



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Disabilities

Kevin Tanner, Commissioner

**DBHDD**

Office of the Commissioner

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) announces creation of multi-agency committee for children's behavioral health**

Georgia DBHDD Commissioner Kevin Tanner on Friday announced the formation of the Multi-Agency Treatment for Children Committee (MATCH), which will help state leaders identify gaps in services for youth with complex treatment needs.

The MATCH committee was created in House Bill 1013, Georgia's "Mental Health Parity Act," signed into law by Gov. Brian P. Kemp in 2022.

The goal of the committee is to facilitate collaboration across state agencies and seek solutions for the complex and unmet behavioral health treatment needs of Georgia's children.

"I equate a youth in crisis who is experiencing an access barrier to treatment as a burning fire. There are fires popping up all over the place and we are running from here to there extinguishing one fire at a time," said Tanner. "MATCH is charged with reviewing data, understanding the trends that are causing the fires, and recommending meaningful solutions."

MATCH will accept referrals from local interagency children's committees for children whose treatment needs cannot be met through the resources of their local community and custodians. It will also provide recommendations to state leaders on gaps in services that could address the needs of these youth in the future.

Barbara "Bobbi" Cleveland, retired executive director of the Tull Foundation, has been appointed chairwoman of the committee. Cleveland has 40 years of expertise in initiatives aimed at improving child wellbeing in Georgia. As MATCH chairwoman, she has spent the last three months working with appointed members to establish goals and priorities and develop protocols for the committee's work.

"It's going to take all state agencies who touch the lives of children to make a difference, so we're all coming together because no child in Georgia should be stuck waiting on services," said Cleveland. "We have embarked upon the task of developing a plan of action that is both strategic and practical for improving the delivery of needed behavioral health services for children and adolescents."

The Committee will present its progress to the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council at its May 11 meeting, and includes the following members:

- Barbara (Bobbi) Cleveland, Chairperson
- *Georgia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities*  
Danté McKay, Director, Office of Children, Young Adults & Families
- *Georgia Department of Community Health*  
Brian Dowd, Deputy Executive Director, Policy, Compliance & Operations
- *Georgia Department of Corrections*  
Randy Sauls, Assistant Commissioner
- *Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning*  
Laura Lucas, Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Director
- *Georgia Department of Education*  
Tabathia Baldy, Mental Health & Wellness Program Manager
- *Georgia Department of Human Services*  
Audrey Brannen, Caregiver Recruitment & Retention Regional Administrator
- *Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice*  
Margaret Cawood, Deputy Commissioner
- *Georgia Department of Public Health*  
Megan Andrews, Assistant Commissioner, Policy
- *Georgia Office of the Child Advocate*  
Jerry Bruce, Director

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If anyone you know needs help related to mental health, substance use, or intellectual and developmental disabilities immediate assistance is available 24/7/365. Please call the Georgia Crisis and Access Line at **1-800-715-4225**.

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*The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) is the state agency, which supports people with mental health needs, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Department's vision is easy access to high-quality care that leads to a life of recovery and independence for the people it serves.*

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