



Georgia Department of Behavioral Health &  
Developmental Disabilities

Kevin Tanner, Commissioner

**D·B·H·D·D**

Office of the Commissioner

September 29, 2023

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RE: 2022 Interagency Directors Team (IDT) Annual Report on Programs that Serve  
Disabled Infants, Children, and Youth

House Bill 1013 (2022 legislative session) mandated that DBHDD provide an annual report to the Office of Health and Strategy and Coordination outlining the programs that have been developed to serve disabled infants, children, and youth in Georgia.

DBHDD is providing the annual report from the Interagency Directors Team (IDT) included with this report as Attachment A in compliance of the above mentioned requirement. The Georgia IDT, established by DBHDD, plays a central role in designing, managing, facilitating, and implementing an integrated approach to a Child and Adolescent System of Care (SOC). Comprising over 30 representatives from both state agencies and non-governmental organizations dedicated to children with behavioral health needs in Georgia, the IDT operates under the umbrella of the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council (BHCC).

One of the essential aspects of our work through the IDT is recognizing that responsibility for children's behavioral health in Georgia is shared among multiple state agencies. By fostering collaboration between agency program directors, Georgia aims to develop and implement shared strategic objectives and communicate behavioral health issues to various stakeholders with a unified voice.

In this report, you will find the following key information:

1. An overview of the System of Care State Plan
2. Challenges facing the Interagency Directors Team
3. Key Accomplishments and Activities

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to our Director of Legislative Affairs, Michael Polacek, at [Michael.polacek@dbhdd.ga.gov](mailto:Michael.polacek@dbhdd.ga.gov).



**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR  
CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**  
integrating research, policy, and practice



**Interagency Directors Team (IDT) Annual Report**

2022

Interagency collaboration is a central element to developing a strong System of Care (SOC) and is the focus of the Georgia Interagency Directors Team (IDT). The IDT is a multi-agency, public-private formal workgroup of the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council (BHCC) and designed specifically for collaboration in managing, facilitating, and implementing an integrated approach to child and adolescent system of care that informs policy and practices and shares resources.

The IDT consists of the Executive Director, Chair, Executive Committee, and general membership, all with the shared vision of Georgia's youth and families leading independent, enriched, and productive lives in their communities of choice.

### **IDT LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP**

**Renee Johnson, IDT Executive Director** - *Center of Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health, Georgia Health Policy Center*

**Laura Lucas, IDT Chair**, *Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Director, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning*

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### **IDT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The executive committee provides an enhanced feedback loop between BHCC members and executive agency leadership. By providing executive level insight, making recommendation to improve strategic decision-making, and offering reciprocity between the SOC State plan and agency priorities, the executive committee is instrumental in promoting IDT's shared vision, priorities and activities.

### **2022 Executive Committee members:**

#### **Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities**

Monica Johnson, Director, Division of Behavioral Health

#### **Department of Community Health**

Brian Dowd, Deputy Executive Director, Policy, Compliance & Operations

#### **Department of Early Care and Learning**

Susan Adams, Deputy Commissioner

#### **Department of Education**

Matthew Jones, Chief of staff

Mary Lauren Salvatore, Assistant Director, Office of Whole Child Supports

#### **Department of Human Services**

LaMarva Ivory, Deputy Commissioner, External Affairs

#### **Department of Juvenile Justice**

Margaret Cawood, Deputy Commissioner

### **Voices for Georgia's Children**

Erica Sitkoff, Director of Policy, and Outreach (through June 2022)

Melissa Haberlen-DeWolf, Research and Policy Director

### **Woodruff Foundation**

Dahlia Bell Brown, Program Officer

### **IDT General Membership**

The IDT general membership is made up of individuals from different public and private sectors committed to the common agenda of guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities through research and evaluation. The group works collaboratively to address children's behavioral health needs through monthly meetings, workgroup development, and sharing of resources and information. The IDT provides a platform for partnership to develop and implement shared strategic objectives for the SOC for children's behavioral health in Georgia.

### **Georgia State Agencies**

- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)
- Department of Community Health (DCH)
- Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)
- Department of Education (GaDOE)
- Department of Human Services Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)
- Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)

### **Consulting Member**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

### **Partner Organizations**

- Anthem
- Amerigroup Community Care
- CareSource
- Centene
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA)
- The Carter Center
- Center of Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University (GSU/COE)
- Center for Leadership in Disability, Georgia State University (GSU/CLD)
- Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia
- Georgia Alliance of Therapeutic Services for Children and Families (GATS)
- Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (GAAAP)
- Georgia Appleseed
- Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS)
- Georgi Family Connection Partnership

- Georgia Parent Support Network (GPSN)
- Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority
- Jesse Parker Williams Foundation
- Lookout Mountain Community Services
- Mental Health America, Georgia (MHA-GA)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Georgia
- Peach State
- Resilient Georgia
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Strategic Healthcare Partners: Healthcare Consulting Services
- Silence the Shame
- Together Georgia
- United Way of Greater Atlanta (UWGA)
- ViewPoint Health Care Management Entity (ViewPoint)
- Voices for Georgia's Children (Voices)
- WellCare
- WinGeorgia Cate Management Entity (WinGeorgia)

**SOC STATE PLAN**

The Georgia SOC State Plan is a 3-year dynamic, living document that serves as the roadmap for how Georgia will work to improve the state's child and adolescent behavioral health system. As a part of this strategic framework, workgroups were established for each focus area (*access, coordination, workforce development, funding, financing, and evaluation*) in partnership with the five phases of SOC Continuum for behavioral health (*Prevention and Early Screening, Early Intervention, Intervention, Late Intervention, and Spanning the full continuum*).

The charge of the workgroups is to review information and data, gain clarity around the area of focus, engage in thoughtful discussions, and to work towards implementing the key strategies and measurable objectives outlined in the SOC State Plan. Current workgroups and leadership include:

**IDT SOC State Plan workgroup Chairs and Co-chairs**

<b>Workgroup</b>	<b>Workgroup Leadership</b>
Behavioral Health Mapping	Melissa Haberlen DeWolf, Voices Wendy Tiegreen, DBHDD Ann Marie Mukherjee, GSU/COE
Coordination	Hannah Smith, GA-AAP La'Keidra Mitchell, GSU/COE
Cultural and Linguistic Competence	Nykia Greene-Young, DBHDD Sandra Thompson, CareSource Ann DiGirolamo, COE Astrid Prudent, COE
Evaluation	Christine Doyle, DJJ

	Kennedy Lewis, GSU/COE
Funding	Helen Robinson, Carter Center Angela Snyder, GSU/COE Ann Marie Mukherjee, GSU/COE
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	Callan Wells, GEEARS Arianne Weldon, GFPC Ann Marie Mukherjee, GSU/COE Twanna Nelson, GSU/COE
Marketing and Communication	Matthew Clay, DBHDD Shilloy Bates, Anthem
Peer Support and Lived Experience	Anita Speed, GPSN Tami Brown, Centene La'Keidra Mitchell, GSU/COE
School Based Mental Health	Kelsey Lynn Corallo GSU/COE Isis A Nelson-Graham, GSU/COE Christianna Jarvis, GSU/COE
Telehealth	Kelsey Lynn Corallo, GSU/COE Ann Marie Mukherjee, GSU/COE
Workforce Development	Layla Fitzgerald, DBHDD Kennedy Lewis, GSU/COE

### **CHALLENGES**

Complex problems – such as those encountered in behavioral health – require complex solutions including the need for cross-system data sharing and collaboration. Implementing data sharing across Georgia’s state agencies stills proves to be a challenge for the work of the IDT. The inability to get timely and relevant agency data has hindered the IDT’s ability to better understand the areas of strength and need, including full implementation and evaluation of the SOC State Plan and activities. Other challenges for the IDT include the limited funding support from state agencies to build staffing capacity and support state mandate activities such as Local Interagency Planning Teams (LIPTs). The lack of designated funding for LIPTs creates significant strains on agency staff who already have competing priorities within their individual agencies. Even despite these long-standing challenges, the collective talent and strength of the IDT and its members have been seen in how the group has built on existing assets and continued to advance Georgia’s current system of care.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- IDT continued its focus on funding priorities and the development of strategies to support blended and braided funding with the aims to conserve resources, decrease duplication of efforts, and expand needed services throughout the system of care. Through cross-agency collaboration the IDT worked together to acquire new funding, bring about innovative programs, and serve as subject matter experts to several formal advisory committees. Examples include Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funded Mental Health Access in Pediatrics (GMAP) and Infant Toddler Court Program (ITC), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded Access, Integrate, Mobilize, Educate (AIME)) project.

- **GMAP** funding was awarded in 2021 and continues to be implemented through partnerships between the Office of Children, Young Adults and Families at DBHDD, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA), the Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (GA-AAP) (in collaboration with Augusta University, Medical College of Georgia, and Children’s Hospital of Georgia), and the COE at Georgia State University. In 2022, GMAP provided greater access to education through the establishment of Project ECHO, an interactive tele-mentoring learning approach between behavioral health specialists and pediatric providers. This also included teleconsultation guidance on cases through a telephone advice line, and care coordination services for families through a directory of behavioral health providers by county.
- **GMAP Supplemental:** In partnership with DBHDD and the IDT’s Cultural and Linguistic Competency workgroup, the GMAP program was able to secure \$300,000 in Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Expansion Award funds. In part, funds will be utilized to develop web-based trainings and in-person workshops around the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards to expand cultural competency, advance health equity, and help eliminate behavioral health disparities.
- **Infant and Toddler Court Program (ITCP)** is a newly funded SOC program. The program was created through a multi-agency partnership, which included the following agencies the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS), Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL, and DBHDD. Goals of the program are to improve statewide systems and policies to support young children (ages 0-3) and their families who are involved, or at risk of involvement, with the child welfare system, and build capacity to prevent child maltreatment more broadly. Georgia will achieve this goal by expanding evidence-based ITCP court teams and improving early developmental health and wellbeing of infants, toddlers, and their families. Total funding awarded: \$3 million dollars across five-years for statewide and local implementation and planning.
- The **AIME Project** leveraged its partnership with the American-Academy of Pediatrics-Georgia Chapter (GA-AAP) to secure sustainable funding for the CHOA partnership with GMAP. Other accomplishments included establishing two new Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (FFCMH) chapters in the southeast and southwest Georgia, enrolling nearly 700 youth and young adults into services, implementing the Kagen System of Care Fellowship for Leaders, as well as several state and local presentations.



In collaboration with IDT's **Marketing and Communication Workgroup** the AIME Project also launched the interactive and user-friendly SOC Website ([www.GASystemofCare.org](http://www.GASystemofCare.org)) in 2022. Since its launch, the website has been utilized to educate families and providers about behavioral health updates (*e.g., policy changes, laws, key announcements*), training opportunities, new projects, and access to community services. The website is also being used as a tool for healthcare professionals (*e.g., doctors, pediatricians*) when referring children who need behavioral health services. The successful implementation of Project AIME is another step towards a statewide SOC infrastructure.

- **The Behavioral Health Mapping (BHM) Workgroup** created *Framework 1.0* – a “map” or story of Georgia’s spending on children’s behavioral health. *Framework 1.0* is a first look at connecting the dots of spending across Georgia’s Behavioral Health system of care. Using a snapshot of SFY 2019 data, the BHM workgroup collected and analyzed data from each child-serving state agency. Spending data were categorized across the spectrum of need, from prevention and early intervention to late intervention, and the group traced the dollars by state and federal sources. *Framework 1.0* is intended to help agencies, policy makers, and the public understand the policy-social-program landscape that underlies this system and to support future funding opportunities. *Framework 1.0* is scheduled for release in Calendar Year 2023.
- **The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Workgroup** continued helping the state build its system of care for young children and their caregivers in 2022. Much progress was made throughout the year with support from the Workgroup and its members and the IECMH Taskforce coordinated by DECAL. 2022 saw successes building the IECMH workforce, clarifying billing policies for Medicaid for this age group, and educating more stakeholders across the state about the importance of IECMH. The IECMH Taskforce supported the creation of a [billing toolkit](#) now posted to Georgia’s Medicaid website. The state also celebrated the creation of the Georgia Alliance for Infant Mental Health (GA-AIMH) in November, a group that will help further grow the IECMH workforce in Georgia. The IDT IECMH Workgroup helped spread the word about these accomplishments. The Workgroup also developed and rolled out an introductory presentation on IECMH core concepts that can be used broadly by all its members to inform stakeholders about the importance of IECMH.
- **The Cultural and Linguistic Competence workgroup** trained a total of 676 providers and partners statewide on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Trainings focused on Providing Culturally Responsive Care for Behavioral Health in Georgia Part I and Part II. Examples of topics included *Culturally Competent Mental Health Services to Faith-Based Communities, A Trauma-Informed Approach to Serving LGBTQ+ Youth, and Healing the Strong Black Woman*. Additional training opportunities are being planned for Year 3.

## **Moving Forward**

In the next year, the IDT will focus efforts to achieve the full implementation of the 2020-2023 State Plan goals and objectives. Ongoing activities include:

- Completion of the IDT Rebranding Project which will bring a sharper focus to the IDT's vision and mission and boost the public education and promotion of IDT initiatives, activities, and accomplishments.
- A 50-state scan being completed by the Workforce Development workgroup to identify best practices on improving licensing pathways for providers and standardizing cultural competence training. A finalized state scan will be used to develop a behavioral health practice brief, including recommendations to the BHCC statewide implementation.
- The Behavioral Health Mapping Workgroup will leverage previous mapping products, including *Framework 1.0*, to create an asset and resource map identifying behavioral health resources available to children, youth, young adults, and families in the state.
- The Cultural and Linguistic Competence Workgroup will be sponsoring a series of workshops to train providers and agencies on the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) standards to expand cultural competency, advance health equity, and help eliminate behavioral health disparities. A train the trainer workshop will also be held to expand training in this area.
- The School-Based Mental Health Workgroup is working on utilizing existing resources to increase awareness and expand the comprehensive school-based mental health services available to students.
- The Evaluation Workgroup is collaborating with partner agencies to help facilitate interagency data sharing to monitor trends and outcomes that will inform and support the improvement of the children's behavioral health system.