PUBLIC NOTICE (REVISED)

Pursuant to 42 C.F.R. § 447.205, the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) is required to give public notice of any significant proposed change in its methods and standards for setting payment rates for services.

Georgia Strong for Healthcare ImProvement (HIP) Directed Payment Preprint (DPP)

Pending approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Department of Community Health proposes implementing a new hospital state-directed payment (DPP) program under Medicaid managed care, effective July 1, 2025.

Eligible public hospitals are defined as all state and non-state government hospitals, excluding Critical Access Hospitals. Eligible private hospitals are defined as all private, acute hospitals, excluding general cancer hospitals, free-standing children's hospitals, rehabilitative/psychiatric/long-term acute care hospitals, rural emergency hospitals, and geriatric psychiatric hospitals. All Critical Access Hospitals, except those eligible to participate in the Rural OB DPP program, and all hospitals currently participating in the GA-AID DPP program are excluded.

Under the proposed program, GA STRONG HIP payments are designed to supplement existing Medicaid-directed payments to ensure total reimbursement for eligible providers equals 100% of the average commercial rate (ACR) in aggregate. For hospitals currently receiving STRONG payments, set at 200% of the Medicaid base rate, GA STRONG HIP would provide an additional payment equal to the difference between that level and ACR. Similarly, for hospitals participating only in the Georgia Hospital Directed Payment Program (HDPP), which reimburses at Medicare plus 10%, GA STRONG HIP would cover the remaining differential between that amount and ACR. For hospitals participating in the Rural OB DPP program, which provides up to 250% of the Medicaid base rate, GA STRONG HIP would cover the remaining difference up to the ACR.

The GA-STRONG for Healthcare Improvement (GA-STRONG HIP) program is designed to enhance healthcare access, improve outcomes, and strengthen the state's healthcare workforce by supporting eligible hospitals that serve Medicaid enrollees. This change is projected to increase provider funding for critical services and reduce disparities in Medicaid reimbursement.

The following table reflects estimated SFY 2026 payments under the updated methodology:

	State Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
SFY 2026	$856,346,394 *	$1,692,303,588	$2,548,649,982

* Funded via intergovernmental transfer and provider payments

This public notice is available for review at each county Division of Family and Children Services office. An opportunity for public comment will be held on **July 1, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., via Zoom audio**. There will be **no in-person** attendance at the Department of Community Health (DCH).

Individuals who are disabled and need assistance to participate during this meeting should call (404) 656-4479 at least three (3) business days before the scheduled public hearing to ensure any necessary accommodations can be provided.

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88504631796?pwd=6fohW1iqiHr7hEXaCu2DW2b0LnX8YS.1

Meeting ID: 885 0463 1796
Passcode: 283152

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Meeting ID: 885 0463 1796
Passcode: 283152

Individuals wishing to comment in writing on any of the proposed changes should do so on or before **July 8, 2025**, to Danisha Williams c/o the Board of Community Health, Post Office Box 1966, Atlanta, Georgia 30301-1966. You may also email comments to Danisha Williams, danwilliams@dch.ga.gov or fax to 404-651-6880.

Comments submitted will be available for review by submitting a request via email to openrecordsrequest@dch.ga.gov. ***Please note that any comments submitted are subject to open records.***

If the proposed changes are presented to the Board for final action, relevant comments from written and public testimony will be provided to the Board. The Board expects to vote on the proposed changes

at the Board meeting to be held on **August 14, 2025,** at 10:30 a.m. at the Department of Community Health unless withdrawn or withheld by the Department for further review.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THIS 27th DAY OF JUNE 2025
Russel Carlson, Commissioner