

GHF COLLABORATES
WITH COMMUNITIES
AND PARTNERS TO
LEAD POLICY CHANGE
THAT ADVANCES
HEALTH
EQUITY

Executive Summary

Georgians for a Healthy Future (GHF) was established in 2008 to provide a unified voice and leadership for Georgia health care consumers, particularly vulnerable and marginalized populations. By leveraging a small, effective staff and growing a committed constituency of advocates and partners, GHF successfully achieved several key policy changes in the years since, even in challenging political landscapes.

GHF's previous strategic plan launched in 2017, amid profound organizational leadership and staffing changes, and an unstable federal policy landscape. Since then, the organization grew in size and stability. GHF's board and staff have applied proven tactics of consumer and community outreach, coalition building, strategic communications, and public policy advocacy to build a longer track record of policy wins. A global pandemic and movement for racial justice emerged as GHF closed its previous strategic plan and began the process for creating a new one.

After examining the environment in which GHF operates and gathering input from diverse internal and external stakeholders, the board of directors updated GHF's mission, vision, and values. GHF's leadership also designated four strategic goals that aim to deepen the organization's impact on health equity; strengthen relationships in Georgia's marginalized communities; improve organizational sustainability; and strengthen our state's public health systems and infrastructure.

Georgians for a Healthy Future is sincerely committed to the implementation of this strategic plan through 2026. Successful realization of this plan will meaningfully improve the health and well-being of Georgians and position GHF for even greater impacts in the future.

OUR MISSION

GHF COLLABORATES
WITH COMMUNITIES
AND PARTNERS TO
LEAD POLICY CHANGE
THAT ADVANCES
HEALTH EQUITY

OUR VISION

ALL GEORGIANS HAVE
EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES
TO ACHIEVE THEIR
HIGHEST LEVEL OF HEALTH.

OUR VALUES

EQUITY
COLLABORATION
COMMUNITY
TRUST
DATA-DRIVEN

Environmental Review

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

FEDERAL

- Compared to recent years, the federal policy environment looks more stable.
- While political changes at the federal level will slow or speed progress depending on the balance of power, changes at the state level will have a more dramatic impact on GHF's work.

STATE

- Recent election results demonstrate that Georgia's electorate is evenly divided.
- Newly drawn Congressional & state legislative district maps will likely preserve Republican majorities for the duration of this strategic plan.
- The development of an organizational approach to advocacy that builds power through community engagement & organizing can facilitate continued progress even in challenging political environments.

MOVEMENT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

- Police violence towards people of color and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people of color catalyzed a nationwide movement for racial justice in 2020.
- The movement brought broader awareness & education among white Americans, and organizational, systemic, & policy changes across sectors, including the nonprofit sector.
- Race and ethnicity have been widely recognized within public health and health care to meaningfully influence individual and community health, and the racial justice movement has brought that understanding to a wider audience.
- The racial justice movement will continue to influence philanthropy, politics & policy, community organizing, and many other aspects of GHF's work for years to come.

HEALTH TRENDS AND POLICY ISSUES

Few health indicators in Georgia are trending in positive directions, indicating that our state's health & well-being is not meaningfully improving. These health trends and policy issues were highlighted as particularly important over the next several years by internal & external stakeholders in the strategic planning process:

- COVID-19—the short & long-term impacts of the pandemic on people, the health system, & policies
- Mental health & substance use across the lifespan
- Racial and geographic disparities—driven by systemic discrimination and disinvestment
- Maternal and child health—including reproductive health care
- Social determinants of health
- Medicaid expansion
- Health care affordability & costs

STRENGTHS

TRUST + INTEGRITY

based on GHF's reliance on sound data, evidence-based policy recommendations (even when they are unpopular), and reliable follow through on commitments

PARTNERSHIPS

strongest with peer state advocacy groups, national advocacy organizations, & some local advocacy-focused community groups

DEEP EXPERTISE

particularly related to the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid expansion, health insurance and consumer protections, and health care affordability

Situational

OPPORTUNITIES

RACIAL EQUALITY

Improve incorporation of racial equity into GHF's mission, internal workings, and programmatic initiatives

DIVERSIFY + EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS

among local community-based and mutual aid groups; civic engagement groups; businesses & chambers of commerce, etc.

BRAND AWARENESS

build audience and supporter base, especially around high-profile issues like Medicaid expansion or mental health

WEAKNESSES

LACK OF STATEWIDE STAFF

staff living and working locally would help to build stronger grassroots and community relationships

GRASSROOTS RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT

shows up in two ways:

- 1) GHF's work may not reflect the true health needs or priorities of marginalized Georgians; and
- 2) GHF struggles to mobilize large grassroots support for some policy aims

LIMITED DIVERSITY OF PARTNERS

current partners are concentrated in health advocacy, philanthropy, and health care systems/associations

Assessment

THREATS

FINANCIAL DIVERSITY

build audience and supporter base, especially around high-profile issues like Medicaid expansion or mental health

SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION OF MEDICAID EXPANSION

A meaningful portion of GHF's resources is dedicated to advocacy for Medicaid expansion, and GHF brand is tightly connected to the issue. The policy is deservedly a primary advocacy goal but its achievement may result in a loss of funder interest and support.

POLITICIZATION

of health care, public health, & equity—in an increasingly polarized society with fragmented media environments, it's becoming more difficult to build a politically diverse base of support for GHF's policy aims

Goals

1

GHF is recognized as a leading statewide organization working to advance health equity.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Disaggregate available data by social, demographic, and geographic factors and share findings publicly.
- b. Prioritize advocacy for policies that will most reduce racial health disparities, and against policies that will widen existing gaps.
- c. Embed the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion into GHF's internal policies and practices.

EVALUATION MEASURES:

- Percent of reports, analyses, & other public products that include disaggregation of data and/or attention to health inequities
- Percent of policy statements, project plans, & internal working documents that include attention to health inequities
- Percent of GHF board & staff who identify as diverse by race and ethnicity, gender, and other factors
- Number and implementation of internal policies & procedures that center diversity, equity, and inclusion in GHF's operations

2

GHF meaningfully and consistently engages with communities and individuals in ways that amplify their voices and experiences to achieve policy change.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Facilitate meaningful community input during each policy advocacy initiative to better understand the problem and identify community-supported/driven solutions.
- b. Establish multi-year funded partnerships with local organizations that are led by/serve marginalized Georgians in 3+ communities outside metro-Atlanta.
- c. Strengthen the Georgia Health Action Network (GHAN) so that it expands GHF's reach into 5+ Georgia communities and facilitates information sharing between community members & GHF.
- d. Partner with civic engagement organizations, direct-service organizations, & community-based groups to provide technical assistance, training, & support on health policy issues in exchange for community feedback on emerging health issues and challenges.

EVALUATION MEASURES:

- Percent of reports, analyses, & other public products that include disaggregation of data and/or attention to health inequities
- Number, duration, & value of funded partnerships with local organizations
- GHAN membership growth in priority communities; frequency of meetings; & location of regular participants
- Number, duration & quality of reciprocal partnership opportunities with other groups

3

The people and programs that make up GHF have the financial resources and supporting policies/practices to be sustainable and resilient in the face of change.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Update GHF's evaluation practices & increase purposeful marketing efforts to reach receptive audiences more effectively with GHF's impact story.
- b. Increase unrestricted funding to 25% of GHF's annual budget.
- c. Strengthen GHAN so that it creates a diverse pipeline of future board members and individual donors from across the state.
- d. Each year, formalize one or more internal policies or practices that promote staff or board member well-being and resilience (e.g. formal sabbatical policy, cross-training between staff, etc.).
- e. Embed professional development and leadership development as a core organizational principle to prepare for inevitable changes.

EVALUATION MEASURES:

- Growth in GHF email subscribers, social media followers; Number of attendees at GHF-sponsored events; completion rates for email action alerts
- Unrestricted funds make up 25% of GHF's budget
- Diversity of GHAN membership; engagement of members as donors & board members
- Staff satisfaction; number of staff/board members who take advantage of professional development opportunities; staff & board retention rates
- Number of staff who take part in meaningful leadership development opportunities per year and can report on how the opportunity supports their growth as a leader and furthers the mission and vision of GHF

4

Strengthen public health infrastructure in Georgia by advocating for increased state funding, workforce capacity, and effective action by public health agencies.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Grow community understanding of public health through training, outreach, & other mobilization and communications strategies (e.g. petitions, op-eds, etc.).
- b. Collaborate with public health agencies, workers, & leaders to understand their needs and strengths, as well as areas for advocacy.
- c. Develop funding for GHF to support this new area of advocacy.
- d. Identify & collaborate with peer advocacy organizations to advocate for public health initiatives that address the social determinants of health (e.g. climate change, housing, Hi-5 interventions, etc.).

EVALUATION MEASURES:

- Meaningful increases in public health workers, funding, etc.
- Number of Georgians reached through training, outreach, & other activities meant to increase understanding of public health
- Number & quality of collaborations with public health agencies & individuals
- Amount of funding secured to support this area of work
- Number & quality of partnerships with advocacy & community groups that do not primarily work on health care or coverage issues and are focused on SDOH such as housing and climate change

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- **Shari McKenzie-Hicks**, *Center for Preparedness and Response, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention*
- **Peter Paye**, *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- **Juliana Prieto**, *Fulton County Board of Health*

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