

Governor Kemp's Vision Leads the Way

Georgia's healthcare system is on the brink of transformation thanks to the leadership of Governor Brian Kemp, who directed the Department of Community Health (DCH) to apply for a new State Directed Payment Program (DPP) and required that a meaningful percentage of its funding be dedicated to Graduate Medical Education (GME).

This move reflects a forward-thinking commitment to addressing Georgia's physician shortage while improving healthcare access and outcomes statewide. Governor Kemp's actions align Georgia with national leaders, where targeted investments in GME expansion have proven to strengthen both the quality of GME training and the quantity of residency training for the physician workforce.

On [August 14, 2025](#), the DCH Board approved the new Healthcare Improvement (HIP) DPP, a significant step forward for Georgia's healthcare infrastructure and physician workforce strategy.

Board Member Dr. Tommy Hopkins, long recognized for his commitment to expanding residency training in Georgia, urged the Board to allocate at least 20% of DPP funds to GME expansion to fill Georgia's unfilled ACGME-approved residency slots and to create new quality training programs. Such ensures that new funds are tied directly to measurable workforce outcomes and long-term improvements in access to physicians across the state.

Why It Matters

Where a physician trains often determines where they practice:

- **66%** of Georgia's medical school graduates leave the state for residency.
- Only **43%** of those who leave return to practice in Georgia.
- Whereas **73.1%** of physicians who complete both medical school *and* residency in Georgia stay to practice here.

Expanding and fully funding residency programs helps to ensure that Georgia will retain more of its medical graduates, building a sustainable, locally trained physician workforce.

As of July 15, 2025, Georgia has 497 ACGME-approved GME positions that remain unfilled. Filling these existing positions and funding new ones will improve access to care for millions of Georgians, particularly in underserved rural areas. Without such action, Georgia is projected to face a shortage of more than 8,000 physicians by 2030, leaving over 2.75 million Georgians with inadequate healthcare access.

GHEHI Commends the Leadership Shaping Georgia's Future

The Georgia Higher Education Healthcare Initiative (GHEHI) applauds:

- Governor Brian Kemp, for his bold vision in tying the new DPP to GME development and physician workforce growth.
- The DCH Board, for advancing this innovative funding mechanism.
- Dr. Tommy Hopkins, Senate Chairman Ben Watson, and Senate Appropriations Chairman Blake Tillery, for their advocacy of the GME funding mechanism, and
- Atrium Health Navicent, Piedmont Hospital, and Emory University, for their advocacy of accountability and transparency in DPP implementation.

Their collective leadership ensures that Georgia's healthcare investments deliver measurable, generational impact, overall building a stronger, healthier future for all Georgians.

Watch the full discussion: [DCH Board Meeting, August 14, 2025](#)

Read GHEHI's full public comments on DPP-GME expansion:

<https://www.gahehi.org/so/fePbT3OLs?languageTag=en>