

2025

Legislative Priorities

GMHPP

GEORGIA MENTAL HEALTH POLICY PARTNERSHIP

Georgia Mental Health Policy Partnership



JUST DO IT!

Georgia Mental Health Parity Act

ENFORCE PARITY

Remedy Widespread and Material Parity Law Violations

In 2022, the General Assembly, in an historic unanimous vote, passed HB1013, the Georgia Parity Act. Parity is the foundation of improving Georgia's behavioral health care system in Georgia. This means that insurance companies must treat behavioral health equal to physical health. To date, there are still widespread violations that are not being addressed.



Advocacy Objectives

- **ENHANCE** accountability and enforcement by establishing an automated claim denial appeal process and an online scheduling and compliance tool.
- **ENCOURAGE** participation by providers, facilities, and systems in ensuring parity accountability, including the regular submission of parity data to regulators.
- **ESTABLISH** a single Parity Regulator.

ADDRESS CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY

Through Medicaid Directed Payments

When youth face persistent adversity, such as abuse, neglect, trauma, and family instability, their stress response systems can become overwhelmed, leading to behavioral and mental health challenges.



Advocacy Objectives

- **IMPLEMENT** Medicaid directed payment programs that require Medicaid MCOs to reimburse providers at market-based rates for:
 - Services that address childhood adversity, including dyadic services, case management, family counseling, and housing support.
 - Early intervention and preventive services such as resilience training and conflict resolution—to reduce the impact of adversity before it leads to more severe mental health issue.

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REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES and Improve Public Health Outcomes (Medicaid)

Over 1.2 million Georgians lack health coverage, including more than 32,000 uninsured veterans and military spouses. Thousands of these Georgians deal with mental health issues. These Georgians fall into the “coverage gap,” earning too much to qualify for Medicaid under current state guidelines but not enough to afford private insurance or qualify for subsidies under the Affordable Care Act.

Closing the coverage gap will reduce financial strain on hospitals, particularly rural hospitals, that are often burdened with providing uncompensated care to uninsured patients. It will also assist Georgia in addressing geographic and racial health disparities across the state. Georgians in rural areas, as well as in communities of color, disproportionately lack access to affordable healthcare.



Advocacy Objectives

- › **CLOSE** Georgia’s Medicaid coverage gap by enabling low-income adults to enroll in health insurance through Medicaid or Georgia Access without imposing work requirements. Work requirements require a bureaucratic expansion that consumes significant resources and diverts funding away from direct healthcare services.

IMPROVE PROVIDER LICENSING and Paneling Processes

Reducing delays in licensing mental health professionals in Georgia is critical to addressing the state’s mental health workforce shortages. Many individuals who could be providing services to Georgians are instead waiting to be licensed and paneled with a payer. Strategies to streamline the licensing and paneling processes include regulatory reforms, leveraging technology, and enhancing communication.



Advocacy Objectives

- › **REQUIRE** payers to increase provider paneling, especially for directed payment programs.
- › **FUND** a robust, user-friendly online platform for submitting, tracking, and managing applications. Ensure the system includes clear step-by-step guidance and automatic status updates. Use digital tools to scan and verify transcripts; supervised experience hours; and exam results in real time.
- › **INCREASE** the number of administrative staff dedicated to processing applications and addressing applicant inquiries. Train staff across multiple licensing boards to handle peaks in workload efficiently.
- › **OPTIMIZE** the supervision process by expanding approvals for virtual supervision to increase access to qualified supervisors, especially in rural areas.
- › **EXPAND** the workforce by streamlining licensing for qualified internationally-trained clinicians living in GA’s diverse refugee and immigrant communities.