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Georgia Caregivers Act Signed into Law

Atlanta- May 6, 2022---The Georgia Council on Aging (GCOA) is pleased to announce that on the morning of May 4, 2022, Governor Brian Kemp signed the Georgia Caregivers Act, HB 1304, into law. This law requires hospitals to provide patients with the opportunity to identify lay caregivers to provide aftercare once they are discharged. Identified lay caregivers are then educated by hospital staff on how to properly care for their loved one. Right then and there, the caregiver can decide if they can handle the aftercare or if other arrangements need to be made.

Last year, GCOA's Coalition of Advocates for Georgia's Elderly (CO-AGE) identified the Georgia Caregiver's Act as one of the most pressing issues for older Georgians across the state. Throughout the 2022 legislative session, GCOA and CO-AGE worked closely with advocacy partners, including AARP and the Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, in collaboration with Representative Lee Hawkins of District 27 to advocate for the bill. The team of advocates met regularly, consulted with legislators, and gave testimonies in support of the bill at various committee hearings. Sponsored by Rep. Hawkins, Rep. Mack Jackson, Rep. Sharon Cooper, Rep. Katie Dempsey, Rep. Houston Gaines, Rep. Rick Jasperse and Sen. Dean Burke, it was passed by the House on March 8th and by the Senate on April 1st.

The Care Act is already in effect in 40 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. While exact legislation varies from state to state, the general guidelines requiring live instruction of care, identification of a family caregiver, and informing the caregiver of when a patient is to be discharged remain the same. According to the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, around 39 million individuals (over 16% of Americans) serve as a caregiver or care partner for an adult. Family caregivers are sometimes expected to perform increasingly complex medical and nursing tasks and often feel ill prepared to take on this important role. The Georgia Caregivers Act provides specific guidance for ensuring that family caregivers are guaranteed a proactive role, along with hospital staff, in providing the best home care for their loved ones.

Read the official press release from the Governor's Office here <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2022-05-06/gov-kemp-signs-legislation-healthier-georgia>.

The Georgia Council on Aging (GCOA) was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1977 to advise the Governor, assembly and state agencies on matters relating to the state's seniors.

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