

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CARE AND LEARNING, AND GEORGIA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AGENCY

PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT

This cooperative agreement is made and entered into by and between the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as “DBHDD”), the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services, (hereinafter referred to as “DHS/DFCS ”), the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (hereinafter referred to as “DJJ”), the Georgia Department of Community Health (hereinafter referred to as “DCH”), the Georgia Department of Public Health (hereinafter referred to as “DPH”), the Georgia Department of Education (hereinafter referred to as “DOE”), the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (hereinafter referred to as “DECAL”), and Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (hereinafter referred to as “GVRA”). Hereinafter, these entities will collectively be referred to as “the Parties.” Hereinafter, this cooperative agreement will be referred to as “the Agreement” or “this Agreement.”

PURPOSES OF THE AGREEMENT

The purposes of this Agreement are:

- 1) to promote increased cooperation, coordination, and integration at the administrative and service delivery levels between the Parties for the benefit of children and adolescents in need of or in receipt of behavioral health services, and their families;
- 2) to promote, manage, design, facilitate and implement an integrated approach to a child and adolescent system of care which shares funding, resources and informs policy;
- 3) to enhance the quality and appropriateness of services for children and youth in Georgia through improved coordination of resources between the Parties;
- 4) to enable youth accessing the Parties’ services, programs and supports to lead independent, enriched and productive lives in their communities of choice, growing up to be healthy adults who live stably in the community, who are employed, and who choose and guide their care in the least restrictive and most integrated environments possible;
- 5) to advance the purposes of the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council (hereinafter referred to as “BHCC”), set forth in O.C.G.A. § 37-2-4; and
- 6) to establish a statewide Interagency Directors Team.

BACKGROUND OF NEED FOR COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

The Parties to this Agreement accept the following justifications of need for creation of this Agreement:

1. The Parties have authority and/or mandates to provide services to the children and youth of Georgia, and specifically to children with behavioral health or developmental needs,

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and agree that clear communication, coordination, and shared responsibility to these children and youth is necessary to assist them in performing these services effectively and efficiently. See O.C.G.A. §§ 20-1A-1, 31-2-1, 31-2A-2, 37-1-4, 49-2-1, 49-2-2.1, 49-4A-3, 49-5-8, and 49-9-4.

2. In order to better coordinate and serve the child and youth population in Georgia, data should be shared, and data sharing agreements developed, between the Parties wherever possible.
3. The System of Care concept should be promoted in Georgia, ensuring that children's behavioral health services are community based, child-centered and family focused (involving youth and family as partners), culturally and linguistically competent, comprehensive, individualized, and provided in the least restrictive, most integrated and most appropriate setting as possible.
4. Early identification of and intervention with children with behavioral health or developmental needs is critical to improving the health and productivity of each child as they age.
5. Public-private partnerships are essential to successful operation of a system of care, and should be promoted in Georgia.
6. Such partnerships and coordination in providing consistent and high-quality interventions that conform to evidence-based practices are economically beneficial.

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

1. All Parties agree to establish and participate in a statewide "Interagency Directors Team" (hereinafter referred to as "IDT") for the purposes of managing, designing, facilitating and implementing an integrated approach to a child and adolescent System of Care which shares funding, resources and informs policy. The IDT shall work to enable the children served by the Parties to grow up to be healthy adults who live in the community, are employed, choose and guide their care, in the least restrictive and most integrated environments possible. The IDT shall:
 - a) create a yearly (state fiscal year) action plan with a data-driven sub-goal, based on this purpose, that the Parties will work together to advance during the year;
 - b) provide written recommendations to the BHCC on yearly action plan as well as ad hoc topics related to this purpose;
 - c) provide written or oral updates, and an end of year written report to the BHCC describing the progress of yearly action plan work; and
 - d) propose modifications to this Agreement as necessary for approval by the Parties to this Agreement.

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The IDT shall consist of at least the following members:

- a) A representative of DBHDD;
 - b) A representative of DHS/DFCS;
 - c) A representative of DJJ;
 - d) A representative of DCH;
 - e) A representative of DPH;
 - f) A representative of DOE;
 - g) A representative of DECAL;
 - h) A representative of GVRA;
 - i) A family advocate;
 - j) A youth advocate;
 - k) A representative of the provider community; and
 - l) Any other member as deemed appropriate by the IDT.
2. All Parties shall provide appropriate and coordinated services, in accordance with federal and state law and their respective policies and procedures, to children with behavioral health or developmental needs and their families. Services may be paid by federal, state, or local funds, as well as by private insurance.
 3. All Parties shall make good faith efforts through policy management and practice to enable children and youth to access appropriate care in the least restrictive and most integrated environments as possible.
 4. All Parties shall actively work toward the development of ad hoc and more permanent information and data sharing agreements, in accordance with federal and state law and their respective policies, for the purpose of allowing the Parties to better assess the need for and success of, various children's behavioral health and developmental services in the state.
 5. All Parties shall explore innovative service financing opportunities, in order to provide appropriate and fiscally responsible child behavioral health and developmental services.
 6. All Parties shall work to seek and maintain public-private partnerships appropriate to each Party's line of business that benefit their children served, and the system of care in Georgia.

TERMS OF AGREEMENT

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This Agreement shall be effective upon the date of final signature and shall continue for a period of one (1) year, and shall automatically renew annually for additional one-year periods, not to exceed fifty (50) years, unless terminated earlier in accordance with this Agreement. The Parties shall review this Agreement each year and re-sign the agreement annually to verify each Party's approval and understanding of the Agreement. This Agreement may be amended only in writing signed by all Parties. Any Party may terminate its obligations under this Agreement upon 30 days prior written notice to the other Parties in writing. Termination by one Party will not affect the Agreement as to the other Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have entered into this Agreement as evidenced by their signatures below. The Agreement is effective upon the date of the final signature.

For Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities:

_____ Date _____

For Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services:

_____ Date _____

For Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice:

_____ Date _____

For Georgia Department of Community Health:

_____ Date _____

For Georgia Department of Public Health:

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Date

For Georgia Department of Education:

_____ Date

For Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning:

_____ Date

For Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency:

_____ Date