



# CERTIFICATE OF NEED POLICY FRAMEWORK

The current Certificate of Need (CON) process requires communities to demonstrate a clear need before opening a new hospital or healthcare facility. However, there are few requirements for the closing of facilities, which leaves communities vulnerable to losing their closest source of healthcare with limited notice or justification.

## Georgia Watch proposes the following CON process reforms:



Implement a notice of closure requirement into the CON process, requiring written notice to government officials and the public when a service line or facility is closed.



Increase the duration a closed facility or service line can reopen without a new CON if the closure was not due to adverse action regarding the facility's license.



Provide a financial analysis demonstrating the need and reasons for the closure of a facility or service line.



Allow existing CON holders to increase bed capacity if the facility has maintained a sufficient occupancy rate over the past year.



Require public hearings and independent assessments of hospital conditions and finances conducted by the Attorney General and the Department of Community Health (DCH).



Require CON holders to provide uncompensated indigent or charity care proportional to their adjusted gross income as a condition of the holder's maintaining its CON.



Add a definition for "uncompensated indigent or charity care" to the statutes regulating hospitals and similar organizations.



Implement policies to increase access to pre- and postnatal care.



Empower DCH to enforce CON laws and to update the State Health Plan at least every five years.



Expand Medicaid coverage to close the gap. Expand Medicaid funding for Behavioral Health patients.