

NOW/COMP WAIVER FORUMS

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Disabilities

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Statewide Stakeholder Feedback Forums

“Congrats to all for probably the most positive step forward I have seen in helping families feel positive about services and having caring support readily available. Great public service.

“Thank you so much,”

Mike & Gwen Powderly

Forum Objectives

- Communicate the latest information on the NOW/COMP waivers to self-advocates, families, providers and advocates.
- Maximize statewide participation by planning events in each region.
- Facilitate stakeholder discussions and record suggestions for improvements to services.
- Analyze trends and summarize results.

10 Stakeholder Forums:

- Dates held: January 26-March 3
- Eight two-hour, in-person forums
- Two additional forums held in Region 3
- Two “virtual” forums



Outreach and Collaboration

- 500+ organizations
- Email and phone calls
- Database: 1,543 organizations and individual advocates
- Region 2: Forum at the Northeast Georgia Transition Team conference
- Region 6: Forum at the Georgia Winter Institute

Partnerships:

Parent to Parent of Georgia; the Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University; and DBHDD regional leadership and staff

Community Partners: Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities; Service Providers Association for Developmental Disabilities; local advocacy resource centers; individual provider agencies; and advocacy organizations



Meeting Format

- NOW/COMP Presentation
- Stakeholder Q&A
- Small discussion groups (conversation “pods”)
- Participants grouped by common experience
- Self-advocates, provider, family members and advocates
- Regional staff participation

Meeting Format

- Participants were given discussion questions prior to the meeting:
 - What is working well?
 - What are some of the challenges you are experiencing with waiver services?
 - What suggestions do you have for improving waiver services?

Options for Stakeholder Participation

- In-person meetings
- Online “virtual” meetings
- Online feedback forms



Statewide Attendance

- 340 family members
- 504 providers
- 83 advocates (62 self-advocates)
- 90 unidentified (virtual)
- Total attendance: 1,017

Attendance By Region

Region 1	163
Region 2	68
Region 3	271
Region 4	133
Region 5	108
Region 6	78
Out-of-state	1
Virtual	195
Total	1,017

Media: Cartersville

NEIL MCGAHEE/The Daily Tribune News

Catherine Ivy, director of community services for the Division of Developmental Disabilities, answers questions about the state waiver program.



FORUM

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Providers, caretakers, families and individuals lined up to ask questions at the forum.

"The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services came out with new federal guidelines for what home- and community-based services should be," Kirkland said. "There's some concern that some of the services, particularly day services, may not meet that definition."

Other people had questions about budgetary restraints, waiting lists and the limited number of people that

What is Working Well? (546 responses)

1. Self-direction
2. Day services and community access groups
3. Region staff in regions 1 and 4
4. Array of services offered
5. Recent rate increase for providers
6. General satisfaction with NOW/COMP waiver
7. Timeliness of receiving payment for services
8. More focus on community integration for services
9. More choices available for individuals
10. Emphasis on person-centered services

What challenges are you having? (887)

1. Access to services-planning list
2. Support coordination
3. Caps on service categories
4. ER process
5. Need for more outreach and education
6. Billing restrictions in service categories
7. Communication to stakeholders
8. Regions
9. Low rates for services
10. Funding to meet overall need

What suggestions do you have for improvements? (858 responses)

1. Improve communication strategies with stakeholders
2. Increase outreach and education
3. Require more training for support coordinators
4. Rates: study rates; improve rate structure
5. Billing: allow more flexibility
6. Remove caps
7. Increase employment opportunities (Employment First)
8. Revamp ER process
9. Improve application process for waivers and new provider
10. Increase funding for planning list

Organizational Responses (36)

- Remove arbitrary caps on services
- Communicate best practices to all providers
- Lessen administrative burden of ER process
- Incentivize person-centered supports; fund adequately
- Clearly define supported employment and associated services (individual and group services, and job maintenance)
- Give providers more incentives to find employment for individuals
- Provide more training and stakeholder education regarding policy changes (ex. home- and community-based services)
- Keep language in the new waiver flexible to meet individual needs

Self-advocate Responses

- Working well: friendships, social opportunities in community
- Challenges:
 1. More employment and self-employment opportunities
 2. Education on understanding benefits/work
 3. Personal supports: pay rate, finding good staff
 4. Housing options
 5. Transportation: mileage caps, finding reliable transportation other than family members

Thank you!

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