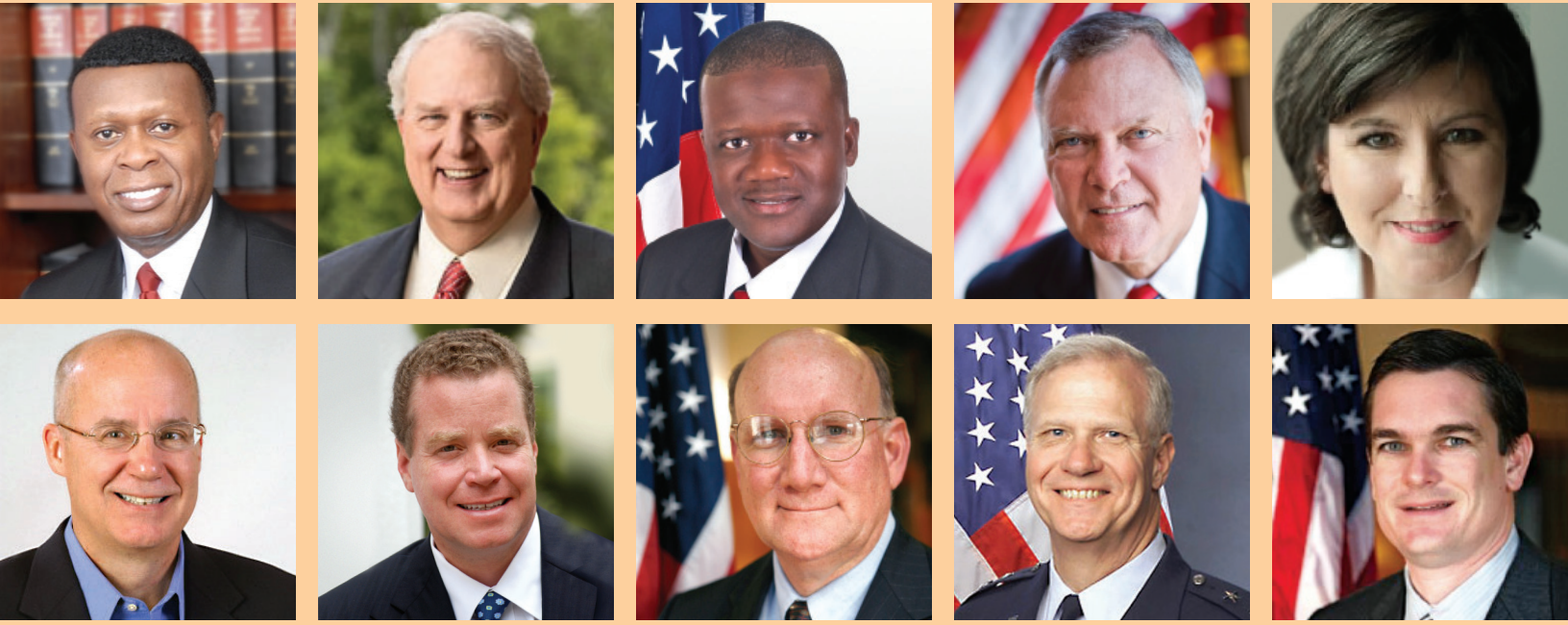


Georgia's Gubernatorial Candidates Address Our State's Most Critical Health Challenges



Election Guide 2010

About Election Guide 2010

Healthcare Georgia Foundation is pleased to present *Election Guide 2010: Georgia's Gubernatorial Candidates Address Our State's Most Critical Health Challenges*. The Election Guide was conceived as a truly nonpartisan public education effort designed to inform Georgia voters as they decide which road to follow towards better health and healthcare for our citizens. Election Guide 2010 seeks to promote the examination and discussion of the critical health issues facing our state today, and hopefully, open the door to new and innovative solutions.

History reminds us that Georgia too often has faltered in efforts to measurably improve the health of its residents. We have an unfortunate record of allowing health conditions to persist long after problems have been identified and solutions developed. We can see first-hand the effects of declining resources, the absence of leadership, public complacency, and the spiraling costs of poor health outcomes. Georgia ranks at or near the bottom among states on numerous measures of health status. We can and must do better!

As we see it, the 2010 gubernatorial election is a defining moment in the state's efforts to improve health and healthcare for all Georgians. In the context of the current national economic downturn, federal healthcare reform efforts, our state's declining revenues, and a population confronted with a host of intractable health problems...principled, informed leadership has never been so urgently needed.

The Foundation, in partnership with Mathews & Maxwell, Inc., a governmental affairs consulting firm, began work on this multi-purpose election guide in the fall of 2009. The purpose of the guide was to inform both voters and candidates, and to encourage leadership by all elected officials in efforts to address our state's most pressing health issues. Following a round-table discussion with more than a dozen representatives of various interest groups, a survey comprised of nine broad health questions was developed. Each known gubernatorial candidate was invited to provide a prepared response to the questions. Candidates responded to the questions between November 2009 and January 2010. The positions, opinions and policies of all the candidates are presented precisely as they were submitted by the candidate.

We are deeply indebted to each of these candidates—one of whom most likely will be Governor; all of whom are seeking to build a better Georgia—for their leadership and commitment to public service, and their participation in this project.

Table of Contents

- 4 **Thurbert Baker** - Democrat
- 7 **Roy Barnes** - Democrat
- 11 **Carl Camon** - Democrat
- 15 **Nathan Deal** - Republican
- 19 **Karen Handel** - Republican
- 22 **Eric Johnson** - Republican
- 24 **John Oxendine** - Republican
- 29 **DuBose Porter** - Democrat
- 33 **David Poythress** - Democrat
- 37 **Austin Scott** - Republican



Healthcare Georgia Foundation

Healthcare Georgia Foundation is a statewide, private independent foundation. The Foundation's mission is to advance the health of all Georgians and to expand access to affordable, quality healthcare for underserved individuals and communities. Through its strategic grantmaking, Healthcare Georgia Foundation supports organizations that drive positive change, promotes programs that improve health and healthcare among underserved individuals and communities, and connects people, partners and resources across Georgia.

Healthcare Georgia
Foundation
50 Hurt Plaza
Suite 1100
Atlanta, GA 30303
404.653.0990
404.577.8386 fax

healthcaregeorgia.org

Healthcare Georgia Foundation
grantmaking for health





Thurbert Baker - Democrat

Bio

Recent Experience: Attorney General and former State Representative

Thurbert Baker has been Georgia's Attorney General since 1997. Before taking office as Attorney General, Baker served five terms as a member of the Georgia House of Representatives and floor leader to former Governor Zell Miller. Born in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Thurbert Baker received his undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1974. Thurbert received his law degree from Emory University School of Law in 1979, and has lived and practiced law in Georgia his entire adult life since then. Attorney General Baker lives in Stone Mountain with his wife of 30 years, Catherine, a career teacher in the DeKalb County public schools. The Bakers are the proud parents of two adult daughters.

1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

We must improve all Georgians' access to affordable, quality healthcare, especially for children. The necessary state programs and costs will largely be determined by the outcome of the current debate in Congress. I can, however, tell you some of my goals and principles.

First, we must make sure that Georgians in all parts of the state have access to healthcare, particularly access to timely trauma and emergency services. Too many Georgians are too far from the lifesaving services they need should they become seriously ill or be critically injured. Second, we need to ensure that we are spending our healthcare dollars wisely by funding preventive care, especially for children and pregnant mothers. Many of our most expensive health problems can be prevented or their severity significantly reduced if we provide quality care to expectant mothers and children.

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

We need to ensure that every child has access to quality healthcare, especially ongoing access to

a primary care pediatrician. Addressing a child's healthcare needs as early as possible will pay benefits in many ways. The children will enjoy better lifelong health, they will be better able to learn in school, they will grow up to be more productive citizens, and we will be able to provide needed treatment before problems worsen and become much more expensive to treat.

3 Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

This question is difficult to answer until we see the result of the current healthcare debate in Congress. I believe that regardless of what happens in Washington, we need to ensure that all children have quality coverage, and we need to change our health insurance system to allow everyone the opportunity to buy affordable coverage, including those who currently have a disqualifying pre-existing condition. We also need to make health insurance more portable for people who have employer-provided insurance so that they do not lose coverage when their employment situation changes.



4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

We have no more important obligation than protecting the well being of our children. As I stated above, I believe ensuring that all children have access to quality healthcare means they will learn more in school, have a better quality of life, and be healthier and more productive adults. Making sure every child receives quality healthcare is not only a moral obligation, it is a wise investment because it saves us money over the long term.

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation? If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

I believe we must find a way to ensure that no part of our state is more than an hour of travel time from a trauma center. Science has shown that trauma patients have a much higher chance of survival if they receive trauma care within an hour of the accident. Funding a high quality trauma care network will be a top priority when I am Governor.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

We have a moral obligation to provide quality care and living conditions for our most vulnerable citizens. I believe we should focus as much as possible on providing treatment that will allow mentally ill persons to live in the community as long as they are not a threat to others or themselves. For those who must be institutionalized, we need to have facilities and programs that are focused on treatment and not just keeping people locked up.

In order to reach these objectives, we must provide the funding to live up to the agreement that was reached in January between the U.S. Department of Justice and the state Department of Human Resources. We have a legal and moral obligation to ensure that the terms the state has agreed to are not just words on a page but are followed through with action.

Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

We need to recognize that a person with a mental illness has a disease, and that disease should be treated just like others. We need to develop community mental health centers that not only provide residential treatment for those who need it, but can provide quality outpatient treatment for others.

Thurbert Baker, Democrat - *continued*

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia?

Public health services are critical, not just for persons who need treatment, but in protecting all of our citizens from contagious diseases and other health threats. It is a critical area both for healthcare and for public safety that has traditionally been underfunded in Georgia and around the nation. State budgeting is about priorities, and improving our public health infrastructure deserves a high priority.

What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

We need to ensure that our public health facilities are fully staffed and that they have the updated infrastructure they need to fulfill their missions. I believe it is a priority budget item, and when I am Governor, I will ensure that we have adequate funding for our public health facilities.

8 *Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).*

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain? If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

These are tough times, and we have many needs in healthcare and other parts of the state budget. I cannot, however, support any increase in taxes, especially when so many Georgians are suffering from job losses, foreclosures and other difficulties due to our economy. As I said above, budgeting is about priorities, and I believe that healthcare needs, particularly children's healthcare and public health, deserve a higher priority than we have given them over the last several years.

9 *In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?*

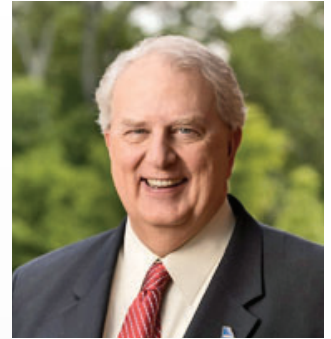
Our healthcare agenda over the next several years will be determined in large part by the outcome of the current debate in Washington. As I have stated, my priorities are to ensure that all children have access to quality healthcare, that we fund a high quality statewide trauma network, and that we ensure that our public health facilities have the resources they need to provide care and protect the public.

Roy Barnes - Democrat

Bio

Recent Experience: Former Governor, former State Senator, former State Representative and Attorney with The Barnes Law Group

Roy Barnes served as Georgia's governor from 1999–2003. Prior to taking office as governor, he served eight terms in the State Senate and six years in the State House of Representatives. Since his tenure as governor, Barnes devoted six months of his time to Atlanta Legal Aid before returning to law practice through the establishment of The Barnes Law Group. Barnes was born and raised in Mableton, Georgia. After earning an undergraduate degree and a law degree from the University of Georgia, he served as a prosecutor in the Cobb County District Attorney's office. Roy and his wife, Marie, live close to their three children and six grandchildren.



1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

Eighteen percent of Georgians are uninsured, and even more are underinsured. Those individuals that are inadequately insured are less likely to receive preventive and primary care services and ultimately face worse health outcomes; further, they are forced to rely on emergency health care services, driving up health costs for taxpayers and putting undue strain on hospitals and health care providers. A majority of Georgians receive health care benefits through their employer; however, as unemployment has risen in Georgia, so has the number of uninsured individuals. We can start reducing the number of uninsured Georgians by creating more jobs in the state.

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

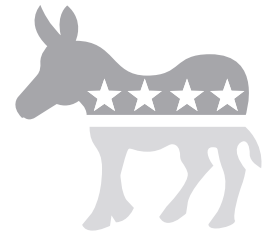
Moving Georgia out of the bottom ten unhealthiest states starts with the next generation. Studies have consistently shown that providing comprehensive preventative care for children drastically reduces their chances to develop health problems later in life, so we must take steps to ensure that every Georgia child has access to quality preventative and primary health care services. Our public schools

must also play a role in ensuring that Georgia children get a healthy start in life. We need to think more critically about the habits we teach our children in school, from menu options at lunchtime, to health and nutrition education, to the importance of physical education and exercise. There is a significant connection between a healthy childhood and adulthood free of medical problems.

3 Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006–2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

We know that a majority of Georgians receive health care benefits through their employers, so therefore it would follow that we must ensure that Georgians have access to jobs that provide employer-based coverage. For those Georgians who are employed but still do not have access to employer-based insurance, we can work to provide incentives for small businesses to participate in health insurance pools, thereby lowering the overall cost of providing insurance for Georgia workers. In terms of affordability, we can also work to improve provider choice, increase transparency of services and fees, and eliminate the barriers imposed by insurance agencies that unnecessarily inflate the health-care costs. By returning healthcare to a focus on the relationship between doctor and patient,



Roy Barnes, Democrat - *continued*

we will be able to eliminate the fees that inflate healthcare beyond an affordable range.

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

Regardless of what happens with health care reform at the federal level, the state can play an important role in ensuring that Georgia's children receive the health care services that they need to grow and thrive. Children have broad health needs that must be addressed to make certain that they develop into healthy adults, regardless of whether or not revenues are declining. In the face of increasing unemployment, and therefore increasing numbers of children losing access to their parents' employer-sponsored health coverage, the state can ensure that Medicaid and PeachCare continue to serve as effective insurance safety nets for lower income children. We can streamline enrollment procedures for our public health insurance programs, as reducing administrative burdens for enrollment and renewal of coverage increases the likelihood that eligible children will enroll and remain covered—during a recession, this is crucial, as parents who are accustomed to private insurance plans must apply for public health care assistance.

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation? If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

The Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission plays an important role in coordinating and overseeing Georgia's trauma facilities and ensuring that Georgians have adequate access to trauma care. Our state's trauma death rate is considerably higher than the national average, so it is crucial that we bolster our existing trauma care infrastructure while continuing to build a comprehensive state trauma care system that is funded in a common-sense, sustainable manner.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

Mental health patients in state institutions deserve the best care that Georgia can provide, but unfortunately our mental health system has been pushed beyond its limits in recent years. We must work to fulfill the provisions of the Department of Justice's settlement by improving incident reviews and investigations, reviewing administrative protocols, and iden-

tifying other possible improvements in patient mental health care.

Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

Community mental health services are a crucial component in our state's health care delivery system, and we should never stop seeking new ways to improve patient care.

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia?

My vision for public health in Georgia is simple—we need to have a public health system that addresses the needs of the diverse communities across our state. Prevention—not just treatment and preparedness—is vital, which means that we must be willing to support the vehicles that provide valuable public health services for Georgia families. Therefore, we must protect funding for grant-in-aid to the counties that need it most, while also providing county health departments with the resources they need to serve their unique populations.

What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

For public health agencies and workers to prevent and protect against the spread of disease, injuries, and disaster, a strong, cohesive public health infrastructure must be present in our state. In order to accomplish this, we must do several things. First, we need to make an honest assessment of our public health workforce

needs, and then provide opportunities for education and training to the public health workers of tomorrow. Second, we must bolster our state's public health capacity by joining forces with organizations from the private health sector as well as building strong public health organizations and leaders. Lastly, we must strengthen our public health information systems, which will allow public health officials to communicate with the public, gather and utilize data, and share crucial information with state agencies and officials, all in a more effective and efficient manner.

8 *Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).*

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain? If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

I never voted for a tax increase in the legislature, nor did I ever ratify a tax increase as Governor, and yet I was able to fund countless initiatives and programs during my tenure in government. We can achieve advances in health care funding if we focus on reducing waste, clarifying spending priorities, and eliminating unnecessary revenue losses through special interest tax exemptions. Instead of looking to our citizens' pockets for funding, we must look at where money coming into the capitol is leaking back out. In 1975, there were just a handful of exemptions to the sales tax. Currently, there are over 200 exemptions on the books. We cannot allow our growth revenue to be continually eroded, as has happened over the past several years.

Roy Barnes, Democrat - *continued*

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

First and foremost, we need to make it as easy as possible for every Georgian, regardless of age, race, or socioeconomic status, to receive health insurance. Second, we need to improve access to health care services—no matter where you live in Georgia, every individual in this state should be able to find affordable, quality health care services in their community. Additionally, we need to make sure that, regardless of the federal health care reform outcomes, Georgians are able to make their own choices when it comes to health care—we should all be able to choose our own physicians and hospitals. Lastly, in order to serve Georgia's ever-growing population, we must ensure that we have a highly skilled health care workforce and a finely tuned health care infrastructure in place in all corners of our state.

Carl Camon - Democrat

Bio

Recent Experience: Mayor, Educator, Air Force Veteran

Carl Camon served five terms as Mayor of Ray City, and as a member of the Southeast Georgia RDC Board of Directors, for four years. He served several years on the Georgia Municipal Association's (GMA) Board of Directors, and as Chairman of GMA's Environment Natural Resources Committee. Camon served as Chairman of the County & Municipal Probation Advisory Council for the State of Georgia for four years. He founded the nationally recognized Mayor's Youth Leadership Institute of Ray City and served nationally, for five years, as a Municipal Showcase Presenter at the National League of Cities Congress of Cities. Camon earned an Education Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership, and has fifteen years experience in education, as a Pre-K Director, High School Teacher, and Assistant Professor of Education. Camon is a U.S. Air Force Veteran of 10 1/2 years, and he is married to wife Angela, and they have four children.



1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

Currently our state is experiencing serious problems as it relates to Obesity. Obesity causes Diabetes, Heart Problems, High Blood Pressure. These problems may lead to other problems, such as, Kidney Disease, Vision Loss, and Stroke. Obesity is not a problem isolated to just one race, age group or gender, but it covers a broad spectrum of Georgians. Although there are other important healthcare concerns, such as AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and Cancer; Obesity is a preventable problem that affects Georgians of all ages.

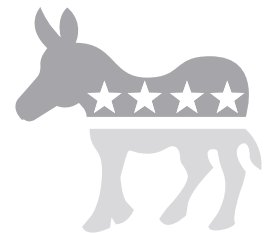
I intend to address the problem of obesity, by using funds that have already been allocated, and by using those funds in a more cost effective manner. Our team would lead the way to help combat Obesity, by launching Obesity prevention events at various Health Departments, and encourage those events to coincide with other events that are already scheduled, so as to reduce the associated cost. We must continue our efforts to ensure that our schools are serving nutritious meals and that Georgia's families are doing the same. We can also include information in newsletters that are already in circulation to state foodservice departments and other state operated facilities, as well. Our team would use Georgia Public Television, and other media outlets, as a means to broadcast information regarding Obesity preventative measures to Georgians all across our state.

As Governor, I would address the state on this and other very important issues related to health and healthcare in Georgia.

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

Preventative Care is the single most important initiative that I would use to move Georgia off of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states list. Our state is currently paying millions of dollars each year for ailments that many Georgians have that could have been prevented. People choose to live promiscuous lifestyles, smoke, drink, eat unhealthy, and not exercise. As Governor of Georgia, I would encourage all Georgians to take every measure necessary, to prevent health problems, by having a proper diet; incorporating a reasonable exercise routine, and living an overall healthy lifestyle.



Carl Camon, Democrat - *continued*

3 *Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.*

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

Current measures have been taken at the federal level to ensure that more Americans have access to affordable health insurance. As Governor, I would put policies into place that would ensure that those Georgians, who choose to, would have the opportunity to take advantage of the positive aspects of this monumental healthcare reform. The Georgia Department of Community Health estimates that Georgia would incur expenses between \$100 million to \$200 million per year when the program begins in 2013. The comparison of the current contributions that the state makes toward healthcare for Georgians, combined with indigent care costs will provide a clearer picture as to whether or not the estimates above will have a significant impact on our state budget.

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

The state should take every action necessary to promote health and prevent diseases among Georgia's children. Traditionally, children who have been exposed to a good education at a young age, often fair better, than those who have not. Likewise, children who are taught to eat healthy and exercise regularly will more than likely be better off, than those who have not been taught. The state should lead the way

in educating children about good health habits and measures to that help prevent diseases.

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation?

Yes, I support the current aims, until further research is conducted that may offer a better approach to appointing commission members; and a more sound strategy for funding.

If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

As Governor, the ultimate goal would be to fully fund the trauma network, but reality dictates that funding be contingent upon the state's budget, which is based on projected revenue. I support the current "Super Speeder Traffic Law", which is one method to help provide funding for the trauma network. As Governor, I would recommend that any funds that have not been expended from a previous year's budget, be carried over to the next year's budget, in an effort to perpetuate funding.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

As an educator, I have worked with students with mental disabilities for over a decade. I understand the needs of these individuals and their families. As Governor, I would ensure that all recipients of state funds and federal funds administered via the state follow federal and state guidelines regarding patient care and protection. I would also take necessary measures to ensure that funds are used in a more concentrated manner to address specific mental illness needs. I would also require recipients to be accountable, and institute benchmarks that when analyzed, will serve as evidence of whether or not various requirements have been met.

Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

I don't believe that we have failed in the provision of community mental health services entirely, but there is always room for improvement in every aspect of providing services for Georgia's mentally ill. Recently, mental health services in many communities have been reduced, due to a reduction in state funding. The current economic status of our state has forced us to find ways to streamline services in nearly every state department. Future funding will be based on our state's ability to improve its current economic condition, by the creation of jobs, which generates revenue. Another factor is regarding whether or not our state's leaders are willing to be accountable and transparent with state funds, which ensures that the funds we do receive are used in the most effective manner.

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia?

My vision for the role of public health in Georgia is that public health agencies have the tools (funds, facilities, staff) necessary to meet the needs of Georgians.

What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

My vision for building public health capacity and infrastructure is based on a regional concept. The ideal concept is to have a public health facility in every city in Georgia. This would ensure that Georgians would have access to healthcare in their own communities. The regional and most practical concept, which is again, dictated by the level of funding, is that public health facilities be located regionally, with adequate and affordable transportation to and from these facilities. The current global economic crisis has forced us rethink how we conduct business in our state. It is not business, nor politics as usual. Whether we like it or not, our world is changing everyday, and we have to be willing to embrace those changes, while continuing to provide necessary public health services for Georgians.

Carl Camon, Democrat - *continued*

8 Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain?

Our current distinction may be a contributor to why we are ranked among the top ten economically challenged states. In that respect, I do not think it is important to maintain this distinction. Also, there is an assortment of variables concerning tax collections, especially when each state is compared to forty-nine other states. However, it is clear that our current system of collection needs restructuring.

If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

States that invest in the health of its citizens are winners. States that do not realize the connection between providing adequate health care services and having healthier citizens are losers at the end of the game. I believe that we should explore every opportunity to invest in health services for Georgians. I have not committed to increasing any fees or taxes, but if the need arises, it may require an increase in certain fees and higher tobacco taxes, in return for a healthier Georgia.

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

My agenda for healthcare in Georgia encompasses ideals that provide for access to adequate and affordable healthcare for all Georgians. I wholeheartedly believe in preventative healthcare and will promote those beliefs throughout my service as Governor of Georgia, if elected. I believe that Physicians should have a seat at the discussion table, especially since they are the providers of the healthcare. I believe that Georgians should have the right to choose the type of healthcare they want. I believe that all stakeholders, including insurance companies should be held to the highest level of accountability, as it pertains to the level of care and other cost related factors.

Nathan Deal - Republican

Bio

Recent Experience: Congressman, former State Senator, former Juvenile Court Judge, Attorney and Army Veteran

Nathan Deal is the U.S. Representative to Congress serving the people of Georgia's Ninth District. He was first elected to Congress in 1992 and today serves the citizens of 15 North Georgia counties. Representative Deal is a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. He was raised in Sandersville, Georgia and graduated from Mercer University in 1964 and Mercer Law School in 1966. He lives in Gainesville, Georgia with his wife Sandra and has four children and six grandchildren.



1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

Given the breadth of issues encompassed within healthcare delivery in our state, it is difficult to enumerate one priority over another. However, ensuring availability of care and access to healthcare services are challenges which are consistent across all fields of healthcare (See question #3). Being able to improve the public health in our state depends upon securing a highly-trained and effective healthcare workforce and to provide support to build needed healthcare jobs throughout every corner of the state. I support efforts to provide healthcare to Georgia's children who are in need and support school-based nursing clinics. These facilities often serve as a child's only access point to primary care and provide critical healthcare support to Georgia's children who would otherwise not be treated today.

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

Unfortunately, far too many Georgians are suffering from illnesses as a result of lifestyle choices. Healthy eating, physical wellness and disease prevention have real and lasting impacts not only on the lives of Georgians, but on state health programs as costs from avoidable ill-

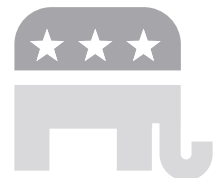
nesses are reduced. As Governor, I will work with the appropriate Departments, healthcare providers and patients across the state to advocate for policies which promote healthy living and disease prevention.

3 Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

Access to affordable health insurance is dependent upon a number of laws and regulations—some state and some federal—which govern the purchase and sale of health insurance policies as well as the provisional structure of the policy and its benefits. Under today's health insurance system, a large majority of health insurance regulation remains vested with the individual states, giving Georgia's legislature, Insurance Commissioner, and Governor the flexibility which is needed to create a regulatory and economic environment which will drive down premiums, improve coverage, and ensure more Georgians have access to the care which they need.

As a member of the United States Congress, I have had the privilege to serve as Chairman and now Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce's Subcommittee on Health and have devoted considerable effort in Washington to improve federal policy affect-



Nathan Deal, Republican - *continued*

ing healthcare. Currently in the 111th Congress, I have introduced several bills which would improve access to affordable health insurance. I support fully-funding high-risk pools and reinsurance programs for individuals with 'pre-existing' conditions and tightening consumer protections to prevent unwarranted exclusions of coverage. Further, I have legislation which would put federal consumer protections provided within the individual market 'on par' with those within the group market which are considerably more robust. I support allowing states to enter into regional compact agreements to increase economies of scale, thus reducing per capita premium costs. Additionally, the current economic situation underscores regulatory barriers which result in millions of people who have lost their job from maintaining coverage. Federal health insurance continuation law prescribed by the Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA) often results in policies which many families in Georgia cannot afford and results in loss of certain consumer protections when coverage has to be dropped. I have offered legislation in the House which would ensure these consumer protections remain available for families and would provide the regulatory flexibility needed for families to change their health insurance plan to something which they can afford. I also have offered legislation which would provide Georgia's Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) additional options not available in today's one-size-fits-all approach. My legislation would provide these individuals with the ability to use this assistance to participate in an employer-sponsored plan which best fits their individual coverage needs. Encouraging enrollment in options already available to thousands of Georgians must be a priority, as well. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of those who make up our states 'uninsured' population have options made available to them through their employer or other programs, but simply do not enroll. I have offered legislation which would overcome the inertia which results

in thousands of individuals being uninsured by providing the ability for employers to enroll new employees in a health insurance plan offered to their employees by default, so long as the opportunity to elect out of such coverage exists without any penalty.

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

Given our current economic environment both at the state and federal level, I believe it is important that elected leadership focus on providing the most critical services while working to reduce duplication and ineffective utilization of limited dollars. Preventing disease and promoting the welfare of Georgia's children is one such priority. The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), known as PeachCare in Georgia, has served a critical role in bridging the gap of care for countless children across our state since the program was established in 1997.

Earlier this year, Congress reauthorized the State Children's Health Insurance Program and changed a number of policies within the law designed to ensure the program focuses on providing care for children as it was originally intended. In addition to relaxing standards to ensure only eligible individuals gain access to SCHIP program resources, millions of adults and higher-income families in other parts of the country are able to enroll in coverage designed to protect our nation's most vulnerable children. I offered an amendment which would have prohibited states from enrolling these individuals before ensuring that at least 90% of children who are below 200% of poverty which are eligible for SCHIP benefits are enrolled. The amendment was unfortunately rejected.

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation? If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

Determining the appropriate level of funding for critical programs such as the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission depends upon a host of variables which are often difficult to predict, particularly as our state continues to feel the true weight of our nation's economic downturn and is forced to make difficult choices. As Governor, I will work with the Georgia General Assembly to ensure all critical healthcare programs are funded as fully as possible given the state's limited resources, and without adding to the tax burden of hardworking families across the state who are likewise challenged to balance their budgets.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation? Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

At the federal level, I supported reauthorization of federal mental health parity law during the 110th Congress. This critical law ensures

patients in need of mental health services maintain access to needed care, and as Governor, I will continue my efforts to ensure Georgians maintain needed access to critical mental health services.

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia? What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

Public health is critical to our state in protecting our population against disease and ensuring Georgia remains home to a strong and effective student body and workforce ready to perform. We are blessed as residents of our great state to serve as a home to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and numerous world-class health research and education institutions, and as Governor, I would advocate policies which harness the power of these institutions' public outreach efforts for the betterment of the people of our state.

I also support the mission of our state's Community Health Centers and will work to continue to support their efforts to provide care to the citizens of Georgia. During consideration of the "Community Health Center Reauthorization Act" last year, I was actively engaged in bipartisan-bicameral negotiations which led to its successful passage and signing into law and worked to ensure Georgia's Health Centers benefit fully from the law. Community Health Centers fill a critical gap in the continuum of care in our state and as Governor, I will work to advance policies which encourage more healthcare providers to volunteer their skills to

Nathan Deal, Republican - *continued*

enhance access for patients. I have advocated for federal liability protection for such volunteers for many Congresses and will continue to encourage similar approaches be made both at the state and federal level.

8 Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain? If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

At a time of economic downturn, in particular, I believe the state government first has an obligation to the taxpayers of Georgia to look internally for resources. Financing public health activities involve a complex set of benefits and consequences which must be evaluated in the light of changing circumstances. As Governor, I will work with the General Assembly to address the fiscal needs of our state, keeping the potential benefits and consequences consistently at the forefront of my decision-making.

During consideration of the "Children's Health Insurance Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA)" in both the 110th and 111th sessions of Congress, additional excise tax revenues were included to finance expansions of the SCHIP program. Through a lengthy and somewhat repetitive legislative process, I was presented with a vote eight different times which, among other provisions, would approve additional federal taxes on tobacco products if passed. I consistently voted against the measure each time it was brought to the floor for a vote and will consistently oppose regressive taxes such as this.

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

Given the substantial role of state governments in the regulation of healthcare and health insurance, many opportunities exist to improve upon Georgia's healthcare delivery system. As Governor, I will utilize continued experience working in Congress on healthcare issues for the state and will work with the Georgia General Assembly, the state Insurance Commissioner, the Congress, healthcare providers and their patients to enact proven reforms to our healthcare delivery system which reduce cost, improve quality, and ensure all Georgians maintain the freedom over their healthcare decision-making.

Karen Handel - Republican

Bio

Recent Experience: Former Secretary of State, former Fulton County Commission Chair, and former CEO of North Fulton Chamber of Commerce.

Karen Handel was elected in November 2006 as Georgia's first Republican Secretary of State. As the president and CEO of the North Fulton Chamber of Commerce Secretary Handel was directly responsible for working with state, local, national and international organizations to bring job growth to north Fulton County. She has also served as an executive at several Fortune 500 companies, including global eye care company CIBA Vision and international accounting firm KPMG. Handel lives in Roswell, Georgia with her husband, Steve.



1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

2 *National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.*

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

3 *Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.*

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

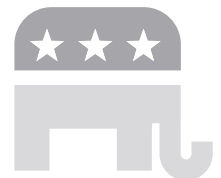
Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation? If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation? Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia? What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?



Karen Handel, Republican - *continued*

8 Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain? If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

The following letter was provided by Karen Handel in response to the Healthcare Georgia Foundation healthcare survey request.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Healthcare Georgia Foundation's candidate questionnaire.

In light of the pending federal legislation to reform health care and its impact on the states, I have chosen to respond to your questionnaire with this letter, which provides a fundamental understanding of my views on health care and how I would address these issues as Governor.

First, the legislation currently in conference in the United States Senate and House of Representatives would have a significant and detrimental impact on states, especially Georgia. This legislation represents a multi-billion dollar unfunded mandate through the expansion of Medicaid on the states. This unfunded mandate comes at a time when our budgets, especially in the areas of public health and mental health, are already stretched to the brink.

Second, this Federal legislation will significantly hinder other innovative reforms. We can all agree that reforms are necessary in order to increase private insurance coverage and accessibility to those who currently may not be able to afford it. Research by the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, among others, indicates that a growing number of workers who are employed

cannot afford the insurance provided by their employers.

As Governor, I will work with the legislature to develop a program to provide credits to those who cannot currently afford the full employee portion of employer-provided insurance. This credit program will "bridge the gap" to employer-provided, private sector insurance and serve as an alternative to Medicaid or lack of insurance. I believe that better, more cost-effective coverage can be achieved if the Federal government allows the states the flexibility to design a system of credits for those who don't currently qualify for Medicaid.

It is estimated that individuals with chronic diseases account for approximately 75% of all healthcare spending. A system of subsidies for the uninsured to purchase private insurance could be designed in a way that actually encourages healthier living and preventive care by linking the subsidy to certain healthier living criteria, such as regular and/or preventive check-ups, consistent maintenance and/or preventive medication, smoking cessation, and weight loss.

The benefits of these and other provisions can lead to healthier Georgians, as well as have a positive impact on long-term spending on health care. Safeway, for example, has lowered health care costs by providing incentives for individuals who take steps to avoid these types of conditions or at least mitigate the expensive complications associated with unhealthy behaviors and lack of preventive care.

With regard to the Trauma Care network, Georgia must have a dedicated revenue source in order to build out a system that can meet the needs of Georgians. The new "super speeder" fines may provide such a revenue stream. However, it is unclear whether this will serve as a consistent revenue source or if it will meet the needs of the network. There is also merit to the proposal that would redirect the state property

tax, approximately \$85,000,000 annually, to Trauma Care.

The argument for more revenues, and indirectly or directly for higher taxes, is far too often seen as the solution for issues, including health care. Let me be very direct: I do not support higher taxes for health care or any other issues. Rather, Georgia must prioritize its spending and get refocused on the mission-critical functions of state government—which obviously includes programs in this area. I see this time as our opportunity to fundamentally change what we are doing and how we are doing.

We must also aggressively and tirelessly pursue Medicaid fraud and waste and ensure that all funds are being utilized in the best, most efficient way. It is simply unfair and unrealistic to ask the people of Georgia—including those uninsured citizens who would supposedly benefit from increased funding—to pay higher taxes when we are not managing programs efficiently.

When it comes to mental health and mental illness, it is clear that Georgia must make significant improvements. As Governor, I will turn to those who know the issue best, seeking their counsel and guidance, having these experts serve in key positions and engaging them in the development of a comprehensive plan to address the state's challenges in this area. I will seek out and embrace innovative programs and approaches, such as public-private partnerships like those established in Florida.

I have personally seen the positive impact that innovative programs, such as Just People, can have in our communities. As Governor, my goal will be to identify those programs that will help those in our community with mental health issues and mental illness to reach their fullest potential.

We should recognize that our Mental Health system will be under greater stress in the coming years as U.S. Military personnel return home. We must begin our preparation now

by partnering with the U.S. Military and the Veterans' Administration to develop programs to ensure that we give our best to those who gave their best for this Nation.

There are several other innovations and reforms that, as Governor, I will consider in order to provide better health care, while also potentially saving money. These include:

- Explore opportunities to allow Georgia citizens to purchase private insurance from providers in other states, similar to what is available in the car insurance market
- Encourage transparency in the provider markets by providing a platform for consumers to check prices and view quality measures, such as the program currently available at www.ghlc.org.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the state-mandated coverage for the state health benefit plan, as well as the small group market, to identify savings and ways to lower costs.

Clearly, the status quo in health care is unacceptable for our state, for the providers, and, most importantly, for Georgians. There are many innovative ideas and potential solutions to our state's health care issues that we must pursue in order to flatten the cost curve for health care while seeking a higher quality of care. I've mentioned several here, but I most certainly do not have all of the answers. If I have the privilege of being Governor, I will welcome Healthcare Georgia Foundation to the table as my partner in identifying the best way forward on these important issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questionnaire. I look forward to working with you in the future.



Eric Johnson - Republican

Bio

Recent Experience: Architect and former State Senator President Pro Tem

Eric Johnson of Savannah was first elected to the Senate from the Savannah area's 1st District in 1994. Johnson is the Senate Minority Leader and a member of the Appropriations, Finance and Public Utilities, Rules, and Transportation Committees. Prior to his election to the state Senate, Johnson served one term in the Georgia House of Representatives from 1993-94. A graduate from Tulane University, he is currently an architect with the firm of Hussey, Gay, Bell and DeYoung International. Johnson and his wife, Kathryn, live in Savannah and are the parents of two children.

1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

3 Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

4 Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.

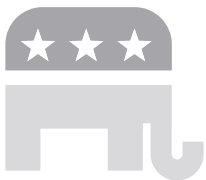
Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

5 Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation? If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

6 Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation? Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?



7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia? What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

8 *Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).*

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain? If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

The following statement was provided by Senator Eric Johnson's campaign office in response to the Healthcare Georgia Foundation healthcare survey request.

Eric has a proven record of advocating for policies that increase access to and affordability of quality healthcare. He will continue to do so as Governor. Throughout the course of the campaign, we will be unveiling his innovative, forward looking healthcare agenda.

January 7, 2010



John Oxendine - Republican

Bio

Recent Experience: State Insurance Commissioner

John W. Oxendine was first elected Georgia Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner in 1994 and is now serving his fourth term in office. He is also the state's Safety Fire Commissioner, Industrial Loan Commissioner, and Comptroller General. Prior to taking office, Oxendine was with the law firm of Oxendine & Associates. He also served with distinction on the State Personnel Board, and was elevated to Chairman of the Board by Governor Joe Frank Harris in 1990. In 1984, Oxendine enrolled at Mercer University in Macon, where he received his bachelor degree in 1984 and his law degree in 1987. Currently, he resides in Gwinnett County with his wife Ivy and their children.

1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

Economic development—jobs—is directly impacted by an effective health care delivery system. In order for Georgia to compete for economic development opportunities and jobs, Georgia must have a modern, effective, and affordable health care delivery system.

Georgia must have a true statewide trauma network. Our small communities do not have a health care delivery system which, again, impacts economic development and our ability to grow jobs in Georgia.

There's a clear need for electronic health care - electronic medical records will save lives. Georgia requires a continuous and dedicated source of funding to establish a statewide trauma system.

Georgia needs reforms that ensure the adequacy of payment to physicians, reduce administrative burdens to allow for more actual treatment and less paperwork in the physician-patient relationship.

Georgia must retain the remaining elements of the tort reform bill passed in 2005 including the cap on non-economic damages; this will encourage more doctors to practice in Georgia.

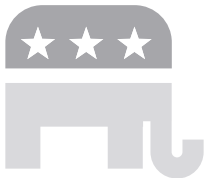
2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

According to their report, Georgia's challenges include a low high school graduation rate with 62.4 percent of incoming ninth graders who graduate within four years and a high incidence of infectious disease at 24.6 cases per 100,000 of our population. My Administration will work on both of these important and actionable issues.

Again, Georgia must have effective health care delivery system. In order for Georgia to compete for economic development opportunities and jobs, Georgia must have a modern, effective, and affordable health care delivery system.

When you have a percentage of the population who are in an unsafe health bracket, it affects so many aspects of life. Insurance rates are affected in an adverse manner. Economic development is affected in a negative manner. Georgia requires more cooperation in the health care community on prevention.



3 *Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.*

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

The issue of the uninsured requires a multifaceted approach rather than the government-centric solution that is being proposed in Washington, D.C. Georgia should pursue additional incentives to encourage individuals to purchase health insurance. Individuals should be afforded the same tax incentives to purchase insurance as businesses are. Putting the individual back in charge of their health insurance would lead to reduced costs. We should also make the state more attractive as a business location for health insurers by reducing the insurance premium tax and passing on the savings to consumers.

While Georgia has been a leader in the area of health insurance portability, I would pursue additional avenues to enhance an individual's ability to maintain their insurance policies between jobs or when faced with a life-changing situation such as divorce or the death of a spouse.

Consumer education is key to keeping down the costs of health insurance. I have long supported and will continue to support wellness initiatives that encourage healthy lifestyles in return for reduced premiums. Similarly, we must also continue working to educate consumers about the range of health insurance choices available to Georgians.

I would also work to further increase the utilization of technology in healthcare similar to the programs my office initiated in telemedicine and teleradiology.

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) recently launched a consumer-friendly Web site which provides Georgians with price and quality health information as well as other health and healthcare information. Georgia must continue to provide free, accessible, transparent information to our citizens.

Georgia must reach out in more proactive ways to local clinics and find resources so that preventative care can occur away from emergency rooms. This includes non-profit health centers that provide a medical home for a reduced cost or even no cost. Centers like Mercy Health Center in Athens and the Good News Clinic in Gainesville are good examples.

Additionally, we must provide funding for school nurses and age appropriate health care in our schools.

John Oxendine, Republican - *continued*

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation?

I have long worked to ensure that Georgians have access to quality and effective medical care throughout the state through initiatives such as the Georgia Telemedicine Network and certainly support the goal of developing a viable and effective trauma network in Georgia.

If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

The State needs to be a partner with the local hospitals in maintaining existing trauma centers and adding new facilities. As a state, Georgia should strive to provide the full funding necessary to develop and maintain a comprehensive trauma network in Georgia, particularly in non-metropolitan areas that do not typically have access to the full range of medical services and facilities. To that end, sufficient funding is really about establishing priorities and the proper use of taxpayer dollars. As I've long advocated, I would work to eliminate non-essential spending in state government and focus state revenues and activities towards areas where government assistance is appropriate, such as the development of a robust trauma network and ensuring that our providers have the resources and ability to provide critical trauma care.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

Protecting our most vulnerable citizens must be our top priority. I am very concerned about this matter. I agree it is a shame on Georgia and under my Administration Georgia will find a humane solution to this matter.

I will meet with all the stakeholders in the state who have been passionately working on this issue so that I might listen to them and learn from them. I will ask Judge Charles A. Pannell to brief me and my Administration so that that we might work in an expedient manner to find appropriate solutions.

Furthermore, I will tour Georgia Regional Hospital/Atlanta, Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, East Central Regional Hospital in Augusta, Southwestern State Hospital in Thomasville, Georgia Regional Hospital in Savannah and all facilities under state care—unannounced - to get a first hand understanding of conditions at our state facilities.

Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

I would not use the word failed. Georgia has many dedicated and caring citizens who have dedicated their professional careers to the care of others. However, I will acknowledge that Georgia can and will continue to improve in this area.

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia?

I believe that taking care of public health saves the people of Georgia money and I will work to ensure Georgia funds preventative health programs. The reality is that Georgia is facing serious challenges to the state budget in the next several years. I am not going to make a promise I cannot honor just to score political points. What I will promise is that I will be personally involved in our transformation of state government. I will put a high priority on public health. There is no question that a healthy Georgia is a more prosperous Georgia.

What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

The state must be active in leading the effort for a strong statewide public health infrastructure. We must put every option on the table, embrace new technologies, find opportunities to partner with the private sector, and use every opportunity to raise awareness of this important issue.

8 *Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).*

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain? If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

I will oppose any effort to raise taxes. I am going to transform the way we manage state government. I am willing to consider new ways to raise revenue—but I will not raise taxes.

9 *In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?*

The first and most important aspect of health care for the immediate future is to use the power of the office of Governor to oppose the Obama Administration's efforts to remove healthcare from the private sector and make it a part of the federal government. I feel strongly that healthcare must be a private sector entity and that people must be free to choose the doctor of their choice and that doctors must be free to practice medicine without interference from the government.

I will work to improve and lower health care cost in Georgia. A large amount of a person's health status is determined by choices they make surrounding diet, exercise, and consumption of tobacco and alcohol. Relationships, family status, and the physical environment play significant roles as well. We have a great "sick care" system. If you have cancer, for example, or if you need heart surgery, your odds of survival and recovery are far better in America than elsewhere in the world. But we must do a better job recognizing how to improve in other areas. I agree with the Georgia Public Policy Foundation that a comprehensive approach to improving health involves promoting good diets and exercise among Georgia's schoolchildren. It is during a child's early years that habits

John Oxendine, Republican - *continued*

are formed for a lifetime. It is critical that kids through the high school level consume a proper diet and engage in rigorous physical activities at least several times a week. This would cost the state next to nothing and have very real, long-term, positive health effects on Georgia's children it will help stave off, for example, the explosion in adult-onset diabetes and all its related complications. It is better to strike at the root of any problem than to try and treat the symptoms later on. Consumerism and transparency can make Georgians healthier. Healthier people are happier, more productive, and cost less. Finding innovative ways to focus existing subsidies and to encourage portable, affordable, individually owned health insurance will improve the health of the uninsured. These are the ideas that can be implemented immediately to improve health in Georgia.

My Administration will support a consumer-driven, free-market based system, Georgian's deserve portable coverage that isn't tied to the employer and we must work to use technology to improve overall healthcare services in Georgia.

DuBose Porter - Democrat

Bio

Recent Experience: State House Minority Leader, Newspaper Editor and Attorney

DuBose Porter represents House District 143 in the Georgia House of Representatives, serving part of Johnson and Laurens counties. Porter was first elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1982. In January 2003, he was elected Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives, and in 2005 he was elected Minority Leader of the Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives. Porter attended Cumberland Law School at Samford University. Upon graduation, he went back to Dublin and formed the law firm of Nelson & Porter. In 1987, Porter and Griffin Lovett purchased the Dublin Courier Herald. DuBose is married to Carol Dodd of Wrightsville, and they have four sons.



1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

The most pressing health conditions relate to chronic diseases/conditions and include cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, and chronic lung conditions. Obviously, even within this group there is tremendous overlap in cause and effect.

The single most pressing healthcare problem is the lack of access to prompt, quality care for a significant percentage of Georgians, in both rural and urban areas of our state. This may be viewed objectively by noting that Georgia ranks approximately 40th in all-source health care funding and ranks in the bottom 10 unhealthiest states.

Addressing the chronic conditions noted above requires at least a two-pronged approach, including education and direct access to primary care.

"An ounce of prevention..." is still true. We could do a much better job of emphasizing health education and its importance on one's long term wellbeing during school. Likewise, with a "captive audience" one could screen for correctable conditions early and periodically, and follow up with case management.

As Governor, I would work to:

1. Teach health and nutrition; require PE; and screen for HBP, elevated lipids ("cholesterol"), and glucose and track those with suboptimal results.

2. Along with health and nutrition education, stress lifestyle decisions, including avoidance of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco and increase access to dental care for school children and dental hygiene in their educational programs.

3. Improve recruitment of quality primary care providers for Georgia.

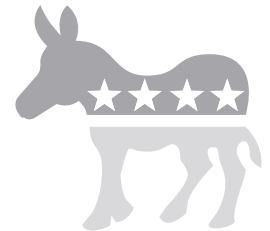
I also support enhancing the attractiveness of private practice to encourage more private providers to locate in areas of need. This could either be through tax breaks or enhanced reimbursements.

In summary, Georgia's healthcare problems include the large number of uninsured, a failed behavioral health and developmentally-disabled state system, a marginal public health system, lack of a statewide trauma system, and financially struggling hospitals, especially in rural Georgia. All of these challenges need to be addressed. As noted, I see the most pressing issue as the large number of our citizens who are uninsured or otherwise lack access to basic primary medical and dental care.

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008)?

I believe we have to start with improving education because it can cure a great deal of Georgia's problems. For example, high school



DuBose Porter, Democrat - *continued*

graduation rates and the number of people living in poverty is largely influenced by one's family situation and public education. As Governor, I will make education a priority once again, along with my agenda as laid out in the response to Question 1, which will help us move out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states and among the bottom 40's in education as well.

3 *Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.*

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

First let me say that pending federal legislation will likely effect this issue. But as Governor, I would continue efforts to expand medical education in Georgia—medical, nursing, and dental schools—and be creative and proactive in developing incentives to recruit and retain medical professionals, particularly in underserved areas.

I'm also the one who led the efforts to protect the threshold levels in PeachCare when it was under attack two years ago. I have since sponsored legislation to go to the new threshold levels, which would insure more children in Georgia.

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

See number one. The State should invest now in the young to provide for improvement in the future. This is again to be addressed through education, and I fought to keep school nurses in the school system. As Governor, I would

also ask public health departments and the Department of Education to collaborate on efforts such as taking junk food out of school settings. Prevention and education are the keys to promoting healthy children.

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation?

Yes, I support the aims included in SB 60, and I am open to future legislation that supports the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission.

If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

I support funding at a level proposed by trauma professionals, and I voted for the Super Speeder bill. Furthermore, I sponsored HR 293, which would ensure in the Constitution that fees collected by the state go where they are intended to be appropriated, instead of into the general fund. I also co-sponsored HB 148, which would have added a \$10 fee for local phone service to fund trauma care in the state.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

First, we would stop across the board cuts and implement priority-based budgeting. In that process, we will make mental health one of the highest priorities for the state, meeting our legal and moral responsibilities. Additionally, the number one provider of mental health in Georgia is now the prison system because elected lawmakers have taken so much funding out of community based programs. As Governor, I would make sure our state meets its legal and moral responsibilities and would make mental health a part of the comprehensive health care plan of our state.

Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

Yes, our community mental health services are inadequate and need to be included in a comprehensive plan.

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia? What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

Public Health is a vital public service, and county health department personnel provide a wide range of critical population-based and clinical preventive services. My administration would work closely with all public and private stakeholders, including ACCG and federal partners, to raise awareness of the importance of the services being provided at the community level and the benefits to each community as well as the state and to collectively build capacity in our public health system to become a national leader in public health. Specific possibilities are noted in the previous responses.

Because of the size and importance of Public Health, I believe it should be its own department. Moreover, I believe increased funding would allow more positions in Public Health to serve our communities; however, the ability to also provide compensation equal to the private job market would allow the recruitment and retention of high quality applicants. As Governor, I would support Public Health as its own department and would look at providing equal compensation with the private sector.

DuBose Porter, Democrat - *continued*

8 Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain? If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

What I am concerned with is the state not collecting what is on the books. In 2009 I co-sponsored HB 356, which allows for the collection of sales tax at the point of sale, thus allowing local governments to collect their own—as well as the state's—sales taxes, instead of the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue, by their own admission, has lost millions of our tax dollars. Had this bill been allowed out of committee, it would have brought in an estimated \$1 billion in revenue without raising taxes or fees. Alabama has already passed a similar bill which, when implemented, brought them an additional \$1 billion without raising taxes. This available funding could have been used during the budget writing process to prevent furloughs and cuts in public and mental health.

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

In addition to the above, as Governor I will:

1. Seek to attract and retain high quality personnel in the field of behavioral health and developmentally-disabled and public health, and assure that those in leadership positions for the state have direct access to the ear and the support of the Governor.
2. Maximize any available state funds available to match federal dollars.
3. Promote collaboration between the Department of Education and Public Health. Strengthen medical, nursing, and dental education and the recruitment and retention of private providers for Georgia through the use of tax incentives and enhanced reimbursements.
4. Continue to focus on educational achievement and job creation, as both positively influence all other aspects of improving population health and the capacity of providing healthcare.

*Footnote

These questions were a collaborative effort with the assistance of public health officials who I have worked with for over 28 years. Before making judgments concerning policy, I always consult with as many professionals in the field and recipients of the services as time permits, and I will continue that practice as Governor.

David Poythress - Democrat

Bio

Recent Experience: Former Secretary of State, former State Labor Commissioner, former State Adjutant General, Retired USAF Lt. General and '98 Candidate

David Poythress attended Emory at Oxford, and earned his degree and his commission as an Air Force officer at "big Emory" in Atlanta. He served four years on active duty in the U.S. Air Force as a judge advocate officer (JAG.) He volunteered for duty in Viet Nam, and served one year as defense counsel and Chief of Military Justice at DaNang Air Base, in the Republic of Viet Nam. His civilian career has included public service, military service and private law practice. He has held positions in Georgia state government, including Assistant Attorney General, Deputy State Revenue Commissioner, and Secretary of State. David and his wife Elizabeth have three grown children and eight grandchildren.



1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

Georgia's healthcare problems include the large number of uninsured, a failed behavioral health and developmentally disabled state system, a marginal public health system, lack of a state-wide trauma system and financially struggling hospitals, especially in rural Georgia. All of these challenges need to be addressed. I see the most pressing issue as the large number of our citizens who are uninsured or otherwise lack access to basic primary care.

Some form of federal healthcare reform this year, with expansive access to health insurance, seems virtually certain. And I am optimistic that the reform legislation will also allow Medicaid to expand with our state match at ten percent or less. The 90% federal match will return millions of our federal tax dollars to Georgia. My administration will work with the General Assembly to provide the necessary state matching dollars so Georgia can receive the maximum federal funding available. Georgia citizens pay more than their fair share of federal taxes, and our state should fully benefit from federal programs which support these vital services.

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

It's important to understand that in judging the overall health of a state, the United Health Foundation—rightly—considers a number of factors that do significantly influence health but which are not themselves healthcare services, for example the high school graduation rate, the unemployment rate, and the number of people living in poverty. All of these issues are driven by the quality of public education in our state.

In addition to the benefits of expanding access to basic health services, the single most important initiative of my administration will be to fundamentally transform public education in Georgia. My Poythress Plan for Education, published on my web site (www.poythressforgovernor.com/education), begins with the premise that teachers are not the problem, but rather are an intrinsic part of the solution. Among other things, my plan calls for a renewed commitment to the best available educational software and hardware for both classroom instruction and faculty professional development. My plan will increase the number of students graduating high school and likewise the number pursuing post secondary studies. The resulting 21st Century, globally competitive workforce will assure the continued prosperity of Georgia; incomes will rise as unemployment and poverty decrease.



David Poythress, Democrat - *continued*

3 *Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.*

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

The answer to this question has two parts. As discussed above, the issue of affordability will likely be addressed for many Georgians by the pending federal reforms. The issue of availability of health services is more clearly a state responsibility. I will support and continue current efforts to expand medical education in Georgia, in terms of both medical and nursing schools as well as the numbers of students enrolled in those disciplines. Similarly, I will support and look to expand various incentive programs to attract and retain medical professionals in the underserved areas of our state.

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

In my judgment, the "free public education" mandated by the Georgia Constitution should include extensive instruction on health and wellness, especially as to lifestyle decisions involving nutrition, exercise, alcohol, drugs and tobacco, which are at the root of many health problems in our society.

I also believe it is the proper role of the state to assure that all children have access to medical services (including immunizations) which promote good health, prevent disease and injury, and protect them from natural and manmade hazards, such as possible industrial or environmental contamination.

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation?

Yes.

If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma /Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

I support funding at a level proposed by trauma professionals, which I believe to be in the \$70-80 million per year range.

The "super speeder" fine system will not produce sufficient funds and is ultimately self-defeating. To the extent the fines "succeed" in deterring speeders, the flow of funds to the trauma network will be reduced.

A quality trauma system produces security to everyone in the state, and its operations should be funded as a general operating expense of the state, to the extent they are not covered by insurance or other third parties.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

I understand the Justice Department (DOJ) recently conducted another round of visits to the hospitals and found no substantive changes. In addition, the federal court has not approved the settlement agreement proposed by the Perdue Administration, and I doubt they will. Georgia has a legal obligation to meet the basic healthcare needs of the mentally disabled in state programs, a responsibility affirmed by past Supreme Court decisions. Clearly, to resolve the situation and avoid the court taking over the system, Georgia must move aggressively, stop budget cuts to the programs and create a real action plan to correct the deficiencies. The plan must be more than the current promises to the court which have not been kept. As your Governor, I'll make sure that Georgia's medical schools, the Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association and other professional groups are involved and committed to designing and executing the plan.

Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

Yes, our community mental health services are inadequate. I understand that DOJ wants the court to add improving community mental health services to the court order. The remedies are the same as noted above, but I would require the hospitals and community services in a region to plan together on how best to organize their resources and services. It makes no sense for hospitals and community programs serving the same population to plan separately.

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia?

Public Health is a vital public service, and county health department clinical, environmental, and support staff provide a wide range of population based and clinical preventive services, e.g. immunizations, family planning, nutrition education, and critical environmental services from restaurant inspection to the installation of safe septic systems.

These day-to-day services are important, but county public health staffs are also essential to homeland security/public safety responses in emergencies, with clinical staff providing care and environmental staff assuring safe food and water.

My administration will work closely with all public and private stakeholders, including the ACCG and our federal partners to build a public health system that meets our responsibilities. I want Georgia to be a public health leader nationally.

What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

I will be interested in the findings of the legislative study group charged to review the status of public health following the move of public health to the Department of Community Health. This group will meet from July to December of 2010 and its report prior to the 2011 General Assembly should better inform the policy discussions on this issue.

David Poythress, Democrat - *continued*

Early in my career I was responsible for reorganizing Georgia's Medicaid program, so I have a keen understanding of many of the obstacles to meeting our state's public health needs. I do have some doubts that our state is well served by having a single commissioner charged with Medicaid, overseeing public health, and serving as the state health officer. In my administration I will want an experienced public health professional as state health officer and public health leader, and that executive will report directly to me.

8 Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain?

I want Georgia to be distinguished as a national leader in public health and as a state that provides those government services which are necessary for the health and safety of our citizens, and for the growth of our state.

If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

Increasing revenue does not necessarily mean raising taxes. Our tax system (the sales tax, in particular) is riddled with special exemptions that have eroded the tax base over the years. I will direct my Revenue Commissioner and Budget Director to itemize and "price" all exemptions, and I will require the General Assembly to vote publically to retain or eliminate each exemption. I will also work to correct the historical underfunding of the Revenue Department audit staff and build a first-rate tax audit program for our state. We should not even think about new revenue sources unless and until we are satisfied that our current tax structure is working properly.

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

I believe my responses above reflect the health agenda Georgia needs. The rapid pace of advances in medical technology, the aging of our population, and the diverse needs across our state all underscore the importance of a strong, ongoing commitment to the health and education of our citizens. As Governor, I will fulfill that commitment.

Austin Scott - Republican

Bio

Recent Experience: State Representative, Independent insurance broker

Austin Scott (R-Tifton) has served fourteen years in the Georgia House of Representatives since first elected at the age of 26. A father, husband, and small business owner, he is also a graduate of the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business with a B.B.A. in Risk Management and Insurance. Representative Scott serves as Chairman of the House Governmental Affairs Committee. He is a member of the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors. He is a two-time recipient of the American Cancer Society's 'Outstanding Legislative Leadership Award', and of the Georgia Association of Emergency Medical Service's 'Star of Life Legislative Award'. Georgia Trend has recognized Austin as one of 'Georgia's Brightest Stars under Age 40'.



1 What do you see as the state's most pressing health or healthcare problem, and how do you intend to address it? And pay for it?

Our most pressing healthcare problem in the State of Georgia is the fact that we have 20% fewer physicians per capita than the rest of the nation. I intend to address this by expanding medical residency opportunities at hospitals throughout the State. I believe this is more important than simply increasing the number of available seats in medical school because research has shown that the location of a physician's residency program correlates strongly to where they ultimately decide to practice. Because residency programs are to an extent self-funding, I would be able to address the limited funding gaps through the legislative appropriations process.

2 National health status surveys consistently rank Georgia poorly in various health measures.

Under your leadership, what is the single most important initiative you will undertake to move Georgia out of the bottom 10 unhealthiest states (*United Health Foundation rankings, 2007 and 2008*)?

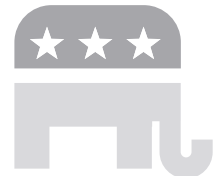
The health of an individual is ultimately a matter of personal responsibility and an area where government can be of only limited effect. In many cases health status is a matter of regular dietary decision-making, which is not subject to governmental control. Our position among the bottom ten unhealthiest states is the end result of poor diet and a lack of exercise. As governor, I will support initiatives to educate the general

public on the value of a healthy diet and physical exercise, and encourage physical activities through the public school system. Specific areas such as diabetes can be addressed through directed awareness campaigns.

3 Georgia has the tenth highest percentage of residents without health insurance in the nation according to the U.S. Census Bureau (three year average, 2006-2008), and the number of uninsured has been growing.

What policies would you put in place to ensure more Georgians (including the uninsurable) have access to affordable health insurance?

It is important that we realize that in many cases it is not a matter of accessibility to health insurance but rather a matter of preference that prevents individuals from seeking coverage. Many people in Georgia are insurable, but choose for a variety of reasons not to purchase insurance. As governor, I intend to encourage competition among health insurance carriers and to work to simplify the health insurance process, which we hope will make health insurance more affordable. I would also be willing to discuss eliminating the premium tax on all health insurance contracts sold in the State of Georgia to reduce the overall cost of insurance.



Austin Scott, Republican - *continued*

4 *Traditionally, Georgia has recognized that those who receive adequate healthcare as children are healthier and more productive as adults.*

Recognizing we are in the midst of healthcare reform and declining revenues, what is the appropriate role of the state in promoting health and preventing disease among Georgia's children?

Currently, the State can focus on transmission of information to parents about the issues most likely to affect Georgia's children through the University System and other State resources.

5 *Georgia's trauma death rate is above the national average and approximately one million Georgians live more than an hour away from any trauma facility. The 2010 state budget funds the ramp-up of a trauma network with \$23 million, but trauma advocates say that closer to \$80 million annually will be required for a top notch system.*

Do you support the aims of the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission as laid out in SB 60 and subsequent legislation?

Yes. I have sponsored legislation that would provide funding to the Trauma Care Network through the implementation of a new tax of ten dollars per vehicle per year.

If so, at what annual level would you fund the Trauma Network, and what method(s) do you propose to perpetuate its funding?

To be effective, the Trauma Care Network in Georgia would require funding of approximately \$100 Million, which I would perpetuate through a ten dollar annual tax on vehicle tags. At approximately three cents per day per vehicle, it is a worthwhile investment for the safety of those traveling Georgia's roads.

6 *Most would agree that Georgia has not done an adequate job of treating and protecting its citizens with mental illness. Recently, a federal judge ruled that Georgia has failed to comply with a Department of Justice settlement regarding patient care and protection in state institutions.*

What actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

I agree that we have not done a good job of treating and protecting our citizens with mental illness. Once elected, I intend to meet with people whom I personally know and respect who have made this issue a mission in their individual lives to begin addressing this important issue. I will ask them to develop a plan and a program of implementation for Georgia's residents in need of mental health services. I believe that government, in particular the State, does have a significant role to play in regard to this particular issue of the health care challenges we face. The key is who we put in charge of the effort, and as Governor, I will appoint the most qualified individuals for this very important task.

Have we also failed in the provision of community mental health services, and if so, what actions would you propose to remedy this situation?

This is another area in which the State could have done better in the past. The actions I would take as Governor of Georgia would resemble those described above: to work with people who are experts in their given field to develop a plan of action in this area.

7 *Despite Georgia's ever increasing population, growing numbers of uninsured and more demand on local public health departments, grant-in-aid programs for public health have been cut, public health programs and resources have been eliminated, and critical infrastructure (such as data and billing systems) has not been updated. Statewide, there are more than 600 vacant public health positions.*

What is your vision for the role of public health in Georgia?

I have consistently opposed the State's reductions to grant-in-aid programs. I believe that community health departments must play a more vital role in public health.

What, if anything, should the state do to build public health capacity and infrastructure?

I believe that through restoring cuts to grant-in-aid programs for public health we can alleviate most of these shortfalls in capacity and infrastructure.

8 *Congressional Quarterly reports that Georgia ranks 50th among states in revenues collected per capita (includes state taxes, fees, and federal funds).*

Is this a distinction you think is important to maintain?

I do not believe this is a distinction that it is important to maintain.

If not, would you be willing to increase revenues in order to invest more in health services for Georgians? If so, specifically how? (New fees, higher tobacco taxes, etc.)

I would be willing to increase revenues, one of the many benefits of which would be improvements in health services for Georgians. One of the major aspects of my campaign platform is a commitment to improving Georgia's tax collection rate. In many cases, the State is simply not collecting what it is owed. As a legislator, I

have introduced measures to change the collection point on sales tax for tobacco and several other products from the retail to the wholesale level. When the collection point was similarly adjusted in the case of gasoline, tax collection increased significantly. There are many areas where we can make improvements to our tax collection and revenue management processes. As Governor, I intend to make this one of my primary issues.

9 In a short paragraph, can you articulate the rest of your health agenda if elected?

As Governor, my health care policies will be informed by a lifetime of experience in and around the healthcare industry. As a private businessperson, I am actively involved in the provision of healthcare products to companies and individuals, so I understand the challenges being faced by both sides of the situation. As the son of a physician, I have witnessed first-hand the interactions between doctors, patients, hospitals, health insurance providers, and regulators. As a legislator, I have been very actively involved in healthcare concerns, including sponsoring the legislation that created the Certificate of Need Commission and the legislation that would fund the Trauma Care Network in Georgia. I will use this understanding and experience to guide my decision-making from the Governor's office.

Healthcare Georgia Foundation
grantmaking for health



Acknowledgements:

Mathews & Maxwell, Inc.
(Survey Development and Implementation)
Avatar Communications, Inc. (Graphic Design)

Recommended Citation:

Georgia's Gubernatorial Candidates Address Our
State's Most Critical Health Issues - Election Guide,
Healthcare Georgia Foundation, Publication #39,
February 2010