



34th Biennial Institute
FOR **Georgia Legislators**

Behavioral Health Reforms Update





Governor's Office of
PLANNING AND BUDGET
THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Governor's Office of Health Strategy and Coordination

Behavioral Health Reform Update

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Carl Vinson Institute of Government's 34th Biennial Institute for Georgia
Legislators
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Creation of OHSC

- House Bill 186 (2019 Session)
- Since 2021, OHSC operates as a division of the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
- **Mission:** break down the silos between government agencies, health care providers, and health care consumers and to promote health care policies that increase access and quality

Statutory Powers and Duties:

“Strengthen and support the health care infrastructure of the state through interconnecting health functions and sharing resources across multiple state agencies and overcoming barriers to the coordination of health functions.”

“Facilitate collaboration and coordination between state agencies, coordinating state health functions and programs, serving as a forum for identifying Georgia’s specific health issues of greatest concern, and promoting cooperation from both public and private agencies to test new and innovative ideas.”



Behavioral Health Reform & Innovation Commission (BHRIC)

- House Bill 514 (2019 Session)
- Chaired by DBHDD Commissioner Kevin Tanner
- The 24-member commission is responsible for reviewing several key areas of behavioral health, represented by subcommittees:
 - **Children and Adolescent Behavioral Health**
 - **Involuntary Commitment**
 - **Hospital and Short-Term Care Facilities**
 - **Mental Health Courts and Corrections**
 - **Workforce and System Development**
- Workgroups:
 - **Aging Adults**
 - **Dental**
 - **Homelessness**
 - **IMD Waiver**
 - **Medicaid**
- Annual Report



Mental Health Parity Act (HB 1013)

- **HB 1013 / "The Mental Health Parity Act" of 2022** is a historic piece of legislation that represents a bipartisan effort to overhaul current behavioral and mental health processes in the State of Georgia and create alignment with federal mental health parity laws
- HB 1013 codifies the recommendations from the BHRIC First Year Report
- Spans the areas of focus of the BHRIC subcommittees

Agencies Impacted

CJCC
DBHDD
DCH
DCS
DECAL
DHS
DJJ
DOE
DPH
DPS (GPSTC)
GBHCW
GDAC
GDC
GSFC
OCA
OCI
OHSC
TCSG
USG



- **Legislation contains six parts:**
 - Part I: Mental Health Parity Provisions
 - Part II: Workforce and System Development
 - Part III: Involuntary Commitment
 - Part IV: Mental Health Courts and Corrections
 - Part V: Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health
 - Part VI: Additional Miscellaneous
 - DCH Medicaid Reimbursement Study
 - Georgia Data Analytic Center
 - Extension of the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission



- HB 1013 implementation
- Related legislation
- Executive Order for Agency Data Sharing



Thank you!

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OHSC Website:





D·B·H·D·D

Building a Future of Hope and Healing: Understanding DBHDD's Role in Georgia's Communities

**Commissioner Kevin Tanner
Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities**

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Scan the QR code
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interactive map.



REGIONAL RESOURCES

Google Earth
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy

DBHDD's Investments in Georgia's Public Safety Net

**Supporting the
Criminal Justice
System**

**Building a
Workforce
Pipeline**

**Increasing
Provider
Rates**

**Expanding
Access to
Crisis Care**

**Planning for
Increased
Demand**

Strengthening Crisis Response: Crisis Bed Capacity Study

OBSTACLES

CRISIS BED CAPACITY

To meet the growing demand for crisis beds, Georgia will require the addition of 8 new crisis centers over the next 10 years. Five out of these eight facilities are needed before 2025.

FORENSIC SERVICES

DBHDD offers hospital-based forensic services to restore individuals to competency before standing trial. Study projects 232-bed gap for forensic treatment by 2025. Forensic waitlist expected to reach 800 individuals.

SOLUTIONS

Three new Behavioral Health Crisis Centers are underway for Fulton, Dublin and Augusta.

DBHDD is working to determine a location for an additional crisis center in the Atlanta/North GA area.

Nearly 100 forensic beds will be brought online by end of 2024. DBHDD is investing in initiatives to reduce reliance on hospital-based forensic treatment and address forensic waitlist.

Strengthening Crisis Response: Serving Individuals with Developmental Disabilities



INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (I/DD)
CRISIS STABILIZATION DIAGNOSTIC CENTER (CSDC)

MACON, GEORGIA



**First-ever Crisis Services
Diagnostic Center in Macon**

Strengthening Crisis Response:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- Less than 15 seconds to answer
- Year-to-date, the 988 Lifeline in Georgia has managed 217,785 contacts through calls, texts, and chats.
- September 2024: 26,627 contacts—a mix of calls, texts, and chats.
- Surge in outreach corresponds to a 17% increase compared to the average monthly volume in 2023.
- Rural south Georgians are reaching out for help at higher rates than urban areas.

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

NOW/COMP Waivers: Serving Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Approach: DBHDD ensures access to high-quality, safe services, especially for individuals with complex behavioral or medical needs. Services are supported through state funding and two Medicaid waivers:

- **NOW Waiver:** Supports individuals living independently or with family, enabling community engagement.
- **COMP Waiver:** Primarily for residential care for those needing more intensive support.



4,266 Individuals
Enrolled in NOW
Services



9,398 Individuals
Enrolled in COMP
Services



TOTAL: 13,651
Georgians Receiving
Vital Community-based
Services

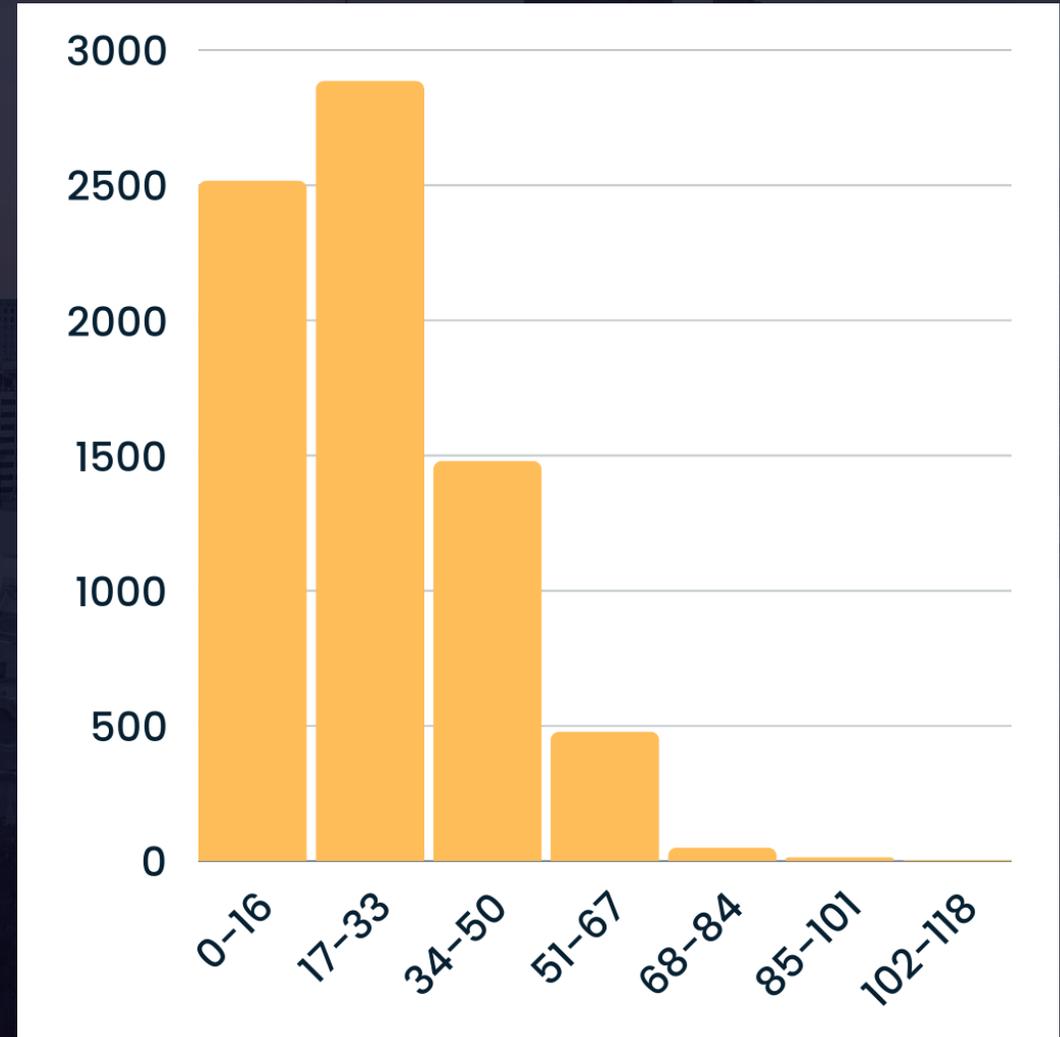
NOW/COMP Waivers: Planning for the Future

The Planning List: estimates the future needs of Georgians who may require NOW and COMP services.

DBHDD estimates **7,400+ Georgians will be eligible for services in the future**. 3,200+ of these individuals are under 21 years of age.

- The waiver serves as a last-resort payor and cannot replace other programs, such as school services, if they cover an individual's needs.
- NOW and COMP waiver prioritization depends on life events and unmet need scores (0–117), based on DON-R, Behavioral, and Medical Needs Screens.
- DBHDD works closely with individuals and families, updating prioritization if needs increase.

of Individuals on Planning List



Needs Score Range

Forensic Services: DBHDD's Critical Role in the Criminal Justice System

DBHDD's Forensic Services provides court-ordered mental health evaluations and treatment for individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Key responsibilities include:

Evaluations: Assessing if individuals are competent to stand trial or meet criteria for criminal responsibility (insanity).

Inpatient Care: Offering hospital-based treatment for individuals found incompetent to stand trial or not guilty by reason of insanity who need intensive care.

Outpatient Services: Supporting individuals with community-based competency restoration and monitoring under court supervision.

Forensic Services: Snapshot of Obstacles

Pre-Trial Evaluations Snapshot: Fall 2024

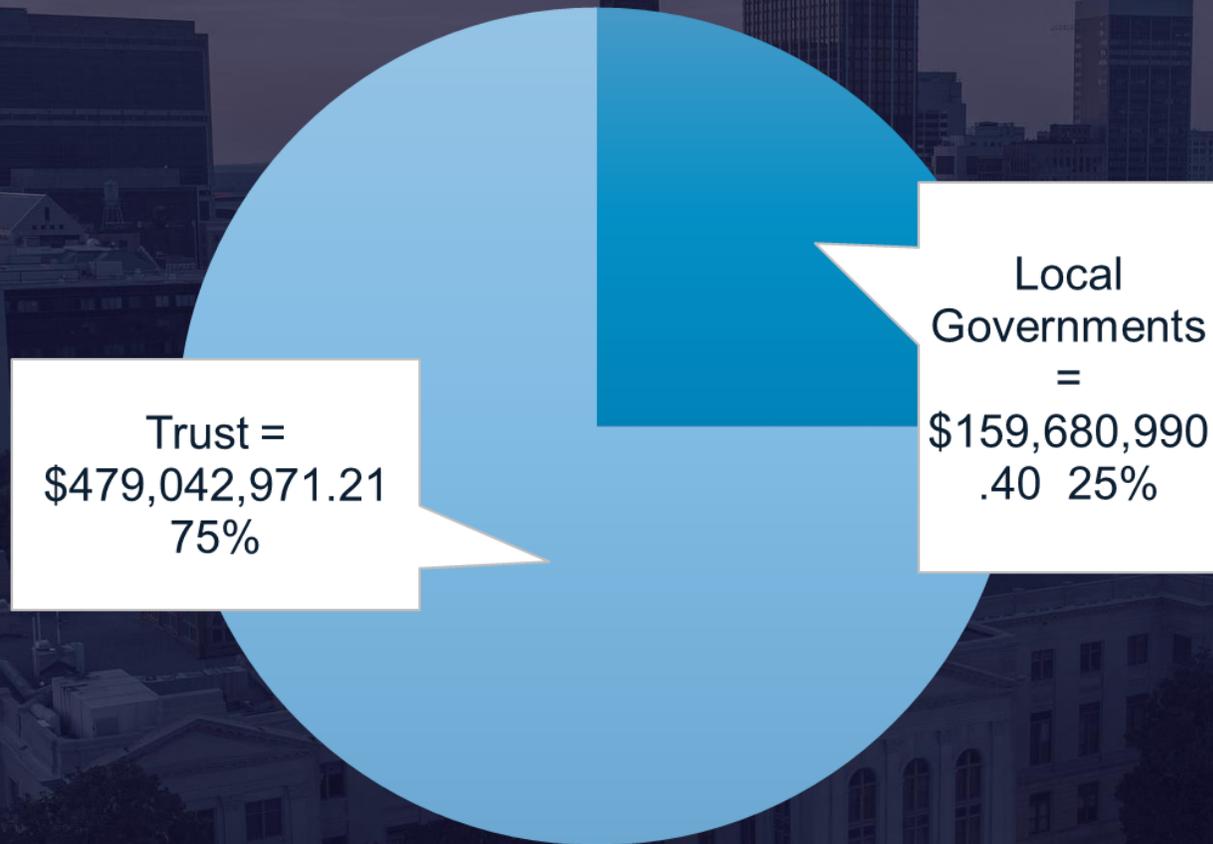
- 867 adults awaiting pretrial evaluations.
- 190 juveniles awaiting pretrial evaluations.

Hospital Bed Crisis Snapshot: Fall 2024

- 641 hospital beds for Forensic Services
- 232-bed gap by 2025
- 770 individuals waiting for a hospital bed
- Admission Wait Times: 330+ days for males and 260+ days for females

Allocation of Settlement Funds: \$638 million

GEORGIA OPIOID CRISIS ABATEMENT TRUST



■ Local Governments ■ Trust



Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission

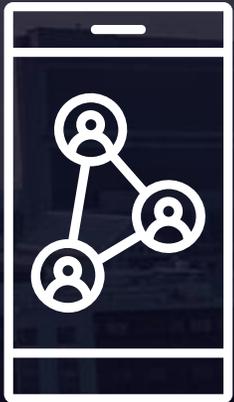
- Reviews workforce shortages, systemic barriers, and the role of education in early identification and treatment.
- Addresses the effects of untreated behavioral health issues on the justice system and explores support needs for individuals transitioning out of it, all to improve mental health outcomes statewide.
- The Commission held its final 2024 meeting on November 25.
- Recommendations will be submitted ahead of 2025 legislative session.

The Commission's Forensic Workgroup:

Examining court process to determine if orders will be issued for competency evaluations.

Determining possible improvements surrounding misdemeanor charges and mental health.

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Questions?

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