

Senate Bill 296

By: Senator Halpern of the 39th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2A of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Public Health, so as to provide for the appointment of a state surgeon general;
3 to provide for qualifications and duties; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
4 laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 SECTION 1.

7 Chapter 2A of Title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department
8 of Public Health, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

9 "31-2A-19.

10 (a) There shall be a state surgeon general who shall be appointed by and serve at the
11 pleasure of the Governor. The surgeon general shall be an employee of the department but
12 shall report directly to the Governor.

13 (b) The state surgeon general shall have the following qualifications:

14 (1) Licensed in good standing as a physician pursuant to Article 2 of Chapter 34 of
15 Title 43; and

16 (2) Advanced training or extensive experience in public health administration.

17 (c) The state surgeon general shall serve as the leading voice on wellness and
18 disease-prevention efforts, including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, immunization
19 practices, health literacy, and the assessment and promotion of the physician and healthcare
20 workforce in order to meet the healthcare needs of this state. The state surgeon general
21 shall be responsible for:

22 (1) Reviewing, assessing, and developing health policy options, including insurance
23 coverage, health risk management, disease prevention, and health promotion strategies
24 across state agencies;

25 (2) Developing public health policy and providing health policy advice for the Governor
26 and the commissioner;

27 (3) Raising awareness of healthcare and public health areas of priority for advancement
28 of the health of the citizens of this state;

29 (4) Reviewing legislative analyses and proposed legislation and creating position
30 statements for the Governor and commissioner;

31 (5) Advising the commissioner and governing boards and commissions on policy issues
32 and program accomplishments;

33 (6) Building collaborative partnerships with schools, businesses, healthcare practitioners,
34 community based organizations, and public and private institutions in order to promote
35 health literacy and optimum quality of life for all Georgians; and

36 (7) Providing medical review oversight and guidance to public health clinical programs
37 upon the request of the commissioner."

38 **SECTION 2.**

39 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.