



GOVERNOR

Keisha's CARE Plan for a Healthier Georgia

A fiscally responsible plan to cut costs, expand access, recruit providers, and improve long-term health

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Health care in Georgia is too often a gamble. It depends on your paycheck, your ZIP code, and whether you can get help before a problem becomes a crisis. Families are paying too much, driving too far, and waiting too long. Rural hospitals are hanging by a thread. Moms still face unacceptable risks in pregnancy and postpartum care. And too many Georgians are one diagnosis away from debt.

That is why Keisha's health care agenda is built around a clear and practical framework: **CARE**. **C**ut costs and waste; expand **A**ccess to care; **R**ecruit and retain health care workers; and **E**nable better nutrition to improve long-term outcomes. Keisha's CARE Plan for a Healthier Georgia is grounded in fiscal responsibility and focused on practical results. It is designed to lower costs, improve access, preserve patient choice, and make Georgia's health care system work better for patients, families, providers, and taxpayers.

This plan starts with a basic truth: Georgia families should not pay more and get less because state government is wasting money on red tape, ignoring preventable shortages, and refusing to use tools that already work. Keisha will bring Georgia's federal tax dollars back home, strengthen rural health care, lower out-of-pocket costs, support the professionals patients depend on, and make prevention and early intervention a bigger part of how Georgia approaches health.

This is not theoretical for Keisha. It is what she has done. As Mayor of Atlanta, she appointed the city's first-ever Chief Health Officer to tackle chronic disease and improve community health. She led the first direct city investment in HIV prevention by expanding access to PrEP in partnership with Fulton County. She launched a diversion program, now a national model, that connects people facing homelessness, mental health needs, and addiction to services instead of cycling through jail because public safety and public health go together. And she served in the White House as the Inflation Reduction Act became law, helping lower drug costs and save seniors real money at the pharmacy counter.

In a state as strong as ours, good health should never be out of reach. Keisha's **CARE** Plan is about making Georgia's health care system work better, not bigger, for patients, families, providers, and taxpayers.

C | Cut Costs and Waste

Georgia hospitals are estimated to lose \$217 million a year due to Medicaid cuts alone.

- **Expand Medicaid to cut costs and close the coverage gap.**

Too many Georgians are working hard and still cannot afford health coverage. Keisha will expand Medicaid and raise eligibility for non-elderly, non-pregnant adults up to 138% of the federal poverty level, about \$21,000 a year for an individual, covering hundreds of thousands of Georgians, bringing billions in federal dollars back to Georgia, and reducing uncompensated care that drives up costs for everyone. It is the fastest, most proven way to strengthen rural health care, help families avoid medical debt, and bring Georgia's own federal tax dollars back home to support working adults and struggling hospitals. Georgia Pathways currently only reaches adults up to 100% of the federal poverty level.

- **End Georgia Pathways and replace it with real coverage.**

Georgia Pathways has become a costly boondoggle—lots of red tape, very little real coverage. Keisha will end Pathways and replace it with a simpler, proven approach that actually gets eligible Georgians insured instead of forcing them through paperwork hurdles. Taxpayer dollars should deliver care, not fund bureaucracy. After two years, only 8,077 Georgians were actively enrolled, and the program had cost taxpayers roughly \$110 million through June 2025, with less than \$1 out of every \$3 going to actual health care, because the program spends more on bureaucracy and consultants than on doctors' visits and prescriptions.

- **Lower premiums and protect consumers through Georgia Access.**

Getting covered should not feel like a maze, and staying covered should not depend on whether you got the right form in on the right day. Keisha will strengthen Georgia Access by maximizing enrollment, protecting families from junk plans, and making sure no one loses coverage because of paperwork. More than 1.5 million Georgians who rely on the Affordable Care Act for their health insurance are now paying higher premiums because Donald Trump refused to extend the enhanced ACA subsidies. When the federal government fails Georgia families, Keisha will take action by pursuing targeted state premium support and other backstops to help keep costs low and prevent coverage loss for Georgians who rely on the ACA.

- **Invest in trusted, local help so families can actually get enrolled and stay enrolled.**

No one should lose health care because they missed a letter, could not get through on the phone, or did not understand what documents mattered. Keisha will simplify Georgia Gateway and state notices, reduce unnecessary documentation hurdles, expand real-time support, and partner with trusted community organizations to provide hands-on help, especially in rural and high-need communities.

- **Lower prescription drug costs and give patients real price transparency.**

Keisha will take on high-cost drugs by creating the Georgia Rx Savings Board, an independent affordability board that reviews excessive price increases and sets fair payment limits for what the state will pay, protecting patients and taxpayers from price gouging. She will rein in pharmacy middlemen by strengthening oversight of Pharmacy Benefit Managers, requiring transparency, stopping anti-competitive practices, and ensuring the savings they negotiate actually reach consumers at the pharmacy counter. And she will create an easy-to-use prescription cost comparison tool so patients can see what a medicine will cost through insurance, cash pay, and discount options before they get to the pharmacy counter. She will also expand access to lifesaving prevention medications by allowing pharmacists to directly furnish HIV prevention treatment like PrEP and PEP.

A | Access to Care

- **Launch Rural Care First Initiative.**

Rural Georgia's health care system is in crisis. Since 2010, nine rural hospitals have closed, and recent analyses have found that roughly 18 to 20 more are now at risk of closure, with some facing immediate financial danger. Many hospitals are already cutting back services, and as of late 2025, only 36% of Georgia's rural hospitals still provided labor and delivery care. That means too many families are losing access not just to emergency rooms, but to maternity care, primary care, and the basic services a community needs to survive and grow. Keisha's Rural Care First Initiative will respond with targeted support to stabilize rural hospitals and clinics, increase reimbursements, and protect the providers communities depend on to keep their doors open. It will also invest in broadband, telehealth, and mobile care so rural families do not have to drive hours for routine care, follow-up visits, or specialty support. This is about keeping care close to home, protecting local jobs, preserving essential services, and making sure rural Georgians are not left behind as federal cuts and chronic underfunding put even more communities at risk. In many towns, the hospital or clinic is the largest employer and the reason a business will choose to locate there. When that care disappears, jobs and families follow. Keisha's plan treats rural health as economic development, keeping rural facilities strong so communities can recruit employers, keep young families, and grow.

- **Protect reproductive freedom and access to care.**

Women and doctors, not politicians, should make time-sensitive medical decisions. Keisha will repeal Georgia's 2022 abortion ban and restore the Roe-era standard so Georgians can make personal health care choices without political interference. She will protect safe access to clinics and health facilities so no one is intimidated or harassed for seeking lawful health care and so providers can do their jobs without threats or interference. And she will crack down on deceptive crisis pregnancy centers and mobile crisis pregnancy clinics that mislead patients, delay legitimate care, and target vulnerable communities. Georgians deserve truth, transparency, informed consent, and timely access to real medical care when they are making serious health decisions.

- **Make pregnancy coverage real, and easier to use.**

Pregnancy should never be the moment a family discovers the system is too confusing to navigate. Keisha will strengthen awareness and use of Pregnancy Medicaid and presumptive eligibility, improve provider participation so patients are not turned away, and build stronger postpartum care coordination so moms do not fall off a cliff after delivery.



A | Access to Care (Continued)

- **Protect maternal health with accountability and better care before, during, and after pregnancy.**

Georgia can do better for mothers and babies, especially Black moms and communities where maternity care has disappeared. Keisha will expand access to prenatal and postpartum care, strengthen the OB and maternal-fetal medicine workforce, and support doulas, midwives, and community health workers so families get consistent care close to home. She will also restore and strengthen the Georgia Maternal Mortality Review Committee so the state has an independent, credible body reviewing deaths, identifying failures, and making recommendations the public and policymakers can trust.

- **Invest in maternal mental health and substance use care with dignity.**

A patient in crisis should get treatment, not stigma, and not jail. Keisha will expand perinatal mental health capacity and screening, strengthen referral pathways to treatment, and grow peer support and community-based services, while treating substance use as a health issue and expanding family-centered treatment.

- **Build a statewide support system that helps families thrive in the first year.**

The work does not end at delivery. Healthy babies depend on healthy, supported families. Keisha will expand evidence-based home visiting and nurse support for low-income, first-time moms, pairing families with registered nurses during pregnancy and continuing through a child's early years to reduce preterm births, strengthen parenting supports, and improve healthy child development. She will also support WIC navigators to help eligible families enroll and stay enrolled, improve NICU-to-home coordination, including telehealth for rural families, and strengthen early connections to Early Intervention and pediatric care so babies get the best start possible.

- **Strengthen Georgia's behavioral health system statewide.**

Georgia has made bipartisan progress in recent years, and Keisha will build on that work and take it further, because families in every community are still waiting too long for care or reaching crisis before help is available. Keisha will make significant, sustained investments to expand the full continuum: stronger mental health parity enforcement, better statewide 988 coordination, more mobile crisis teams, and more crisis stabilization beds so people can get help quickly and close to home. And she will strengthen partnerships with local providers, hospitals, law enforcement, and trusted community organizations to reduce stigma, improve follow-up care, and keep people out of emergency rooms and jails when what they need is treatment.

- **Keep Georgia the global public health epicenter and deliver measurable results statewide.**

Keisha will stand up for Georgia's global public health infrastructure and launch the Georgia Public Health Alliance to bring together CDC expertise with Georgia's world-class hospitals, universities, and public health leaders so our state remains the global hub for public health leadership and innovation. The Public Health Alliance will coordinate a single statewide strategy to strengthen health infrastructure and public health capacity in every region, including a focused push on chronic disease prevention. It will also modernize disease surveillance, emergency preparedness, outbreak response, and community health prevention. The Alliance will strengthen coordination between state and local health departments, so Georgia is ready, whether it is flu season, extreme weather, or a public health emergency, building on Keisha's record as Mayor of Atlanta. During her tenure, she appointed the city's first Chief Health Officer and helped drive public health gains through clear standards, cross-departmental coordination, and follow-through.

R | Recruit and Retain

- **Grow the rural health workforce.**

Rural communities cannot get care without nurses, doctors, and frontline providers who can build a life there. Keisha will expand loan repayment, build residency and training partnerships, and offer targeted incentives to recruit and retain clinicians in shortage areas. She will strengthen partnerships with Emory University, Morehouse School of Medicine, Mercer University School of Medicine, and the Medical College of Georgia to expand rural residency programs and train more providers in the communities that need them most. The payoff is shorter wait times, more consistent care, and stronger local hospitals.

- **Make Medicaid work better for doctors and patients.**

Expanding coverage only matters if patients can actually find a provider. Keisha will work to ensure Medicaid reimburses at levels that better reflect the real cost of care, with a goal of moving reimbursement at least to Medicare rates where feasible, while also streamlining prior authorizations, speeding up payments, and reducing administrative burdens that drive providers away from the program. A Medicaid card should mean access to care, not another dead end for patients and physicians alike.

Raise pay and strengthen standards for home and community-based care workers.

The caregivers who help seniors and people with disabilities stay safely at home do essential work, and they deserve a living wage. Keisha will push for higher guaranteed wages and stronger standards so this workforce can stay on the job and families can count on consistent care. Stable caregiving jobs mean reliable care for families.

- **Bring Georgia into compliance with the federal Ensuring Access Medicaid rule and require wage transparency.**

Georgia must ensure Medicaid payment rates are adequate to maintain access to services and meet federal requirements. Keisha will bring Georgia into compliance and support wage and workforce data tracking, including wages, turnover, and vacancies, so policymakers can see what is working and providers can be held accountable. That transparency helps fix shortages and improve working conditions.

- **Support nurses and rebuild Georgia's nursing pipeline.**

Keisha will support nurses with safer staffing and stronger workplace protections so patients get better care and nurses can stay in the profession. She will expand state loan repayment and scholarship pathways and partner with schools and hospitals to grow the workforce, especially in rural and high-need communities. And she will fight to reverse the Trump administration's U.S. Department of Education move to strip nursing of "professional degree" status, an action that would lower federal loan limits for many graduate nursing students and could worsen Georgia's nurse shortage, while building state-level supports so Georgia's nursing pipeline does not get squeezed.

Over 270,800 small business owners in the state rely on the ACA for coverage - nearly 1 in 5 ACA enrollees in Georgia.

E | Enable Better Nutrition

- **Treat food access as a health care cost strategy.**

Too many Georgians are boxed into preventable illness because healthy food is not available or affordable where they live. Keisha's plan treats reducing food deserts as prevention, lowering chronic disease, avoiding unnecessary hospital visits, and bringing down long-term costs for families and taxpayers. Good health starts long before someone walks into a clinic.

- **Eliminate food deserts with smart incentives.**

Families should not have to drive miles just to buy groceries. Keisha will use tools like property tax abatements and Rural Economic Assistance grants to help grocery stores and fresh-food retailers expand into underserved communities, alongside support for farmers markets and neighborhood access points. Access to healthy food should depend on need, not ZIP code.

- **Expand Georgia-grown food access in underserved communities to support farmers and families.**

Georgia produces high-quality food, yet too many communities cannot easily buy it. Keisha will increase the availability of Georgia-grown products in food desert communities by helping groceries and farmers markets in underserved areas source from Georgia farmers and supporting aggregation and distribution partnerships that make it easier for small producers to get products onto local shelves. She also knows how to grow supply locally. As mayor, she helped advance efforts like Grows-A-Lot, turning vacant city-owned land into gardens and urban farms in neighborhoods that lacked access to fresh food. Stronger local agriculture means stronger public health.

- **Bring farm-to-school to scale.**

While Georgia has some farm-to-school efforts underway, Keisha will bring them to scale by helping more public schools partner with Georgia farmers to supply fresh produce for school meals. That will help children build healthier habits earlier, improve nutrition in schools, and create new market opportunities for Georgia agriculture. Food is medicine, and this is a practical way to support children, strengthen local farmers, and connect better health to Georgia-grown food.

- **Strengthen nutrition through schools and the health workforce.**

Families deserve clear, practical information about healthy eating, and kids should be able to count on nutritious meals at school. Keisha will improve access to high-quality school meals and maximize federal USDA Community Eligibility Provision participation so high-poverty schools can provide free meals to students who need them most. She will also expand nutrition education, so students graduate with real-life skills and health professionals have the tools to support prevention alongside treatment. The goal is simple: healthier habits early, better outcomes later, and lower costs over time.

