

Public Policy Network of Western NC and North Georgia
Candidate Profiles—GA Congressional District 9

Health

Doug Collins-Incumbent (R-GA)

From his website & other sites

- **Access to Care:** Rep. Collins office stated they do not complete surveys, so PPN conducted a review of his voting record in order to complete this survey. In 2017, Rep. Collins voted for the American Health Care Act, which would have reduced funding for Medicare and Medicaid, and shifting costs to states and consumers. It also would have removed protections for pre-existing conditions; weakened protections for people with individual and employee coverage; and increased the number of uninsured in the U.S. by 24 million people. The Act also would have capped Medicaid expenditures, which is the nation's predominant source of financing for long-term care, serving 1 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries, and 2 in 5 people with disabilities. This would have forced states to reconsider providing Medicaid funded services that allow people to remain in the community and avoid placements in more costly nursing homes. The Act did not pass the Senate, however; so it was NOT enacted. For more details on its impact on Georgia, click here: [Georgia - Impact of the American Health Care Act.pdf](#) and <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/restructuring-medicaid-in-the-american-health-care-act-five-key-considerations/>
- **Pre-Existing Conditions & Cost Containment:** As noted above, Rep. Collins voted to weaken protections for pre-existing conditions in 2017. He has voted 50 times to repeal the Patient and Affordable Care Act, (ACA), which would strip 20 million Americans of health insurance and remove protections for pre-existing conditions. The ACA reduced the number of uninsured by 6% in Towns and Union counties. His web site states that free market solutions should be used instead to promote consumer choice and removing the pharmacy middleman. He has introduced bills to promote transparency in drug pricing by pharmacies. For more information, see <https://dougcollins.house.gov/issues/health-care>
- **Medicaid Expansion in Georgia:** In March 2018, Rep. Collins commented on state-run Medicaid programs, as follows: "I think when you look at it (health care reform) from the expansion perspective, you look at what traditional Medicaid is supposed to be about—that is the aged, blind, disabled, those kind of things—I think the discussion is, is this Medicaid expansion actually taking away from the ones who should actually be getting the help?" <https://www.ajmc.com/conferences/ncoda-spring-forum-2018/rep-doug-collins-providing-healthcare-vs-health-insurance>)
- **Challenges of Rural Areas-**No information available.
- **Opioid Abuse, Prevention & Treatment:** In May 2018, Rep. Collins introduced the Substance Abuse Prevention Act in the House, a bill which reauthorizes federal funds for (1) the Office of National Drug Control Policy; (2) the Drug-Free Communities Program; (3) DOJ funding for Drug Courts; and (4) the ONDCP High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program which funds federal, state and local law enforcement task forces in critical drug trafficking regions. The bill would target funds for implementing coordinated drug overdose response strategies, including public health officials. and other multi-disciplinary efforts to reduce the demand for narcotics and prevent drug abuse. Rep. Collins co-sponsored the bill with Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL). His office's press release highlights the value of drug courts in Georgia, as an effective way of helping people break free from addiction and lessen the strain on the justice system. For more information, please see: <https://dougcollins.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/collins-introduces-bill-fight-opioid-epidemic-multiple-levels>

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Josh McCall-Democratic Challenger

From his website & Remarks at a recent Town Hall Meeting in Blairsville (10/1/2018)

- **Access to Care:** Mr. McCall's website states that he will work hard to ensure that our existing health care system is replaced with "an American Health Insurance Plan that provides coverage that is effective for all citizens."

McCall has pledged to work with his colleagues in Congress to create a Medicare for All system that provides, for all citizens, including health services for physical ailments, family planning, and treatment for drug addiction, and mental illness. The Plan should also be focused on reducing prescription drug costs and saving costs over the long run through preventative care and access to medical marijuana.

Health care cannot be a commodity sold to the highest bidder. All of our neighbors deserve affordable and effective health care. We have the opportunity to fix our broken health care system with one that not only saves costs in the long-term, but frees the burden on many small businesses, improves the health of our friends and neighbors, and is simply the right thing to do

McCall's website goes on to say, "When the founding fathers recognized our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it was not contingent upon our ability to pay. Too many have died from inadequate medical care, and too many have gone into financial ruin because of medical bills. This cannot continue."

- **Medicaid Expansion in GA:** Mr. McCall supports Stacey Abrams' efforts to expand Medicaid in Georgia. This, combined with Medicare for All, will ensure that people in Georgia will get the health care they need at an affordable price.
- **Pre-Existing Conditions:** At the October 1st Town Hall Meeting in Blairsville, Mr. McCall indicated that he is committed to opposing any legislation that would allow insurance companies to exclude people with pre-existing conditions from insurance coverage. (This is currently provided under the Affordable Care Act-aka "Obamacare.")
- **Cost Containment:** McCall believes the new American Health Insurance plan should also be focused on reducing prescription drug costs, and saving costs over the long run, through preventative care and access to medical marijuana.
- **Rural Areas:** At an October 1st rally, Mr. McCall stated his view that "Medicare for All" would provide what rural areas need—to ensure that people have access to doctors in rural areas; ensure that transportation is available to doctors in rural areas; and it will ensure that hospitals have financial support to continue to provide health care services in rural areas. Greater financial stability for the health care infrastructure will help attract doctors to the area.
- **Opioid Crisis:** Mr. McCall notes that research shows that fewer people are addicted to opioids when they have access to medical marijuana for pain management. It is extremely difficult to get in

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Georgia. He would propose that the substance be “de-scheduled” on the federal level so that people can grow their own, for their own use—not for sale—and so farmers can have a new market. This, combined with hemp production, will support agriculture in rural areas. At the same time, Mr. McCall believes that pharmaceutical companies need to be regulated so that they cannot continue to flood the market with pills and contribute to the current crisis of opioid addiction. People come before profits.