

SECRETARY OF STATE

ATTORNEY GENERAL

CONGRESS

Statewide • executive

Governor

WHAT DOES THE GOVERNOR DO?

The Governor serves as Georgia's chief executive and has broad influence over the state's health care system. While the General Assembly writes and passes laws, the Governor decides which bills to sign into law, oversees the agencies responsible for carrying out new laws, and proposes the state's annual budget.

The Governor appoints leaders of several agencies that oversee health care programs, including the Georgia Department of Community Health, which administers Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids, the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities, and the Department of Public Health.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

The Governor helps shape how Georgia implements federal health laws, including changes to Medicaid and Georgia Access. The Governor also recommends funding for Medicaid, public health, behavioral health services, maternal health programs, emergency preparedness, and other health initiatives.

Because the Governor appoints agency leadership, the office also influences how health programs operate day to day, including eligibility policies, program administration, and agency priorities.

EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT GEORGIANS

- + Proposing funding for Medicaid and public health
- + Appointing leaders who oversee state health agencies
- + Signing or vetoing health-related legislation
- + Requesting federal waivers affecting Medicaid
- + Leading responses to public health emergencies
- + Responding to federal policy changes

WHY THIS RACE MATTERS IN 2026

Over the next several years, Georgia will make important decisions about implementing new federal Medicaid requirements and other provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The Governor's priorities will influence how these changes affect families, providers, and communities throughout Georgia.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

- + What are your priorities for improving the health of Georgians?
- + How would you approach implementing new federal Medicaid work requirements for adults?
- + What health-related investments would you prioritize in the state budget?
- + How will you improve the experiences of Georgians when they interact with state health programs, like applying for Medicaid or going to the public health department for care?

Statewide • regulator

Insurance Commissioner

WHAT DOES THE INSURANCE COMMISSIONER DO?

The Insurance Commissioner regulates Georgia's insurance industry and oversees Georgia Access, the state's official Health Insurance Marketplace.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

The office operates Georgia Access, reviews many insurance premium filings, investigates consumer complaints about insurance, licenses insurance companies and agents, and helps protect consumers purchasing health insurance.

1.3 million

Georgians purchase their health insurance through Georgia Access, the Marketplace this office operates. ([KFF](#))

EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT GEORGIANS

- + Operating Georgia Access, where 1.3 million Georgians purchase their health insurance
- + Reviewing health insurance premium filings, including insurance companies' justifications for premium increases each year
- + Enforcing insurance laws and consumer protections
- + Investigating consumer complaints and holding insurance companies accountable if necessary
- + Licensing insurers and agents to ensure that they serve clients according to state laws and act ethically

WHY THIS RACE MATTERS IN 2026

Georgia Access is entering a period of significant change as new federal Marketplace requirements take effect. The Insurance Commissioner will oversee many aspects of the Marketplace experience for consumers, and has a heavy influence on what insurance-related legislation is considered and passed by the General Assembly — including how friendly those laws may be to consumers or to insurance companies.

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

- + What would you do to make health insurance more affordable and easier to understand for Georgians who buy their own coverage through Georgia Access?
- + Would you ask the General Assembly to give you more power to limit health insurance premium increases?
- + How would you strengthen consumer protections in health insurance?



INSURANCE REGULATOR

State House & State Senate

Georgia General Assembly

Members of the Georgia House of Representatives are known as state representatives, and members of the Georgia Senate are known as state senators.

WHAT DOES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DO?

The Georgia General Assembly writes state laws and determines how Georgia's annual budget is spent.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

Lawmakers determine funding for Medicaid, public health, behavioral health, hospitals, and many other health programs. They also write legislation and pass new laws affecting access to care throughout Georgia.

NOTE

The Georgia General Assembly is **not** the U.S. Congress. Georgia's members of Congress are covered on [page 10](#).



LAWMAKING & THE BUDGET

EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT GEORGIANS

- + Funding Medicaid and public health
- + Proposing, hearing, and passing health care legislation
- + Investing in key health priorities like rural hospitals or mental health
- + Regulating health professions
- + Responding to federal policy changes

WHY THESE RACES MATTER IN 2026

Lawmakers will decide how Georgia responds to major federal health policy changes, determine how much the state invests in health care programs and services, and issue laws that may change access to care for Georgians.

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

Every state representative and state senator votes on the health care budget and on health legislation. Use the seven questions for every candidate.

[GO TO THE QUESTIONS →](#)

Statewide · presides over the Senate

Lieutenant Governor

WHAT DOES THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR DO?

The Lieutenant Governor presides over the State Senate and influences which legislation moves through the legislative process.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

The office determines which Senators chair (or lead) the committees that hear health care legislation, and influences which health care bills receive hearings, move through committees, and reach the Senate floor.

HOW A HEALTH BILL REACHES THE SENATE FLOOR

**BILL FILED → COMMITTEE ASSIGNED → HEARING → COMMITTEE VOTE
→ SENATE FLOOR**

The Lieutenant Governor shapes the middle of this path — who leads the committee, which committee hears the bill, and whether it gets a hearing at all.

EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT GEORGIANS

- + Appointing committee leadership
- + Deciding which committee will review a bill
- + Setting Senate priorities
- + Influencing the Senate's debate on bills

WHY THIS RACE MATTERS IN 2026

Health policy debates begin with legislative leadership. The Lieutenant Governor's priorities can influence which health care proposals receive serious consideration.



AGENDA SETTING

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

Ask how a candidate would use the office's agenda-setting power on health care — and use the seven questions for every candidate.

[GO TO THE QUESTIONS →](#)

Statewide • elections & licensing

Secretary of State

WHAT DOES THE SECRETARY OF STATE DO?

The Secretary of State oversees Georgia's elections and supports the Professional Licensing Boards Division.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

The office facilitates licensing for many health care professions. The Secretary of State also oversees elections, including ballot access and protections for people with disabilities or serious medical conditions who may need special accommodations or support.

START HERE AS A VOTER

This office runs the My Voter Page, where you can confirm your registration and see every race on your ballot.

[OPEN MY VOTER PAGE](#)

EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT GEORGIANS

- + Supporting health care licensing boards for doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals
- + Processing professional licenses, including how long it takes for a license to move through the full process
- + Administering elections
- + Maintaining voter registration systems

WHY THIS RACE MATTERS IN 2026

Efficient professional licensing helps maintain Georgia's health care workforce, while fair elections help ensure voters choose the leaders shaping health policy.



LICENSING & ELECTIONS

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

- + How would you improve professional licensing processes for health care workers?
- + What steps would you take to ensure elections remain secure, accessible, and efficient — especially for people with disabilities or other medical conditions who may need accommodations?

Statewide • legal

Attorney General

WHAT DOES THE ATTORNEY GENERAL DO?

The Attorney General represents Georgia in court, provides legal advice to state agencies, and enforces many consumer protection laws. This office also oversees mergers and acquisitions of hospitals, which impact access to and cost of care for the residents of those communities.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

The office may defend health laws, participate in litigation involving health policy, investigate health care fraud, and enforce consumer protections. The Attorney General may also decide whether to approve hospital mergers, including whether hospitals should be subject to community benefit agreements to ensure a merger helps, or does not harm, the communities it affects.

EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT GEORGIANS

- + Defending state laws
- + Investigating Medicaid fraud
- + Protecting consumers
- + Participating in health policy litigation
- + Reviewing hospital mergers and acquisitions

WHY THIS RACE MATTERS IN 2026

As new federal health policies are implemented, legal challenges could influence how those policies affect Georgians.



LEGAL AUTHORITY

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

Ask how a candidate would use the office's authority over hospital mergers, health care fraud, and consumer protection — and use the seven questions for every candidate.

[GO TO THE QUESTIONS →](#)

Federal • not a state office

Georgia's Members of Congress

U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. Georgia's members of Congress are elected separately from the state offices in this guide, but they still shape the health care decisions that affect Georgians.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

Georgia's members of Congress write federal laws, approve health care funding in the federal budget, and oversee federal agencies.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT HEALTH CARE?

Congress determines funding and policy for Medicaid, Medicare, Marketplace coverage, public health programs, and many other federal health initiatives.

EXAMPLES OF DECISIONS THAT AFFECT GEORGIANS

- + Passing federal health legislation
- + Funding federal health programs
- + Conducting oversight
- + Confirming agency leadership

WHY THESE RACES MATTER IN 2026

Congress will continue making decisions that shape Medicaid, Medicare, Marketplace coverage, prescription drug policy, and public health funding for years to come.



FEDERAL LAWMAKING

Georgia sends **14 representatives** to the U.S. House and **2 senators** to the U.S. Senate. Your House district depends on where you live; both senators represent the whole state.

[FIND YOUR DISTRICT](#)

QUESTIONS TO ASK CANDIDATES

Congressional candidates vote on Medicaid, Medicare, and Marketplace policy. Use the seven questions for every candidate.

[GO TO THE QUESTIONS →](#)

PART THREE

Take Action in Five Steps

Health care decisions affect every Georgian, regardless of age, income, insurance status, or where they live. Learning about the candidates and asking thoughtful questions can help you make an informed decision before you vote.

STEP 1

Find your ballot

Use Georgia's official My Voter Page to see the candidates and races that will appear on your ballot, verify your voter registration, find your polling place, and view important election information.

[FIND WHO'S ON YOUR BALLOT](#)

STEP 2

Learn about the offices

Review the responsibilities of each office to understand how elected officials shape health care in Georgia.

GOVERNOR

INSURANCE COMM.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LT. GOVERNOR

SECRETARY OF STATE

ATTORNEY GENERAL

CONGRESS

STEP 3

Ask questions

You don't have to wait for a debate or town hall to engage with candidates. Consider asking [the seven questions](#):

- + By emailing or calling the candidate's campaign
- + Through social media or online Q&A events
- + When candidates or campaign volunteers knock on your door
- + During meetings hosted by civic organizations, neighborhood associations, or advocacy groups

STEP 4

Compare candidates

As you evaluate candidates, consider whether they:

- + Demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities of the office they are seeking
- + Explain how their proposals would affect patients, families, and communities — especially those with fewer resources and a harder time accessing or affording care
- + Describe how they would work with other elected officials, agencies, and community organizations
- + Support their positions with facts, examples, or evidence
- + Explain how they would balance competing priorities and limited public resources

STEP 5

Share this guide

Once you've made your plan to vote, help others do the same. Share this guide with friends, family, and colleagues so they can go into the voting booth prepared.

HEALTHYFUTUREGA.ORG

BEFORE YOU VOTE

No single elected official can solve every health care challenge facing Georgia. But each office plays an important role in shaping policies that affect access to care, affordability, public health, and the strength of Georgia's health care system.

Learn more. Ask questions. Make a plan to vote.

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