



"Promoting Healthcare, Wellness, and Academic Success for Georgia's Children."

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



I believe it's safe to say that the mental and behavioral health problems that children and adolescents are currently facing are not new. The issues of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideations, eating disorders, and trauma were present prior to the COVID pandemic. In fact, for the past decade we have seen an escalation in these problems especially among adolescents, young children, LGBTQ youth, and children of color. COVID has simply shed a bright spotlight on these long-standing conditions and in many ways has exacerbated them. We know that as a result of COVID, children are experiencing increased depression and anxiety, grief and loss, food and

housing insecurity and exposure to interpersonal or domestic violence which has increased by at least 30 since the pandemic began. It is estimated that over 167,000 children have lost a loved one to COVID and this trauma is not acute but will pose a threat to the recovery of these children for years to come. In addition, the social isolation, educational loss, and diminished personal control have served to compound the problem.

In order to address these challenges, it is incumbent upon all of us (i.e., parents, mental and medical providers, school personnel, etc.) to join forces to create a system of support that provides early identification and effective intervention for the behavioral health disorders afflicting our children. This system of support includes expanding mental health services in order to provide appropriate treatment for both the child and parent/care giver. It includes school personnel who are patient and skilled in defusing disruptive behavior which is often rooted in trauma, insecurity, and fear. Finally, it involves galvanizing the entire community around the efforts of the schools in order to expand the net which promotes healing and restoration for students and their families.

School-based health centers (SBHCs) are part of this community. During this crisis, SBHCs have played a critical role in addressing the psychosocial issues that impede both function and learning. They have been deliberate in their efforts to expand capacity to increase mental health services for students, provide support for school personnel, and enhance efforts to mitigate the spread and transmission of COVID in the schools. SBHCs have assisted in health screenings for students and teachers, quarantine measures, and providing personal protective equipment to school nurses and staff. In addition, they have served as hubs for COVID testing and vaccinations for students, families, and school staff. SBHCs have been crucial partners in the fight to combat this pandemic and appreciate the opportunity to contribute to every effort that reduces the physical, social, and emotional toll it has placed on children, families, and the schools.

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GASBHA Overview

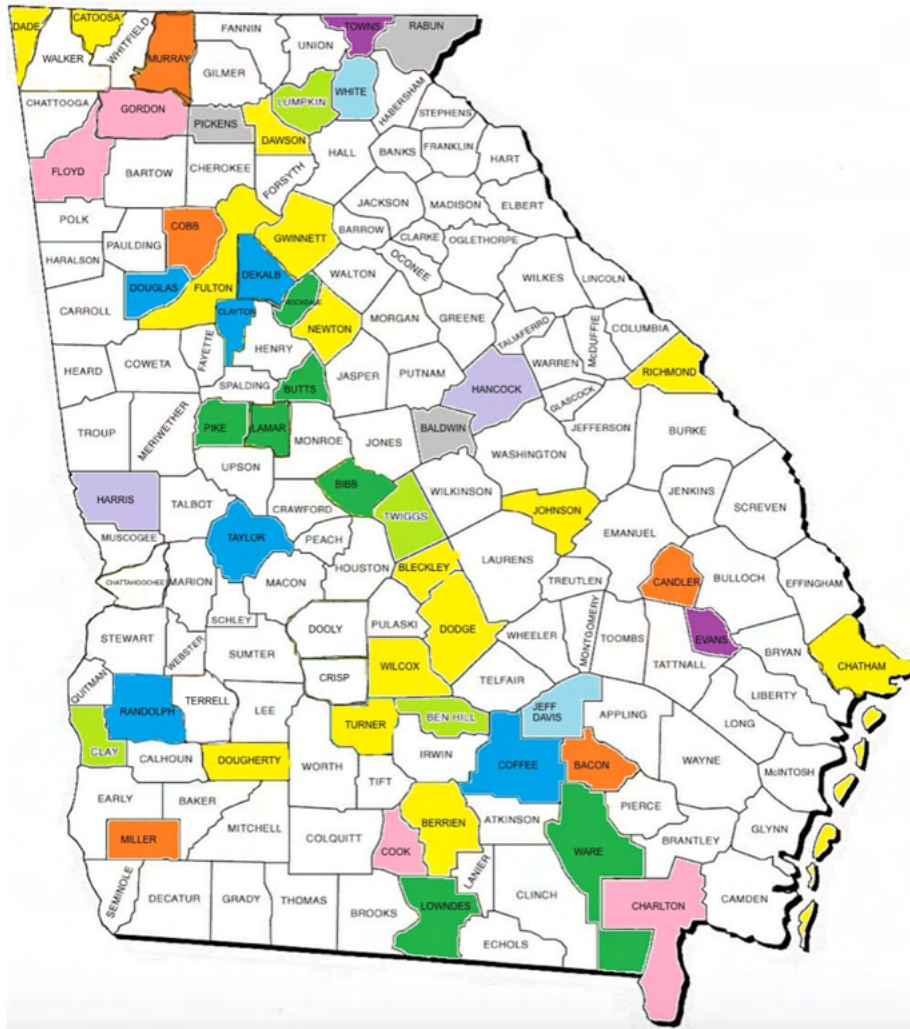
Objectives

- Increase access to healthcare for the uninsured, Medicaid, and CHIP eligible children and adolescents
- Improve health outcomes for underserved children and adolescents
- Improve academic achievement through reduced absenteeism

Mission

GASBHA advances the health and success of Georgia's children through community partnerships to develop and support SBHCs

Planning Grantees Map



Yellow- Round 1 Grantees (Sept 2010)- 11 grantees representing 16 counties. Dodge consortium includes Bleckley, Johnson, Tattnall & Wilcox counties.

Green- Round 2 Grantees (Sept 2011) - 7 grantees

Orange- Round 3 Grantees (Sept 2012) - 5 grantees

Blue- Round 4 Grantees (Sept 2013) - 6 grantees

Purple- Round 5 Grantees (Sept 2015) - 2 grantees

which includes DeKalb Board of Health

Pink- Round 6 Grantees (Sept 2016)- 5 grantees

Gray- Round 7 Grantees (Sept 2017)- 3 grantees

Red – Round 8 Grantees (Sept 2018) – 2 grantees
Sponsored Organization Membership in the School-Based Health Alliance (2013, 2015, 2016, & 2017)

Lavendar – Round 9 Grantees (Sept 2019) – 2 grantees

Light Blue - Round 10 Grantees (Sept. 2020) – 2 grantees

Lime Green – Round 11 Grantees (Sept. 2021) – 4 grantees

Operational SBHCs



List of Operational SBHCs

- AB Williams Elementary, Savannah
- Albany Middle (Dental), Albany
- Alice Coachman Elementary, Albany
- Baldwin County Early Learning Center, Milledgeville
- Bloomingdale Elementary, Savannah
- Brock Elementary, Savannah
- Building Bridges Middle, Savannah
- Burnett/Eastside Elementary, Douglasville
- Chatsworth Elementary, Chatsworth
- Claxton Elementary School, Claxton
- Coffee Middle, Douglas
- College Park Elementary, College Park
- Cooper-Carver Elementary, Dawson
- Crisp County Elementary, Cordele
- Dobbs Elementary, Atlanta
- DeRenne Middle, Savannah
- Dooly County Elementary, Pinehurst
- Doraville United, Doraville
- Dresden Elementary, Chamblee
- East BroadK8, Savannah
- Fairington Elementary, Lithonia
- Fairmount Elementary, Fairmount
- Flatrock Elementary, Lithonia
- Formey Early Learning, Savannah
- Fox Elementary, Columbus
- Gadsen Elementary, Savannah
- Garden City Elementary, Savannah
- Gilbert Elementary, LaFayette
- Grove Park Elementary, Atlanta
- Groves High, Savannah
- Hilsman Middle School, Athens
- Hubert Middle, Savannah
- Hollis Innovation Academy, Atlanta
- Ingram-Pye Elementary, Macon
- Isle of Hope Elementary, Savannah
- Irwin County Middle and High Schools, Irwin
- Johnson Elementary, Wrightsville
- Johnson High, Savannah
- Juliette Low Elementary, Savannah
- King Middle, Atlanta
- KIPPVision, Atlanta
- Lake Forest Elementary, Sandy Springs
- Live Oak Elementary, Albany
- L.P. Miles Elementary, Atlanta
- Martin Luther King Middle, Atlanta
- Mercer Middle, Savannah
- Myers Middle, Savannah
- North Clayton High, College Park
- Oakview Elementary, Decatur
- Panola Way Elementary, Lithonia
- Port Went Worth Elementary, Savannah
- Peachcrest Elementary, Decatur
- Ringgold High School, Ringgold
- Robert Harvey Elementary, Albany
- Ronald McDonald Mobile Van, Atlanta
- Salem Middle, Lithonia
- Savannah High, Savannah
- Shuman Elementary, Savannah
- Snapfinger Elementary, Decatur
- SOWEGA STEM Charter School, Shellman
- Stone Mountain Elementary, Stone Mountain
- Stoneview Elementary, Lithonia
- Taliaferro County K-12, Crawfordville
- Taylor County Primary, Butler
- Taylor County Upper Elementary, Butler
- Thomas County Middle School, Thomasville
- Tiger Creek Elementary, Tunnel Hill
- Toomer Elementary, Atlanta
- Westside Elementary, Rossville
- West Chatham Middle, Savannah
- Whiteford Elementary, Atlanta
- Windsor Forest High, Savannah
- Wings Alternative, Savannah

Community Healthcare Systems

FQHC Interview

Carla Belcher, CEO

How Has the Number of Patient Visits Been Impacted Because of COVID?

The number of visits has gone down. There hasn't been direct access to care for two reasons, schools going virtual and staffing shortages. It can't be stressed enough that the workforce shortage is a huge factor in being able to provide services to people. It's magnified here in the rural areas because we were already struggling but now it's even more so.



What Kind of Impact Have You Seen with the Employees?

Our staff has really suffered because of COVID. People have been out sick with COVID or taking care of family members that have COVID. We have also lost some staff due to the CMS Vaccine Mandate and just general burnout from being in the healthcare field. Some people have decided that the stress of being in healthcare is just not worth it anymore. We were already really short, and it has been exacerbated even more now. I have worked in healthcare for over thirty years, and I have never seen anything like this.



Can You Describe How COVID Has Impacted the Children at the Community Health Center?

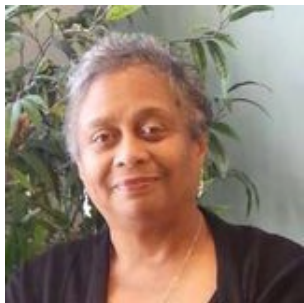
We have seen a difference in their mental health. They haven't been able to be in their social environment for such a long time and it's been very difficult for them. And then trying to re-engage after being out for so long is another difficult piece. So one thing that we're putting in place is having integrated behavioral health within our program. We believe that if you can integrate primary care and mental health care, have good continuity between the different pieces, and have a holistic approach to healthcare, then you will be able to give the patient the best care you can.



Learn More about Our Unique Partnership with Georgia's Department of Education (GaDOE)

Interview with Ruth Ellis, Program Specialist of School-Based Health Care

What Is Your Role at GaDOE?



I started at the GaDOE in November 2021, and I assist in guiding counties and their respective school districts through the planning process and implementation of a SBHC. I also develop documents to assist with planning and implementation. These documents can be helpful in informing communities about the role of SBHCs, how they operate, who they serve, and how they become sustainable.

How Does the Partnership Between GaDOE and GASBHA Work?



GaDOE has identified funds to support some rural counties through the SBHC planning process and is investing in support for the first year of SBHC operations. The counties that we're currently working with are Ben Hill, Clay, Lumpkin, Twiggs, Pickens, and White. GaDOE and GASBHA, together, are providing technical assistance and funding guidance. A revised SBHC Expansion Tool Kit is under development as are other documents that inform planning, implementation, and sustainability phases.

What Makes This Partnership Unique?

GaDOE and GASBHA share the same vision: expanding SBHCs in Georgia so that more children and adolescents have increased access to health care, resulting in increased academic success. This is the first time both entities are pooling resources toward this goal.



Why Did GaDOE Choose Rural Counties?

Rural hospitals are struggling to remain open, and some rural counties do not have a pediatrician. Seeking health care for children could involve traveling several miles to an adjacent county that has available health resources. COVID issues have also impacted available health resources. SBHCs address the barriers to healthcare for children and adolescents: cost, transportation, hours of operation. The GaDOE is invested in helping children and adolescents get the care they need. Unaddressed health needs have a direct impact on a student's ability to learn.



What Do You Hope Will Come Out of This Partnership?

My hope is that through this partnership, we can reach more rural communities in Georgia and encourage them to assess the healthcare needs of children and adolescents. We have 159 counties in Georgia; 118 are considered rural. Of the 118 rural counties, only 11 have operating SBHCs (9%). The goal is to increase that number. We have more work to do!

Get Vaccinated!

Make Sure You And Your Family Are Protected This Season By Getting Vaccinated

EVERY YEAR, MILLIONS OF PEOPLE GET THE FLU

It's important to get the flu vaccine every year because they are updated to protect against the most prevalent virus of that season

THE PFIZER VACCINE HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR AGES 5 AND UP!



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN TO GET THE COVID VACCINE?

Over 7 million children have contracted COVID-19 and over 1,000 have died in the US, due to COVID. Children have more complications such as MIS-C and have long-lasting effects from COVID. Vaccinating children can protect them and others.

IS THE VACCINE SAFE FOR CHILDREN?

Yes! It is less reactogenic because children get 1/3 of the dose that adults get. Clinical trials were conducted and are being monitored for safety by the CDC

All vaccines are available at most of the common pharmacies (CVS, Walgreens, Kroger, Publix, Walmart, etc.)

HAPPY SBHC AWARENESS MONTH!

We Want to Give a Special Shoutout to All of Our Wonderful SBHCs for the Amazing Work They Are Doing.



Evan's County



Dental Care at Head Start for Childrens



Dorothy Height Elementary



KIPPs Vision



Thomas County



Early County



Tiger Care Health Clinic



Gilbert School



Ringghold High School

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

A New SBHC in Doraville Is Now Open!!



Doraville United Opened on November 1st, 2021 and held a Dedication and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on February 17th.

This center is a collaborative partnership with Dekalb, Medcura, and the Emory Department of Pediatrics.

The ultimate goal is to advance the health and well-being of students in order to maximize their academic achievements.

