

House Bill 1437

By: Representatives Scoggins of the 14th and Gambill of the 15th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 24 of Title 33 and Article 1 of Chapter 18 of Title 45 of the
2 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions regarding insurance and
3 state employees' health insurance plan and post-employment health benefit fund,
4 respectively, so as to require coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric
5 autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infection (PANDAS)
6 and pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome (PANS) in accordance with nationally
7 recognized clinical practice guidelines; to provide for definitions; to allow for deductibles;
8 to prohibit special deductibles; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for related
9 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 Article 1 of Chapter 24 of Title 33 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
13 general provisions regarding insurance, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as
14 follows:

15 "33-24-59.34.

16 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

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17 (1) 'Health benefit policy' means any individual or group plan, policy, or contract for
18 healthcare services issued, delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed in this state which
19 provides major medical benefits, including those contracts executed by the State of
20 Georgia on behalf of state employees under Article 1 of Chapter 18 of Title 45, by a
21 health care corporation, health maintenance organization, preferred provider organization,
22 accident and sickness insurer, fraternal benefit society, hospital service corporation,
23 medical service corporation, or other insurer or similar entity. Such term shall not
24 include any self-insured health benefit plan subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the
25 federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. Section 1001,
26 et seq.

27 (2) 'Nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines' means evidence based clinical
28 practice guidelines developed by independent organizations or medical professional
29 societies utilizing a transparent methodology and reporting structure and with a
30 conflict-of-interest policy. Such guidelines establish standards of care informed by a
31 systematic review of evidence and an assessment of the benefits and risks of alternative
32 care options and include recommendations intended to optimize patient care.

33 (3) 'Pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome' or 'PANS' means a class of acute
34 onset obsessive compulsive or tic disorders or other behavioral changes presenting in
35 children and adolescents that are not otherwise explained by another known neurologic
36 or medical disorder.

37 (4) 'Pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal
38 infections' or 'PANDAS' means a condition in which a streptococcal infection in a child
39 or adolescent causes the abrupt onset of clinically significant obsessions, compulsions,
40 tics, or other neuropsychiatric symptoms or behavioral changes, or a relapsing and
41 remitting course of symptom severity.

42 (b) All health benefit policies renewed or issued on or after July 1, 2024, shall include
43 coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of PANDAS or PANS for an individual covered
44 under such policy as provided in this Code section.

45 (c) Healthcare services for PANDAS or PANS for an individual covered under a health
46 benefit policy shall be covered for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, appropriate
47 management, or ongoing monitoring of a covered person's disorder when such services are
48 supported by nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines.

49 (d) The benefits in a health benefit policy as provided for in this Code section shall be
50 subject to the same deductibles, coinsurance, copayment provisions, and other limitations
51 established for all covered benefits within such health benefit policy. Special deductibles,
52 coinsurance, copayment, and other limitations that are not generally applicable to other
53 healthcare services covered by a health benefit policy shall not be imposed on coverage for
54 the diagnosis and treatment of PANDAS or PANS.

55 (e) The Commissioner shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement the
56 provisions of this Code section."

57 **SECTION 2.**

58 Chapter 18 of Title 45 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to employees'
59 insurance and benefits plans relative to public officers and employees, is amended by adding
60 a new Code section to read as follows:

61 "45-18-4.2.

62 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

63 (1) 'Nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines' means evidence based clinical
64 practice guidelines developed by independent organizations or medical professional
65 societies utilizing a transparent methodology and reporting structure and with a
66 conflict-of-interest policy. Such guidelines establish standards of care informed by a

67 systematic review of evidence and an assessment of the benefits and risks of alternative
68 care options and include recommendations intended to optimize patient care.

69 (2) 'Pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome' or 'PANS' means a class of acute
70 onset obsessive compulsive or tic disorders or other behavioral changes presenting in
71 children and adolescents that are not otherwise explained by another known neurologic
72 or medical disorder.

73 (3) 'Pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal
74 infections' or 'PANDAS' means a condition in which a streptococcal infection in a child
75 or adolescent causes the abrupt onset of clinically significant obsessions, compulsions,
76 tics, or other neuropsychiatric symptoms or behavioral changes, or a relapsing and
77 remitting course of symptom severity.

78 (4) 'State health benefit plan' means the health insurance plan or plans established
79 pursuant to this article and Part 6 of Article 17 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 for state and
80 public employees, dependents, and retirees.

81 (b) Beginning January 1, 2025, the state health benefit plan shall include coverage for the
82 diagnosis and treatment of PANDAS or PANS for an individual covered under such policy
83 as provided in this Code section.

84 (c) Healthcare services for PANDAS or PANS for an individual covered under the state
85 health benefit plan shall be covered for the purposes of diagnosis, treatment, appropriate
86 management, or ongoing monitoring of a covered person's disorder when such services are
87 supported by nationally recognized clinical practice guidelines.

88 (d) The benefits in the state health benefit plan as provided for in this Code section shall
89 be subject to the same deductibles, coinsurance, copayment provisions, and other
90 limitations established for all covered benefits within such plan. Special deductibles,
91 coinsurance, copayment, and other limitations that are not generally applicable to
92 healthcare services covered by such plan shall not be imposed on coverage for the
93 diagnosis and treatment of PANDAS or PANS."

94

SECTION 3.

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