

OUR PATH TO INFORMED IMPACT

2024-2026

FUTURE FORWARD

Mindworks Georgia envisions a thriving community that embraces prevention and long-term mental health and substance use recovery. Mindworks and its partners commit to this vision by promoting evidence-based policies that support prevention, intervention, and treatment services that are innovative, person-centered, well coordinated, and easy to navigate for children, youth, and young adults. Mindworks is proud of its recent accomplishments, including work to address infant and early childhood mental health, expand school-based behavioral health services, unravel complicated funding streams, and develop a culturally responsive system of care.

These efforts, while insightful, impactful, and inspirational, are not enough. There are daily reminders of the impact that mental illness and substance use disorders are having on children and families across Georgia. So, our work continues.

We are committed to continue to address the challenges we face and to refine the Georgia System of Care. Together with our partners, we are making notable progress — but we must continue to innovate and advance our system in ways that increase access to care, encourage prevention and early intervention, strengthen communication, promote accountability, and build workforce capacity. Mindworks must also help to inform improved care coordination and service integration as well as foster recovery and resilience.

This strategic plan provides a roadmap for Mindworks and its partners to align our collective efforts with our vision and to become a nationally recognized children's behavioral health system.

OUR PATH TO INFORMED IMPACT

2024-2026

MINDWORKS GEORGIA STRATEGIC PLAN



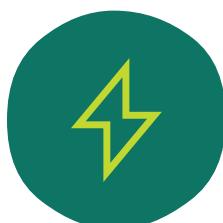
THE OPPORTUNITY. A FOCUS ON GEORGIA'S CHILDREN

4-6



INFORMED IMPACT. A SYSTEM-DESIGNED SOLUTION

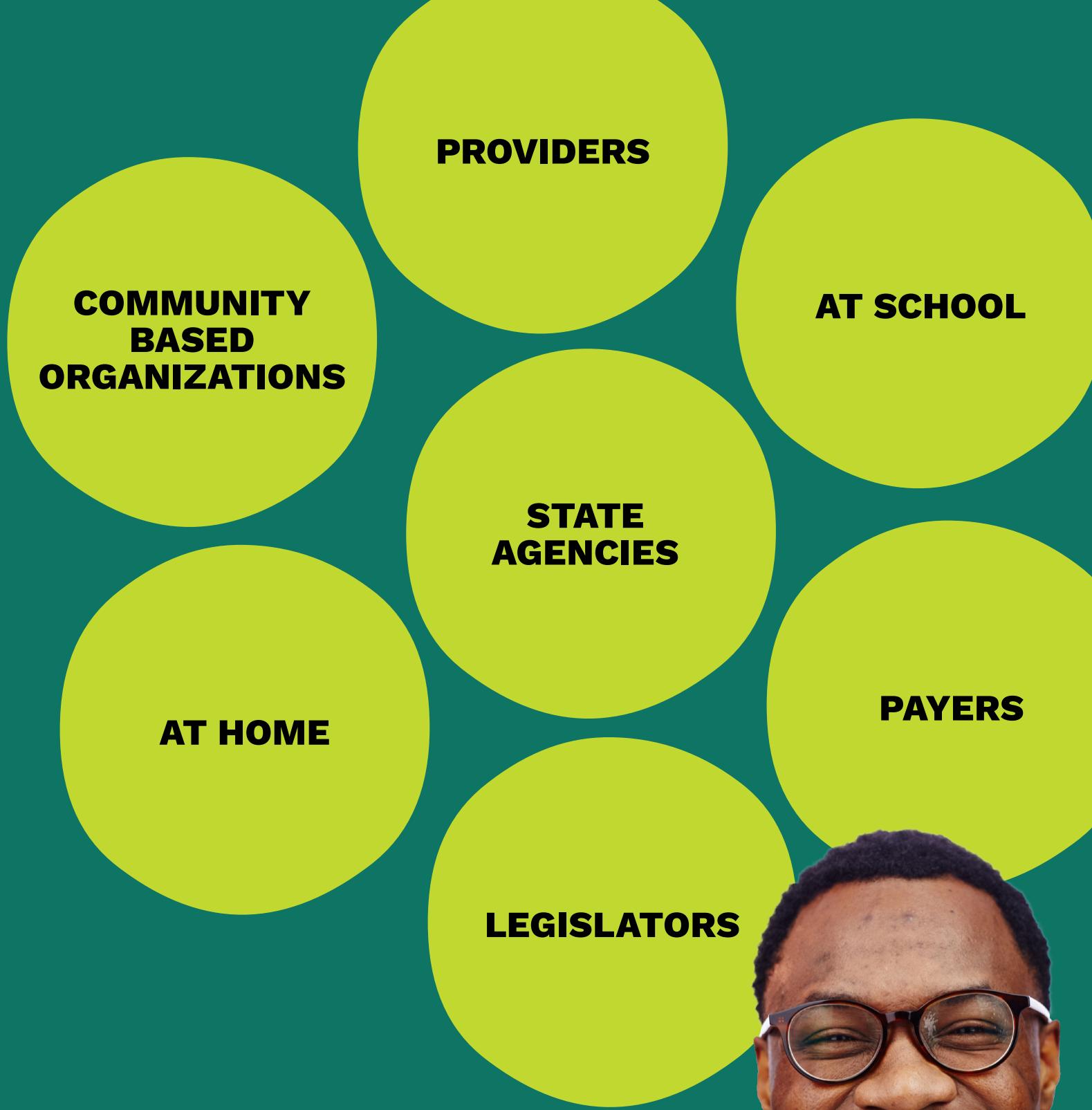
7-10



FUTURE FORWARD. PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, ACTION

11-26

EQUITABLE ACCESS
SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE
WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH
PURPOSEFUL FUNDING
SYSTEM EVALUATION



The Opportunity

Georgia's children, ages 0 to 26, and their families sit at the heart of a dynamic system of care. This complex web, comprised of multiple agencies with a range of objectives, programs, and services, was established to provide reliable access across a variety of settings to those in need. While the intentions are noble, the outcomes have not always met expectations — leaving families frustrated and locked out of the well-being they deserve.



OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

As a collaborative, Mindworks exists to connect the dots of the behavioral health system to improve access and outcomes. In our role, we are well positioned to provide a platform that aligns people, policy, and practice. This structure allows us to design, manage, and adapt a system of care

people

policy

practice



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Beyond our mandate, we have developed a set of optimizing filters through which services are delivered across the system. These principles create an alignment lens for all collaborators to guide



OUR COLLABORATORS

We bring together subject matter experts to coordinate, collaborate, and communicate across the system. Together, we set collective objectives, uncover common challenges, and share data and practices. Workflow is streamlined and solutions are surfaced as we work and learn together to illuminate pathways to progress.

Child-Serving State Agencies

Council of Juvenile Court Judges of Georgia, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Department of Community Health, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Family and Child Services, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, Georgia Department of Public Health, and Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Nonprofit Organizations

American Academy of Pediatrics, Georgia Chapter; Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice; Georgia Association of Community Service Boards; Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students; Georgia Family Connection Partnership; Georgia Head Start Association; Georgia Parent Support Network; Jesse Parker Williams Foundation; Mental Health America of Georgia; National Alliance on Mental Illness, Georgia Chapter; Resilient Georgia; Robert W. Woodruff Foundation; Silence the Shame; The Carter Center; Together Georgia; United Way of Greater Atlanta; Voices for Georgia's Children

Care Management Entities

Aspire CME, Community Service Board of Middle Georgia CME, View Point Health CME, WinGeorgia CME

Family and Youth Agencies

Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority, Juvenile Court of Cobb County

Managed Care Organizations

Amerigroup, CareSource, Peach State Health Plan

Federal Partners

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

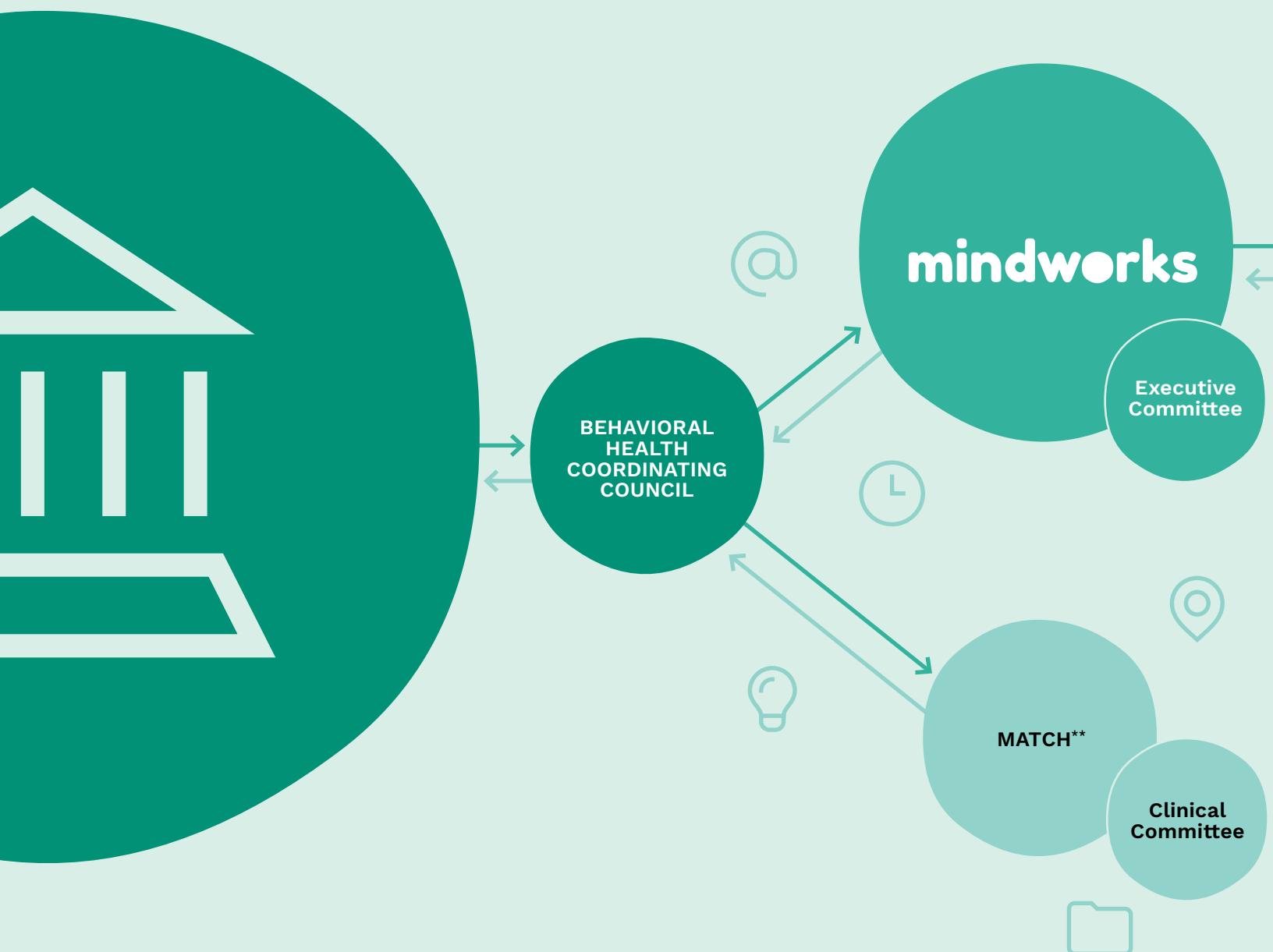
Children's Health Systems

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Informed Impact

Our promise to deliver *informed impact* is predicated on the Georgia System of Care infrastructure. Silos are eliminated as we open a continuous collaboration flow and communication loop that spans from the highest echelons of Georgia state government to beneficiaries. The work, as a result, is humanized as intents are monitored along the way to confirm realities at the service level.

This systems-level thinking and action allows us to rally around shared goals. Sustained investment in this robust framework will help ensure that the state's system of care infrastructure continues to evolve and respond to the behavioral health needs of Georgia's children and families.



THE GEORGIA SYSTEM OF CARE

*Local Interagency Planning Teams

**Multi-Agency Treatment for Children





The Behavioral Health Coordinating Council (BHCC), formed by O.C.G.A. §37-2-4, exists to develop solutions to systemic barriers impacting behavioral health services by implementing funding, policy and practice changes, and evaluating specific goals designed to improve delivery, increase access, and effect positive outcomes. Further, O.C.G.A §49-5-220 calls for the development of a state plan for the coordinated system of care. The BHCC delegates the state plan development and implementation to its formal workgroup, Mindworks Georgia. Its members, representing child-serving agencies and interests across the state and dedicated individuals with broad subject matter expertise, collaborate to resolve systemic barriers, evaluate progress to goals, and share lessons learned for the betterment of the Georgia system of care supporting youth and families. Thank you to Mindworks Georgia for its work throughout the year and its preparation of the 2024-2026 System of Care State Plan.

Kevin Tanner

Commissioner
Georgia Department of Behavioral Health
and Developmental Disabilities



Mindworks, as the system's change agent, is undergoing a transformation. As a result of our recent strategic planning process, we are reframing our work, reimagining our operations, and reinvigorating our collaborative platform. The future is in focus as we elevate the energy of our purpose, sharpen the sophistication of our process, and chart a course for the journey ahead. Moving forward with this refined sense of clarity, Mindworks will fulfill its role as a respected authority to deliver on our promise to Georgia's children.

Renee Johnson

Executive Director
Mindworks Georgia





EQUITABLE
ACCESS



SUSTAINABLE
WORKFORCE



WHOLE-PERSON
HEALTH



PURPOSEFUL
FUNDING



SYSTEM
EVALUATION



Priorities

The thought of complex systems-level change can feel overwhelming. The sheer number of moving parts and players can make it difficult to understand what matters most and where a good starting point might be to effect change. Near-term tasks and responsibilities can obscure a vision for a brighter future when the stress of decision-making and deadlines loom daily. To address this complexity, we have prioritized the path ahead to ensure that decisions, resources, and efforts are focused to accomplish our goals.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention requires identifying and providing effective early supports to children and young adults who are at risk of poor outcomes.

PREVENTION

Early identification, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatment are critical for children, young adults, and families dealing with behavioral health challenges.

*Levels
of Care*

*Spanning
Activities*

Georgia Family Connection Partnership
Family support organizations
Infant and early childhood mental health
Behavioral health clinical consultation
Free Your Feels
Youth clubhouses

**EARLY
INTERVENTION**

PREVENTION

Blending & braiding funds

Data & evaluation

Peer support

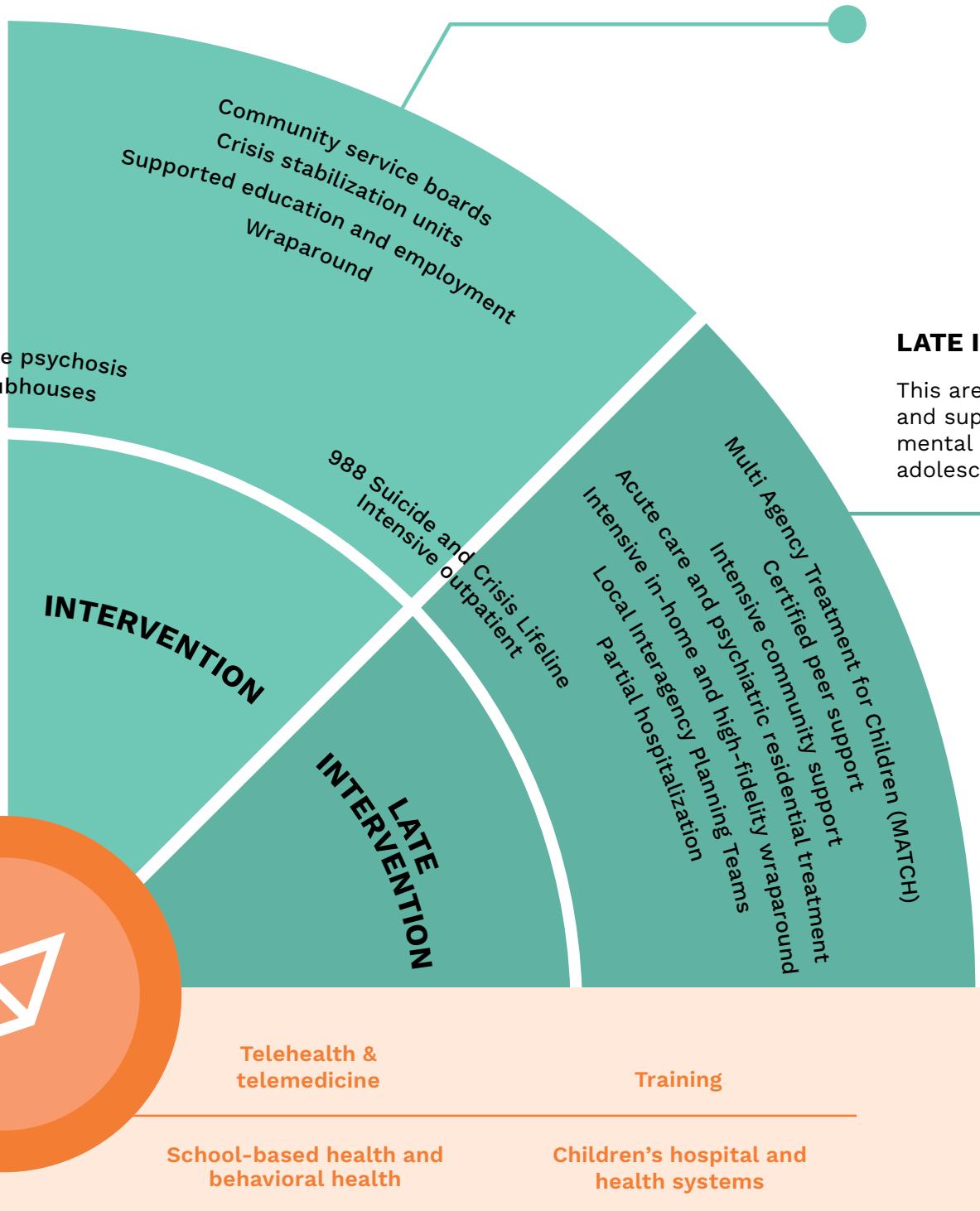
Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health

Culturally & linguistically appropriate standards

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTINUUM OF CARE

INTERVENTION

This level consists of skills-based interventions focused on reducing behavioral health challenges. These are provided in individual, family, and/or group settings.





PRIORITY ONE

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Structural inequalities like lack of insurance coverage, income inequality, and an underrepresented workforce contribute to the persistent gaps in access to behavioral health services. In addition, early life adversity, such as adverse childhood experiences (ACES), increases the need for behavioral health services and access to preventative behavioral health care as early as possible.

GOAL

Mindworks is committed to advancing behavioral health equity by elevating evidence-based policies that address disparities, increasing access to services, and working to ensure that every individual can be as healthy as possible.

OBJECTIVE 1

Increase awareness of and counteract stigma toward mental and substance-use disorders.

STRATEGY

- Promote evidence-based, two-generational, whole-school, whole-community, whole-child approaches that provide parents, educators, school staff, and child-care providers access to trainings on how to communicate effectively about behavioral health.
- Further mental health literacy through outreach, training, and technical assistance.
- Conduct statewide training and capacity building on how ACEs impact and drive poor behavioral health outcomes across the Georgia System of Care.
- Establish a youth and family council for the state.

OBJECTIVE 2

Reduce barriers to care.

STRATEGY

- Further screening for social determinants of health and other barriers that hinder care coordination and develop enhanced referral mechanisms.
- Promote culturally-competent outreach and community response through a multidisciplinary, 24/7 model of care to improve behavioral health outcomes throughout the state.

OBJECTIVE 3

Advance expanded roles and capacity of child-serving state agencies and community-based organizations in prevention and early intervention.

STRATEGY

- Review and highlight statewide community-based prevention and early intervention resources.
- Promote screenings and early intervention activities in non-clinical, targeted settings such as schools, early care and learning centers, and other community settings.

PRIORITY TWO

SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Georgia, like nearly every other state in the country, is facing a workforce shortage among those who serve children with behavioral health needs.

GOAL

Mindworks will advance the development of resources, policies, and innovative solutions to recruit, develop, retain, and diversify Georgia's behavioral health workforce.



OBJECTIVE 1

Foster a vibrant and diverse behavioral health workforce.

STRATEGY

- Engage Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities in system-of-care planning, outreach, program development and evaluation.
- Incorporate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) into state workforce planning efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance professional capacity building.

STRATEGY

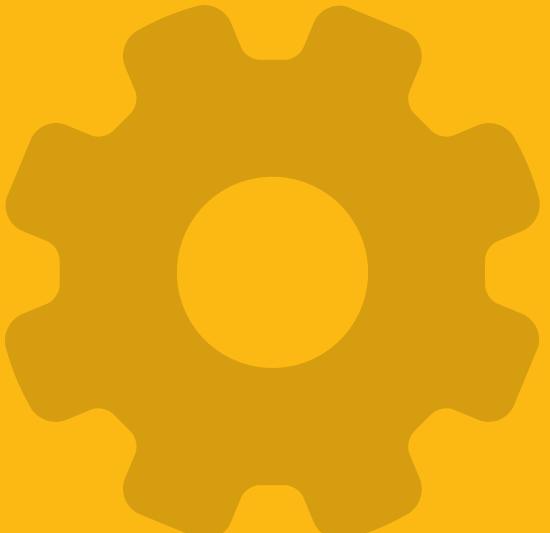
- Promote coordinated behavioral health trainings across the child-serving workforce.
- Further expand behavioral health career pathways and mentoring programs.
- Support interstate licensure simplification.

OBJECTIVE 3

Assess behavioral health workforce needs.

STRATEGY

- Identify, quantify, and describe the behavioral health workforce throughout the state.
- Pursue state plan amendments in collaboration with DCH for new provider classes and expanded scope and settings for interns and associates.



PRIORITY THREE

WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH

Whole-person health involves looking at the whole person — not just separate organs or body systems. This approach considers multiple factors that promote either health or disease and nurtures the delicate equilibrium between mind and body through evidence-based conventional and complementary treatments and services.

GOAL

Mindworks is committed to endeavors that fundamentally restructure the way care is delivered to support better outcomes and experiences for children and young adults who need access to quality behavioral health services.



OBJECTIVE 1

Increase care coordination to ensure that children and families can move seamlessly across the continuum of care.

STRATEGY

- Highlight collaborative best practices across youth-serving agencies, including child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and pediatric primary care.

OBJECTIVE 2

Expand the integration of mental and primary-care services in primary-care clinics across the state.

STRATEGY

- Promote evidence-based best practices to support integrated mental and primary care services.
- Launch targeted learning communities across provider communities working with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Georgia Department of Community Health to adopt integrated behavioral health practice and standardized reimbursement policies.





PRIORITY FOUR

PURPOSEFUL FUNDING

Robust and reliable funding for behavioral health-care services is essential for closing the treatment gap, addressing the lack of access to care, and improving outcomes for children and young adults with behavioral health-care needs. Georgia requires a comprehensive, adequately financed system in which every child with a behavioral health disorder — regardless of economic circumstances — has the opportunity to readily access evidence-based care.

GOAL

Mindworks will target opportunities to diversify funding and generate new revenue, including leveraging Medicaid programs to innovate behavioral health coverage, delivery, and payment models to reach those with disproportionately high needs.

OBJECTIVE 1

Expand revenue generation.

STRATEGY

- Advance increased federal matching funds.
- Support investment in the growth and development of community behavioral health providers.

OBJECTIVE 2

Increase diversity of funding and revenue sources.

STRATEGY

- Identify philanthropic support to demonstrate new approaches or to cover gaps like capital projects.
- Explore collaborative funding opportunities involving the private sector.
- Pursue grants and other short-term funding to complement Medicaid.

OBJECTIVE 3

Foster shared alignment and accountability.

STRATEGY

- Develop return on investment (ROI) metrics for training the workforce and for behavioral health services.
- Produce updated financial mapping reports.



PRIORITY FIVE

SYSTEM EVALUATION

Evaluation and evidence-informed decision making are central to developing effective system practices. System evaluation emphasizes the role of critical reflection, interpersonal competence, cultural responsiveness, and situational awareness in evaluation practice, including the need for ongoing capacity building to conduct high-quality evaluations.

GOAL

Mindworks is committed to advance evidence-based decision making and ongoing evaluation to enhance the Georgia System of Care services and supports.



OBJECTIVE 1

Improve mental health and substance-use services by enhancing program monitoring, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement activities.

STRATEGY

- Access and leverage the All-Payer Claims Database and the Georgia Data Analytics Center to support evaluation.
- Analyze and publicize data on key topics.

OBJECTIVE 2

Monitor and analyze care management organization data.

STRATEGY

- Publish annual care management organization report card with dedicated focus on youth behavioral health utilization, outcomes, and recommendations.



Thriving Outcomes Start Here

Our platform is only as strong as the people who power it. We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations who contributed time and expertise to ensure that Mindworks has an informed roadmap to carry out the vision and mission of the Georgia System of Care. We're energized by our continued journey and invite all to connect dots with us. Together we will uncover opportunities to streamline a system that delivers the excellent behavioral health outcomes Georgia's children deserve.



