

Governors

Governor Sonny Perdue (Georgia)

Governor Perdue Applauds Presidential Executive Order; Points to Similar Actions Already Taken in Georgia

ATLANTA – Governor Sonny Perdue announced today his support of President Bush and Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Mike Leavitt's efforts to provide consumers with transparency in health care costs. He pointed to actions already taken in Georgia to accomplish similar goals.

Consumers in today's marketplace are sophisticated when they have access to information, enabling them to make informed decisions about the services and products they purchase. Decisions on health care should be no different, said Governor Sonny Perdue. President Bush's action today will encourage transparency in the health care industry and help families make informed decisions based on the costs and the quality of the services they receive. Georgia has already taken steps to bring transparency to our health care industry and I look forward to partnering with the federal government to move this plan forward.

In 2005 the state of Georgia submitted to HHS a plan to modernize Medicaid in Georgia. A critical component of the plan was the concept of marketplace transparency within the health care industry. The plan proposes giving health care consumers the opportunity to select providers and health care services based on costs and the quality of the service.

Governor Perdue announced today that state agencies responsible for the administration of health care coverage in Georgia will adopt similar measures to those announced today by the President. Governor Perdue said he hopes large employers in the private sector will follow the example of state government and select health care providers to encourage transparency.

Today President Bush signed an executive order directing agencies that administer or support health insurance programs to take steps that will result in more complete and open information for consumers. According to HHS, the executive order requires federal agencies that administer or support health insurance programs to share information about the quality of care delivered by doctors and hospitals, as well as the prices paid to these providers.

The order also requires agencies and their health care contractors to promote the use of interoperable health information technology products, so that data can be easily shared. In addition, it requires agencies to offer insurance options that reward consumers who exercise choice among health providers based on value and quality of care.

Governor Jeb Bush (Florida)

Governor Jeb Bush Proud to Be Part of Transparency Effort, Points to Florida's Leadership with www.FloridaCompare.gov

On Tuesday, President George W. Bush signed an Executive Order aimed to bring transparency to America's health care system through public reporting of pricing and quality of services, and promotion of health information technology. Florida has already developed successful programs in these areas, and is proud to join the President in this effort to provide consumers with the tools they need to make informed decisions about their health care.

Florida is a leader in transparent health care. Our consumer-friendly website, www.FloridaCompareCare.gov, gives Floridians easy access to the number of patients, charges, lengths of stay, readmission rates, mortality rates, infection rates and complication rates for various medical conditions and procedures in Florida's hospitals and outpatient surgery centers. In July, Florida became first in the nation to publicly report pediatric care outcomes in health facilities across the state.

The state's prescribed drug website, www.MyFloridaRx.com, allows consumers to shop around and compare prices of the 100 most frequently dispensed name-brand and generic pharmaceuticals. Thanks to this comparison tool, prices for prescription drugs have dropped significantly in some areas of the state yielding more consistent prices for the same drugs from town to town.

Additionally, Florida is working with local communities, health care providers, and insurers to begin development of a statewide health information sharing system. We are working hard to reach the President's goal for every citizen to have an electronic medical record by 2014 by giving physicians in each corner of the state complete and seamless access to their patients' entire medical histories - no matter where they may be. We have also partnered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and RTI International in a national collaborative effort to study health information privacy and security.

Everyone is a health care consumer. With the creation of transparency through widespread public reporting, individuals now have the tools to find the best health care for their loved ones and themselves. Florida will continue to work alongside the efforts of our Federal partners to give the power of informed choice to our citizens.

Governor Tim Pawlenty (Minnesota)

Governor Pawlenty's Commends President Bush's Leadership on Transparency

I found your comments on improved health care information technology and increased transparency very useful. Your leadership on these issues is commendable and appreciated.

At the state level, we will lead by example by applying my QCare initiative to all state-purchased health care. I look forward to collaborating with you further as we strive to

increase the quality of health care and hold down rising costs within Minnesota and across the nation.

Governor Mitt Romney (Massachusetts)

Governor Romney Praises New Federal Healthcare Information Directives

Governor Mitt Romney today announced his support for President Bush and Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt's goal to promote quality and efficient healthcare.

The new federal directives are closely aligned with efforts that Massachusetts is making to improve consumer access to consumer healthcare cost and quality information said Governor Romney. Ensuring that consumers have the information necessary to make informed decisions about their healthcare is critical to improving quality as well as lowering healthcare inflation. The Commonwealth is proud to be a partner with the federal government.

Signed yesterday, the President's executive order directs federal agencies that administer or support health insurance programs to share information about the quality of care delivered by hospitals and doctors. It also promotes the use of interoperable health information technology products so that data can be easily shared and provides insurance options that reward consumers who exercise choice among health providers based on value and quality of care.

Launched last October, the state's healthcare transparency website provides cost and quality information on medical procedures for consumers in Massachusetts. To learn more about the state's efforts, please visit www.mass.gov/healthareqc.

Governor George Pataki (New York State)

Governor Pataki Offers Full Support for President's Executive Order

I would like to offer my full support to President George W. Bush and his executive policy initiative to promote and increase transparency throughout our great nation's health care system.

We share a common goal to advance initiatives that preserve the relationship between patients and health care providers; it remains the single most important alliance in health care. I am also a strong proponent of ensuring that Americans have access to accurate and timely information regarding health care so that they can make well-informed health care choices for themselves and their family members.

Officials from our New York State Department of Health met to discuss the President's Executive Order and we are fully committed to the enhancement of our health care system by enabling individuals to take more active roles in their health care decisions. Individuals will be able to make better health care decisions through access to information on health care services such as pricing of procedures and the quality of services performed by hospitals and providers.

The expansion of Health Information Technology, along with other advancements in health care, will promote higher quality and more efficient health care services, directly benefiting the patient.

New York has long been a national leader in promoting the public reporting of health care quality information. For instance, we were the first state in the nation to report on provider mortality rates for cardiac surgery. New York has also publicly reported health plan quality measures and customer satisfaction measures for more than ten years, including measures for Medicaid, Child Health Plus and commercial populations.

In addition, New York State has made data available to the public on a variety of hospital quality measures, most recently, through web-based hospital profiles allowing consumers to compare the outcomes of many hospitals. This builds on a well-established physician profile website for New York's doctors. A similar web-based profile tool for nursing homes will soon be launched by the State Health Department.

New York State's Health Information Technology initiative, funded by the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers (HEAL NY), is helping to expand the use of technology in our health care system to increase the capability and use of electronic health records among health care providers, reduced medical errors, and prevents unnecessary or duplicative diagnostic testing.

Providers will be able to share important data on patients electronically, which will better ensure that appropriate medical care is delivered to patients. It is tremendous opportunity for us to align with the national movement in this movement and we remain committed to meeting that goal.

We look forward to working with you to help carry out the President's vision for increased transparency in health care. Our Priority is to help empower Americans to find the highest quality and most cost efficient health care.

It is an honor to share the results of our State's HIT and related health care initiatives with you to help bolster the national effort to enhance America's health care system.

Governor Rick Perry (Texas)

Governor Perry Pledges Support for Transparency Initiative Outlined in President's Executive Order

I am writing to commend you and President Bush on your initiative to promote the quality and efficient delivery of health care in the United States.

I strongly support and firmly believe that greater adoption and use of health information technology, such as electronic health records, will improve the quality of health care and contain health care costs, while also enhancing our nation's bio-surveillance capabilities and improving emergency preparedness. Providing tools to compare health care price and quality information will empower consumers to control their own health care spending and increase the efficiency of our health care system.

The Executive Order recently signed by President Bush on health care quality, information technology, and transparency will complement the work being done in Texas. In 2005, I signed House Bill 916 creating the Texas Health Care Policy Council as a new entity within my office. The mission of the council is to research, analyze and provide recommendations on ways to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of the health care system in Texas. The duties of the council include:

- Researching and identifying approaches and solutions to address gaps, flaws, inefficiencies, or problems in the health care system and conduct research and analysis on ways to improve health care in Texas;
- Facilitating and promoting the use of technology in the health care system as a way to decrease administrative costs and to increase and improve the quality of health care;
- Providing consumers with access to health care pricing information and quality measurements;
- Ensuring the most effective collaboration among state agencies in the purchase of health care products and services; and
- Monitoring and identifying ways to ensure the health care workforce is large enough to serve the health care needs of the state.

In 2005, I also signed Senate Bill 45 creating the Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) into law. My staff has been providing policy direction to the HITAC as it develops a long-range health information technology plan for Texas. Following the disasters of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Texas joined with the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to establish the Gulf Coast Health Information Technology Task Force. The task force is being coordinated through the Southern Governors' Association, and is charged with charting a digital recovery for the health information infrastructure affected by the hurricanes.

I applaud your efforts on these important issues, and look forward to working in partnership with you and President Bush to implement more transparent and higher-quality health care.

Governor Matt Blunt (Missouri)

Blunt Supports President Bush's Health Care Transparency Initiative

JEFFERSON CITY—Gov. Matt Blunt today announced his support for President Bush's executive order encouraging greater transparency in pricing and quality, the adoption of health information technology standards and providing options that promote equality and efficiency in the delivery of health care.

Providing accurate information to health care consumers empowers them to make the best decisions about medical care for themselves and their loved ones, Blunt said. As we tackle the rising costs of health care and the transformation of the state's health care program it is important to develop a delivery system that gives Missourians the tools they

need to be efficient consumers of health care. It is every Missourians' right to have full access to information about the quality and cost of their health care choices.

Under Gov. Blunt's direction the state of Missouri is already moving toward providing information to health care consumers.

In the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Division of Medical Services is currently working to develop a Prescription Drug Price Posting for Missouri consumers. The web-based price posting will display prices of the top 100 drugs, based on Missouri Medicaid claims data. The price posting is intended for use by all consumers so they may comparison shop among pharmacies to get the best price. Consumers will be able to select a drug and search for pharmacy price comparisons based on zip code, county, area code, or city. A prototype of the site is in development and should be fully functional by Jan. 1, 2007.

Blunt is also committed to providing consumers information about the incidence of Hospital-Acquired infections at hospitals across the state. Beginning in January 2007 the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Internet site will offer an easy-to-use, searchable database that consumers can access to learn the incidence of Central Line Associated Bloodstream Infections at every Missouri hospital. In March 2007 the Internet site will add the incidence of hospitals' surgical site infections, with information on ventilator-associated pneumonias to follow.

Blunt believes his administrations' efforts to arm health care consumers with this data will help make Missouri a leader in providing information to assist them in making smart choices about the care they receive.

Governor Ernie Fletcher (Kentucky)

Governor Announces Support for Federal Health Care Transparency Initiatives

FRANKFORT, KY (Sept. 19, 2006) - Governor Ernie Fletcher today announced his support for federal initiatives to provide consumers with better information about the quality and cost of their health care.

"Improving information on the cost and quality of health care and making it easily accessible are key aspects of my strategy to make health care better for families in Kentucky," said Governor Fletcher. "We are answering the call made by President Bush and Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt to give people the tools they need to make health care decisions."

During the 2005 and 2006 legislative sessions, the Fletcher administration successfully pushed legislation that gives Kentuckians better access to information on cost and quality of health care procedures. As a result, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services is working with the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Transparency to develop a Web site for people to access this information easily and quickly.

"Kentucky is taking the lead in empowering consumers and giving them the cost and quality information they need to make informed decisions about health care for themselves and their families," said Governor Fletcher.

On Aug. 22, President Bush issued an executive order that mandates sharing of information about quality of care delivered by doctors and hospitals and prices paid for services. In addition, the order promotes the adoption of standards for exchanging health information and insurance options that reward consumers who exercise choice among health providers based on value and quality of care.

Kentucky is following suit by looking at ways to integrate federal guidelines into its health care purchasing decisions and by including a consumer-directed plan as an option for state employees.

Today's announcement follows a number of actions taken by the Fletcher administration in recent months to improve health care for Kentuckians. Those efforts include:

- Making health insurance more affordable for small employers and working families through the I-CARE program.
- Helping Kentuckians live healthier and more active lives through the Governor's Wellness and Physical Activity Initiative.
- Expanding access to affordable consumer directed plan options for state employees and small businesses.
- Redesigning the Medicaid program to ensure a more sustainable, cost-effective program in the future.
- Expanding the use of e-Health in the state to improve the quality and efficiency of health care.

"Our efforts to increase health care transparency and improve information sharing demonstrate our commitment to improving the health and well-being of our fellow Kentuckians," said CHFS Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. "The Fletcher administration has made health care a top priority and this is another great example of how we're working to achieve that goal."

Governor Bill Owens (Colorado)

Governor Owens' Letter to Secretary Leavitt Regarding President George W. Bush's Executive Order Calling for Transparency in Healthcare

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the President's recent executive order that aims to bring greater transparency and efficiency to our nation's health care system. I applaud the President's leadership, which will empower Americans to become better and more informed health care consumers.

Throughout my two terms as Governor, I have continuously pushed for greater consumer-directed care. I realize that in order for consumers to take charge of their health, they must be equipped with the necessary tools. When it comes to health care,

information is key. Therefore, I commend the President's action in helping to promote healthcare cost and quality transparency.

I am proud to say that my Administration is committed to helping ensure that Coloradans have necessary information upon which to make educated health care decisions. I recently signed two important pieces of legislation that will provide consumers with information on hospital quality and patient safety information as well as infection rates. Additionally, the Colorado Division of Insurance has taken many steps to improve the information consumers have to make informed health insurance decisions in a consumer directed environment. The Division has created an online interactive premium comparison guide, published a consumer guide to HSA's, and provided consumers with information they can use to compare health insurers. However, consumers still do not have easy access to cost information. I believe the President's efforts will help fill that void.