



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

Advancing Mental Health Parity in Georgia: A Comprehensive Approach

Maxine Elliott

Deputy Executive Director

Medical Assistance Plans

Service Delivery & Administration

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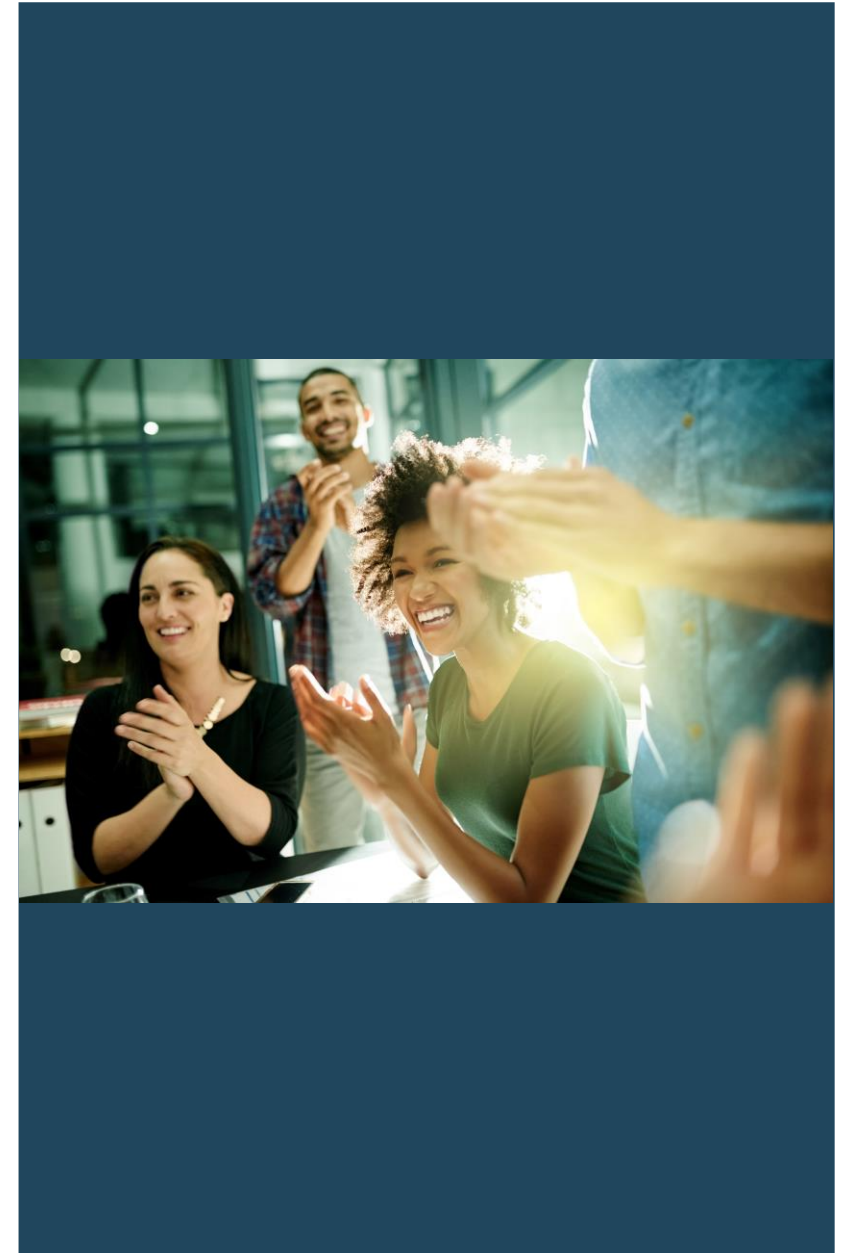




GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

Our Purpose

Shaping the future of *A Healthy Georgia* by improving access and ensuring quality to strengthen the communities we serve.

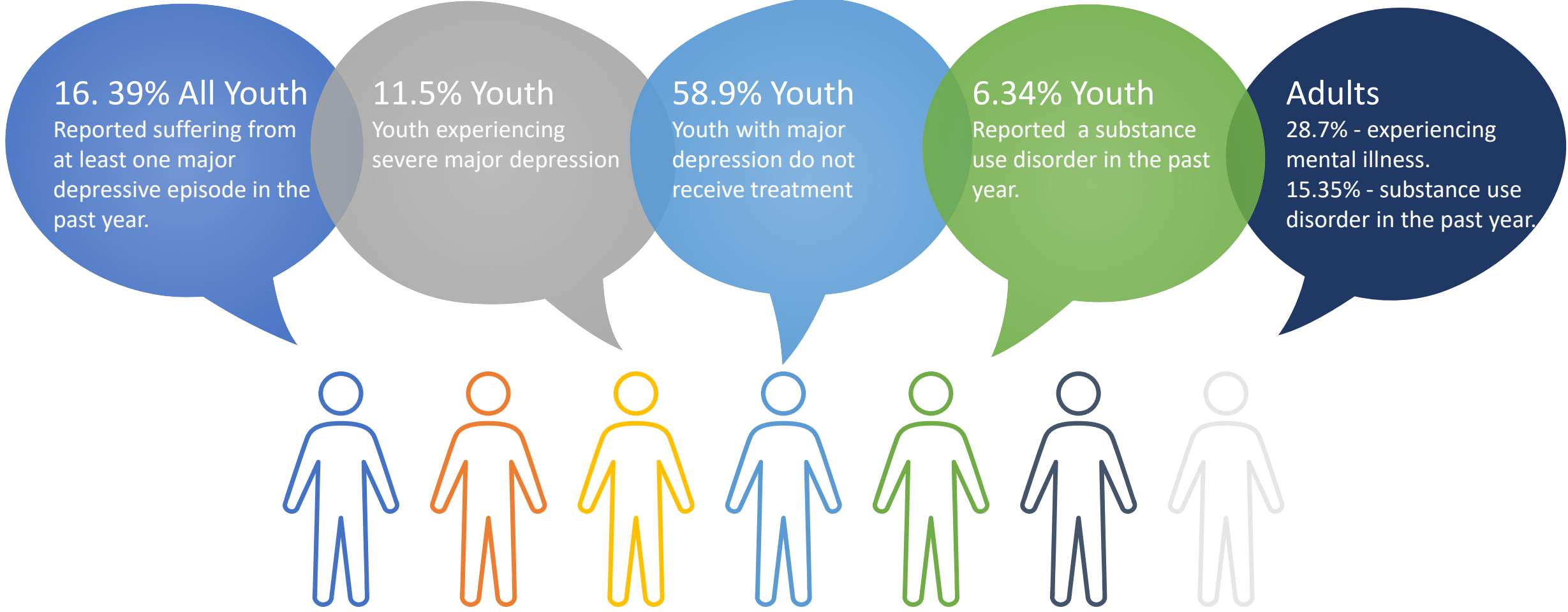




Current Situation - National



NATIONAL OVERVIEW INCLUDING YOUTH





- 11.31% have mental health issues
- 3.92% - Serious Suicidal Ideation
- Children and Adolescents in Georgia indicate similar challenges as seen on the national level
- Georgia faces challenges in mental health care access for all ages, with a portion of adults in mental distress unable to afford a doctor's visit.



Definition

EQUAL TREATMENT

- Providing the same level of care for mental health as we do for physical health
- Equal treatment of mental health conditions and SUD in insurance plans



Federal Context

MHPAEA, 2008

- Laid the foundation
- Requires health plans to offer benefits for mental health/SUD
- Level equal to medical and surgical care.



State Level

FEDERAL + STATE

- Align MHPAEA with State mandates
- Ensure that these federal guidelines are effectively translated into our state's health policies and practices



Practical Implications

Health Insurance Plans

- No more restrictive limitations on mental health/SUD benefits than on medical/surgical benefits
- Co-pays, deductibles and treatment limitations

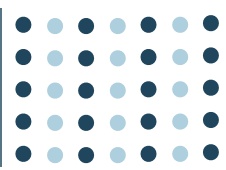


Georgia's Efforts

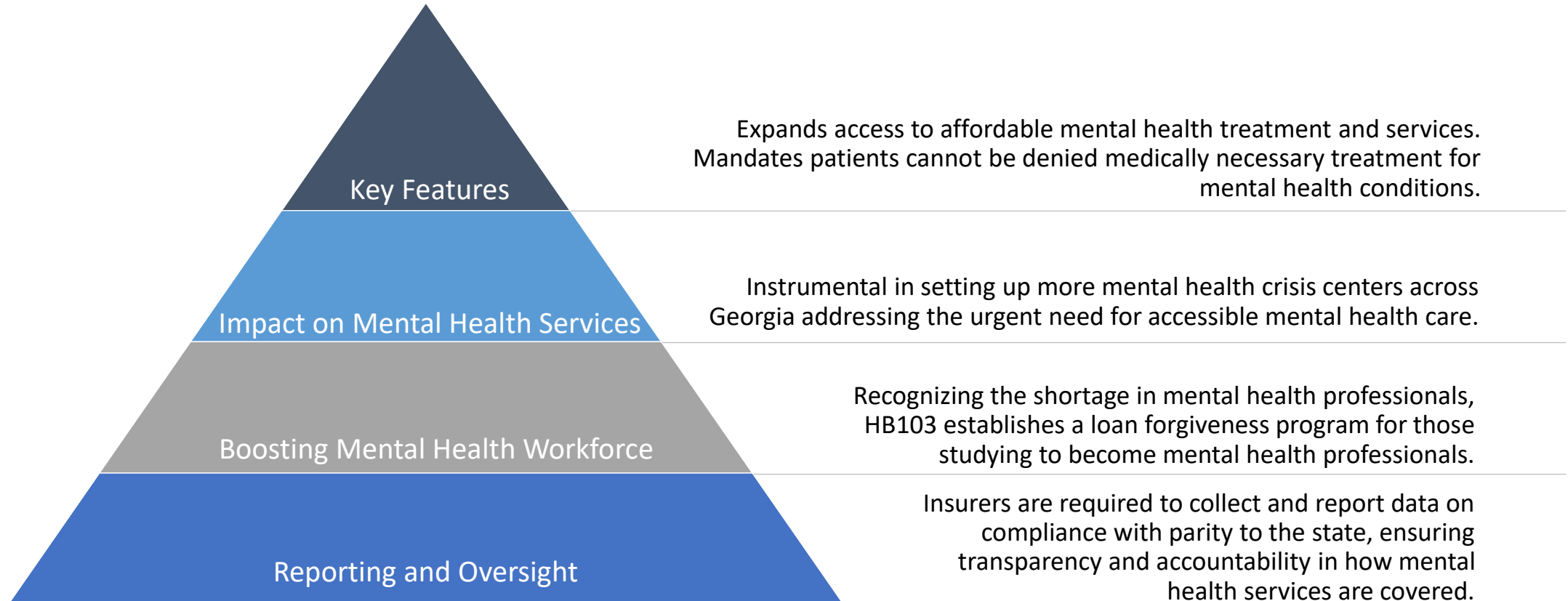
Enhanced Compliance

- Report template options for health plans
- Facilitate both quantitative and nonquantitative reporting to expand Medicaid Health plan
- Reflecting Federal requirements in State compliance - MHPAEA





Overview of HB 1013





HB 1013

PROVIDERS

PATIENTS



PROVIDER TRAINING
AND RESOURCES



ESTABLISHMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
CRISIS CENTERS



ENHANCED ACCESS
TO MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES FOR
PATIENTS



POLICE AND
EMERGENCY
RESPONSE



Compliance with Mental Health Parity:

- Compliance is key.
- Transparency and Demonstration - required to show, not just tell.

Importance of Reporting:

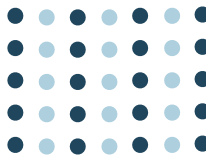
- Federal and State mandates.
- Ensures ongoing oversight.
- Drives continuous improvement and gap analysis.

Role of Data in Ensuring Parity:

- Data collection and reporting help us understand how mental health services are covered and where improvements are needed.

Partnership:

- This is a partnership between the state, providers and health plans.



DCH's Role in Implementing Mental Health Parity:

- The Department of Community Health is at the forefront of implementing and monitoring these mental health parity laws.
- DCH's MH Parity efforts:
 - Good stewards of HB1013
 - Successfully addressed all parts of the law we are responsible for.

Future Initiatives:

- Looking forward, DCH is focusing on initiatives that further enhance mental health services including Workforce Development and Service Expansion.
- Opportunity to move into a responsive and forward-thinking stance.
- Activity in four domains:
 1. Consultation with other states regarding parity efforts, successes, lessons learned.
 2. Proactive partnerships with BH stakeholders
 - ✓ Hosting semi-regular meetings
 - ✓ Outreach activities
 - ✓ Surveys and focus groups
 3. Partnerships with primary care stakeholders
 4. Partnership with Office of Commercial Insurance

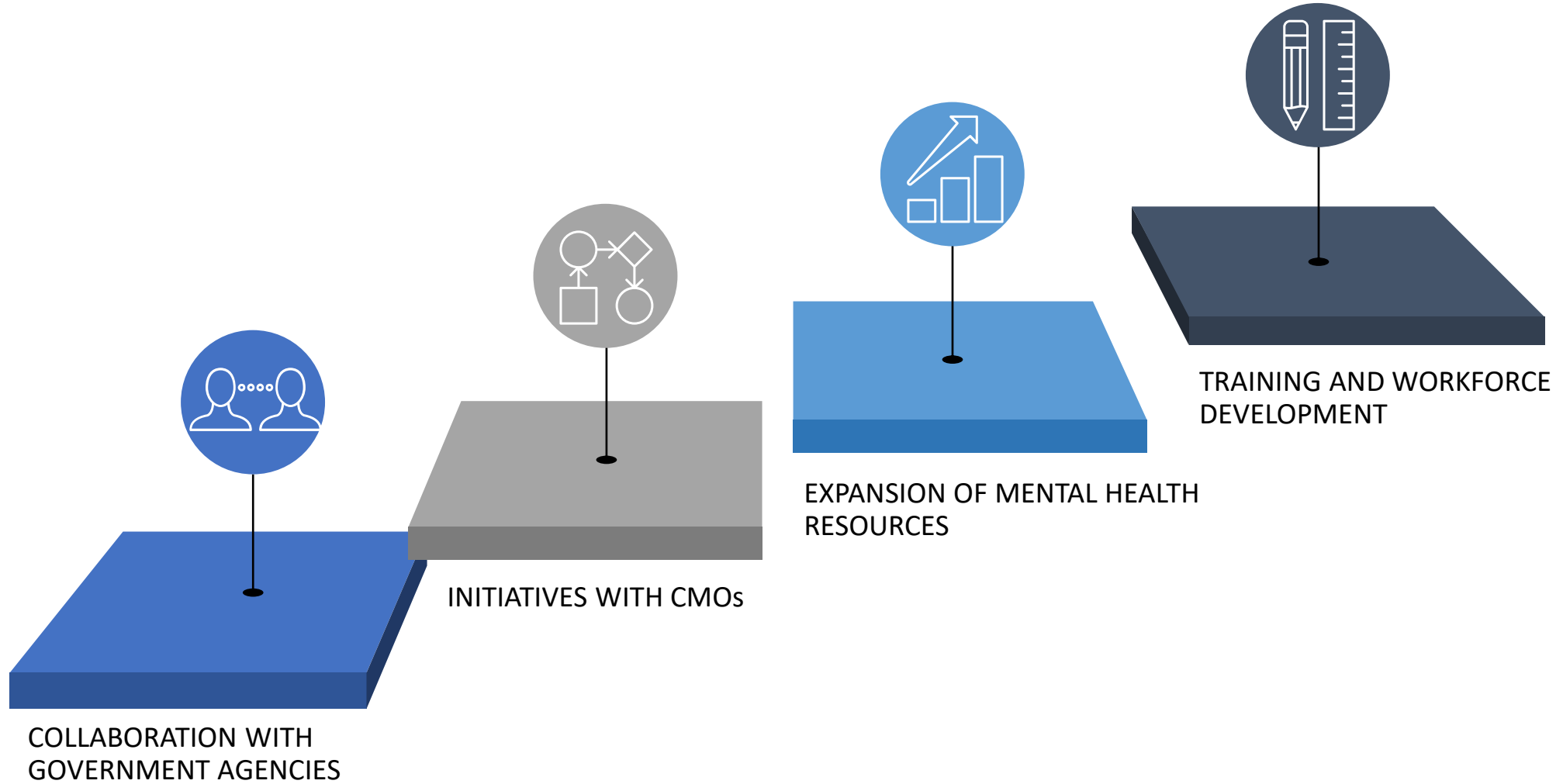


EPSDT:

- Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) – A crucial tool for Mental Health Parity and Autism Care.
- Significantly impacts the care of children and adolescents.
- Ensures that regular mental health screenings are a fundamental part of pediatric care and supports the preventative care model.

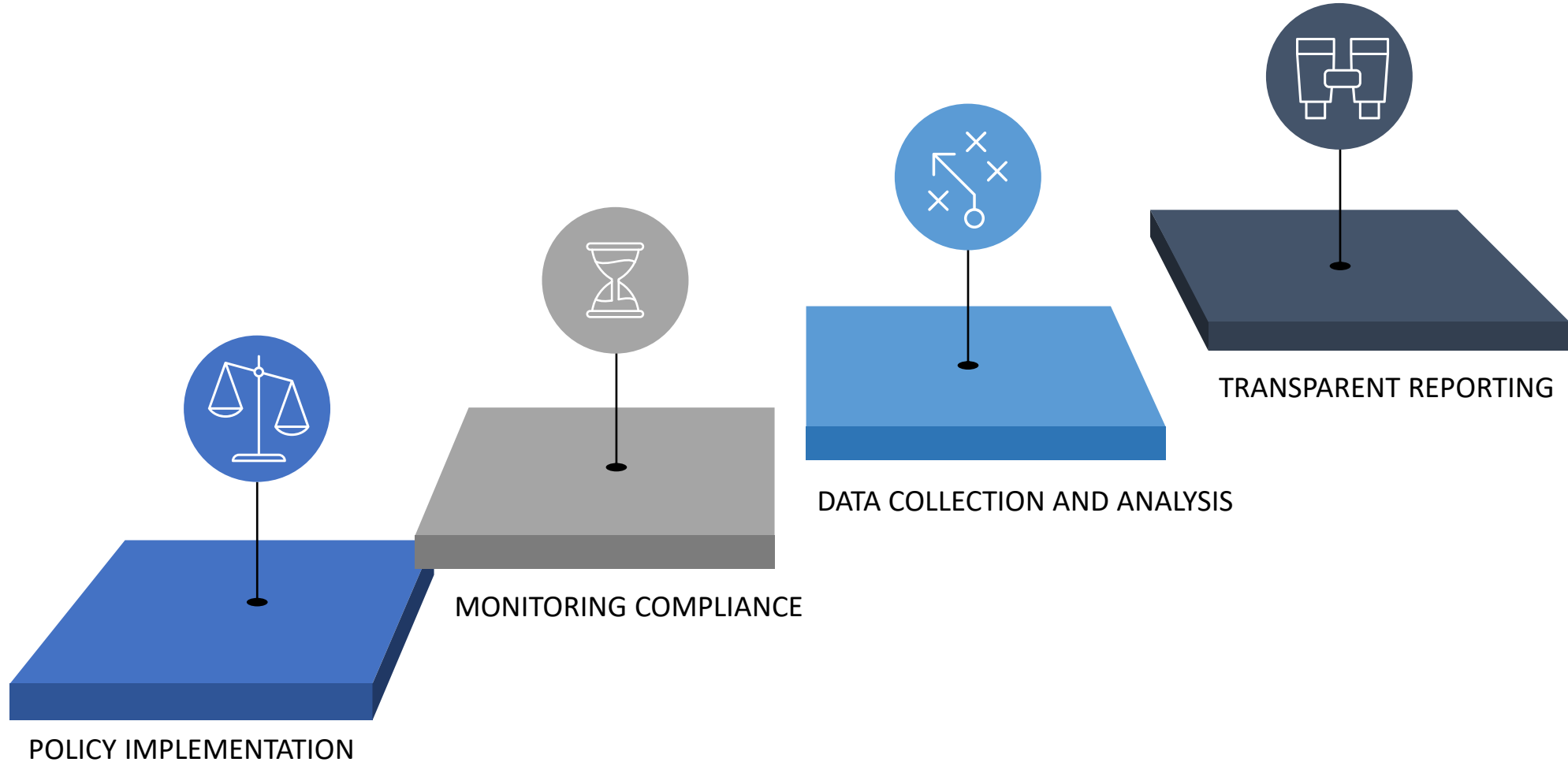


Progress in Georgia





Progress in Georgia





DCH Mental Health Parity Website:

- [Mental Health Parity Information | Georgia Department of Community Health](#)
- Comprehensive information on mental health parity.
- Educates on federal and state parity laws.
- Georgia's mental health parity law, HB1013, ensuring health plans cover mental health and substance use disorders equitably.
- Public access to all compliance reports

Mental Health Parity Complaint Portal:

- A significant milestone is the establishment of the Mental Health Parity Complaint Portal.
- Submit complaints – Medicaid, PeachCare for Kids, State Health Benefit Plan.

Compliance Assessment and Reporting:

- Health Plans must demonstrate compliance.
- Comprehensive, standard document – annual reporting.
- Transparency and accountability.



Key Impacts:

- Improved collaboration between DCH, government agencies and CMOs
- Robust reporting and compliance system,
- Strengthened the mental health care framework in Georgia, enhancing access, equity and quality of mental health services.

PeachCare© for Kids:

- Transportation is now a covered service.
- Supports the requirement HB1013 to ensure equitable access for all.
- **Federal recognition of Georgia 's Efforts - EPSDT IECMH**
 - August 18, 2022, Centers for Medicaid and CHIP Services
 - CMCS Information Bulletin: Leveraging Medicaid, CHIP, and Other Federal Programs in the Delivery of Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth
 - IECMH Policy and Finance – workgroup
 - Collaboration between DCH, DBHDD. GSU Center of Excellence



Addressing Challenges in Mental Health Parity



COLLABORATIVE
EFFORTS



STRATEGIC POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION



CONTINUOUS
EVALUTION AND
RESPONSE TO
COMMUNITY BASED
NEEDS



Reflecting on Year One:

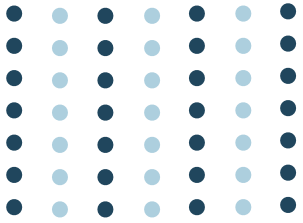
- As we conclude our first year in the five-year implementation plan for mental health parity, it's crucial to recognize the hard work and significant progress made so far. We've laid a solid foundation for equitable mental health in Georgia.

Acknowledging the Journey Ahead:

- While we celebrate our achievements, we are acutely aware of the challenges and work that lies ahead. Our journey towards a fully integrated and parity-based mental health system is ongoing.

Commitment to Continuous Improvement:

- We remain committed to enhancing our strategies, expanding access, and refining our services to meet the evolving mental health needs of all Georgians.



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THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS /
COMMENTS?

