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For more information:

Berneta L. Haynes (404) 525-1085
bhaynes@georgiawatch.org

Georgia Watch releases Georgia Consumer Guide for Medical Bills and Debt

ATLANTA, February 24 – Recognizing the urgent need for consumer information about how to manage medical expenses, Georgia Watch today released the [Georgia Consumer Guide for Medical Bills and Debt](#) to help consumers answer some of the most common and complex healthcare and health insurance questions.

"At a time when uninsured and insured consumers alike are struggling with the high costs of healthcare, Georgia Watch believes consumers need practical information about how to minimize and manage medical debt," said Beth Stephens, Senior Director of Public Policy and Advocacy. Issues with medical bills were the #1 reason that consumers contacted Georgia Watch for help in 2016, and a recent study found that more than 50% of collection items on credit reports are for medical debt. The Georgia Consumer Guide for Medical Bills and Debt contains pertinent information to help consumers navigate the challenges brought by unexpected medical expenses and increasing out-of-pocket costs. The guide covers a range of medical billing and debt concerns, including questions about insurance coverage, explanation of benefits statements, bill payment options, filing for bankruptcy, and debt collection.

A series of educational workshops for consumers and advocates will accompany the guide and run through April 15, 2017. Workshops will be hosted in a variety of settings, including hospitals, clinics, libraries, churches, and community organizations. If you are interested in obtaining hard copies of the guide, please contact Berneta L. Haynes (bhaynes@georgiawatch.org).

Founded in 2002, Georgia Watch is a nonprofit statewide consumer advocacy organization working to empower and protect Georgia consumers through education, advocacy and policy development. Georgia Watch focuses on safeguarding consumer protections in personal finance, ensuring lower utility bills and cleaner energy, defending the availability of quality, affordable healthcare, protecting the right to trial by jury, and promoting access to the courts.