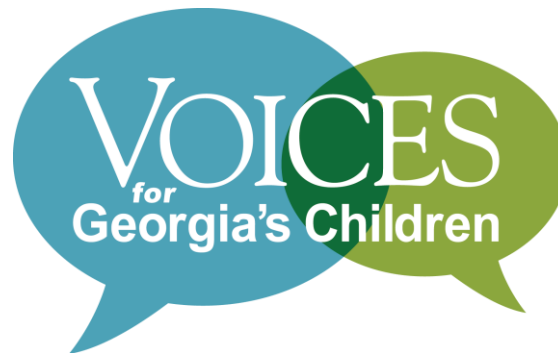


Beth Stephens, Health Access Program Director

Georgia Watch



Background Information of Organization

- Established in 2002; 3 full-time staff and many dedicated interns
- Our mission is to empower and protect Georgia consumers on matters that impact their wallets and quality of life through education, advocacy and policy development.



Georgia Watch Program Areas

1. **Financial Protection Program** – scam and identity theft prevention, predatory lending protection, mortgage foreclosure, etc.
2. **Health Access Program** – ensuring access to safe, quality and affordable healthcare
3. **Consumer Energy Program** – seeks to achieve lower utility bills and cleaner, more efficient energy solutions
4. **Access to Civil Justice** – protecting the right to trial by jury and promoting access to the courts



Recent Accomplishments



- In 2015, we released a report analyzing the first round of nonprofit hospital community health needs assessments in Georgia
- In early 2016, we conducted a mystery shopper study that examined the paid tax preparation market in Southwest Atlanta
- During the 2016 Legislative Session, we successfully prevented title pawn lenders from redefining the fee schedule to make loans more costly for consumers
- We are currently authoring a Military Consumer Protection Guide for Georgia service members

2017 Legislative Agenda

- Closing the Coverage Gap
- Consumer protections for surprise billing and network adequacy standards
- State regulation of paid tax preparers
- Preventing title pawn lenders from redefining the fee schedule



Partnerships

- Consumer Outreach
 - Workshops & resources for consumers
 - Train-the-trainer events
 - Toll-free consumer hotline
- Valuable partnership
 - Just Energy Circle

