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1 Week to Sine Die; 8 Weeks to the Primary

Healthcare

HB1013, the mental health parity bill, moved to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. The committee relocated its first meeting on the bill to accommodate a crowd of people wanting to make public comments. Most were strongly supportive and, although the bill is over-arching and will doubtless undergo multiple revisions once enacted, agreed that the bill is a huge step forward for the state which ranks 50th among all states in its mental health treatment. A group of very vocal opponents from the right-wing Truth in Education did their best to stretch extrapolation of the bill's provisions to include the UN taking over Georgia's mental health treatment and pedophilia no longer being a crime. Hard to make this stuff up.

SB1318 to extend Medicaid coverage for a year after a woman gives birth and SB496 to require an autopsy of a woman who dies of unknown causes during pregnancy cleared the House committee. Both are aimed at curbing the state's parlous maternal mortality rate. Black women are 2.3 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women in Georgia.

HB412 passed unanimously to create a state license for Adaptive Behavioral Therapists (ABT). ABT is, currently, the accepted treatment for those on the autism spectrum. The mother of a child named Ava became the face of the legislation when she fought successfully to get ABT covered by Medicaid. Ava was just accepted at UGA.