**GPHA Legislative Report for week ending Feb. 6, 2015**

**By Scott Maxwell**

**Vaccinations**

State Senator Renee Unterman said this week that she had been keeping in touch with DPH Commissioner Brenda Fitzgerald regarding vaccinations. Unterman supports widening the ability for pharmacies to offer mandatory vaccinations, and she is optimistic proposed legislation allowing that will pass this year.

“It’s about accessibility. As we have less access to primary care physicians, you know, even small towns have a CVS now,” said Unterman.

She does not foresee legislation to change any of the current vaccination regulations in Georgia.

**Tobacco Tax**

Tobacco tax legislation is still out there . . . it just hasn’t taken form and been dropped into the hopper yet. Expecting something soon. It may be that the Senate amends a House bill dealing with some other tax issue, as the state constitution prohibits the Senate from initiating revenue-raising legislation.

**Hold Harmless**

If hold harmless dollars for counties that would otherwise lose under the most recent distribution formula are important to you, now would be a good time to let your representatives and senators know. The Transportation Funding Act is playing the role of vacuum cleaner in the FY 2016 budget. They are trying to fund it with $1 billion dollars without raising taxes. Easy to see how someone could have their gaze set on the $1.3 million the Governor recommended for hold harmless in his budget report.

**Several bills that may be of interest to the public health community saw action this past week. Here is an update. Click on the blue line to view the bill in its entirety.**

[HB 86, Creation of Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20152016/HB/86) (Rep. Tommy Benton-R)

Relating to services for the aging, so as to provide for the transfer of the Division of Aging Services to the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency; to provide for the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Board. **Status:** Referred to Human Relations & Aging Cmte, Passed Cmte with Substitute, Pending Rules Cmte

[HB 195, Interchangeable Biological Products](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20152016/HB/195) (Rep. Sharon Cooper-R)

Relating to pharmacists and pharmacies, so as to provide for substitutions of interchangeable biological products. **Status:** Referred to Health & Human Services Cmte

[HB 198, Suicide Prevention Training for Certified School Personnel](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20152016/HB/198) (Rep. Katie Dempsey-R)

Relating to student health in elementary and secondary education, so as to require annual suicide prevention education training for certificated school system personnel. **Status:** Referred to Education Cmte

[SB 51, Substitution of Drugs and Biological Products by Pharmacists](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20152016/SB/51) (Sen. Dean Burke-R)

Relating to pharmacists and pharmacies, so as to provide for substitutions of interchangeable biological products and drugs; to provide for requirements and limitations. **Status:** Referred to Health & Human Services Cmte, Passed Pharmacology Subcmte by Cmte Substitute, Referred to full Cmte, On Cmte Agenda Next Week

[SB 53, Reauthorization of LPC’s for Certain Acts](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20152016/SB/53) (Sen. Greg Kirk-R)

Revise sunset provision to 2018 for LPC’s to perform certain acts. **Status:** Referred to Health & Human Services Cmte, Passed Cmte, Pending Rules Cmte, Tabled in Senate (I don’t think the bill being tabled had anything to do with the bill’s content. I believe it was a logistical problem associated with other meetings being held in the Capitol. This bill can be moved off the table and back onto the debate calendar with a simple motion.)