



GEORGIANS FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE
COLLABORATES
WITH COMMUNITIES
AND PARTNERS TO
LEAD POLICY CHANGE
THAT ADVANCES
HEALTH
EQUITY



GEORGIANS FOR A
HEALTHY FUTURE

2022 IMPACT REPORT



DEAR FRIENDS,

Wow, 2022 was another big year at Georgians for a Healthy Future!

GHF's board and staff team really put our work into overdrive. We adopted our 2022-2025 strategic plan, and in the process, revised GHF's mission, vision, and values for the first time since our founding in 2008. These fundamental updates reflect the incredible work we were already doing across Georgia.

A look back at our 2022 activities shows conversations with families about how rising health care costs impact their home and work lives. It reveals trainings with community health workers to help them use their advocacy voices to confidently speak for the needs of their communities to leaders with the power to make change. It reminds us of our stand against the unequal and inadequate coverage of mental health by health insurance companies. It shows our first steps in two new-to-us advocacy areas: housing and public health.

In 2022, GHF continued our fight for Georgians all across the state to ensure that no one's health is hampered by where they live, who they are, or how little money they make. Below are just a few examples of our work and impacts in 2022.

**Your support makes all of this possible and inspires us to continue forward.
Thank you.**

Sincerely,

Laura Colbert and all of us at Georgians for a Healthy Future



MENTAL HEALTH IS HEALTH!

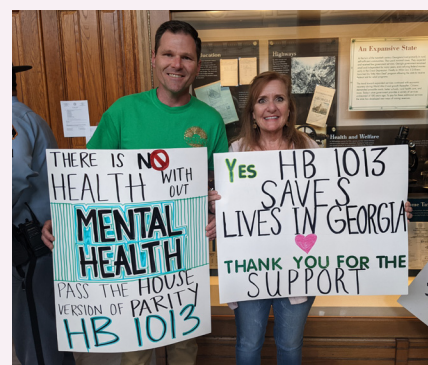
GHF played key roles in the successful passage of Georgia’s sweeping mental health law, the Georgia Mental Health Parity Act.

In the face of profit-driven attacks by insurance companies, GHF worked hand-in-hand with coalition partners and the bill’s sponsors to protect the bill from being watered down or weakened. When stigma about people with mental health and substance use (MH/SU) conditions reared its ugly head, GHF connected Georgians with their elected officials to share their support for the bill and why access to MH/SU care is important to them personally. As a result of GHF’s efforts, more than 1000 constituents connected with Georgia legislators in support of the proposed law! Their voices were essential for the bill’s final passage.

Now that the Georgia Mental Health Parity Act is state law, Georgia families can count on stronger health insurance coverage for MH/SU needs. Georgians will have easier and more affordable access to needed MH/SU recovery services with fewer insurance hassles.

AHEAD IN 2023:

GHF is partnering with The Carter Center’s Mental Health Program to ensure the new parity law is fully and effectively implemented by our state government. Without this step, Georgia families will continue to pay for health benefits that they can’t access because of barriers put in place by insurance companies.



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STORYTELLING WITH RURAL GEORGIANS

Since 2010, 9 rural hospitals have closed in Georgia. In 2022, GHF documented stories from community members following two rural hospital closures in Glenwood and Cuthbert. We were humbled to share their stories in two powerful mini documentaries.

When a hospital closes in a rural community, the effects ripple through every part of community life. The hospital's doctors and nurses move away. Residents are left without access to emergency care and other important health services. Businesses around the hospital may close—a local pharmacy, the downtown diner, or the florist.

Rural hospitals in states that have not expanded Medicaid to low-income adults are more likely to close. Georgia is third in the nation for hospital closures behind Tennessee and Texas—all states without Medicaid expansion.

Georgia Can't Wait is just one way that GHF is working to lift the voices of Georgia families and communities. By sharing their experiences with our state leaders and with people around the state, GHF is moving Georgia closer to Medicaid expansion and a future where all of us have health coverage, regardless of the money in our wallets.

AHEAD IN 2023:

GHF continues to ask Georgians to share their stories about health and health care. We keep turning up the volume on their stories so that they reach the ears of state leaders. This year, we are dedicating special attention to Georgians who are trying to renew their health coverage during the Medicaid unwinding, Georgians who remain uninsured because of our state's inaction on Medicaid expansion, and public health workers. Share your stories at healthyfuturega.org/story.



“I can’t emphasize enough, since we lost our hospital we lost our local bank, lost our grocery store. In fact, there’s not a grocery store in this entire county. And for a while we lost our pharmacy.”

—Mayor Joiner, Glenwood, GA

“People came here for here health care. They came here for the x-rays, lab work, see their doctors. But they don’t come here anymore.”

—Ken Kull, ambulance driver, Glenwood, GA

“It shouldn’t be that you have to live in a wealthy area to get good medical care.”

—Mayor Jenkins, Cuthbert, GA



REACHING UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED GEORGIANS



GHF re-launched its health insurance navigator services to support uninsured and underinsured Georgia individuals and families.

GHF’s two health insurance navigators helped Georgia consumers understand Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act’s health insurance marketplace and whether they qualify for coverage through either program. They guided individuals and families through enrollment, helped them use their insurance, and answered questions about medical bills.

During open enrollment, Mrs. R asked for my help finding the right health insurance for her. She was still too young for Medicare, even though that’s how her husband was covered. This couple lives in Sandersville, in east-central Georgia. Mrs. R said she needed to go to the doctor and get medication for a chronic condition. She shared a list of the doctors she wanted to be able to see and her needed medications. We used that information to find a great plan with Ambetter with a monthly premium of only \$8.64. Now she can go to her long-time doctor to follow up on neglected health issues.

Insurance agents kept calling Ms. R but she would tell them, “I have someone helping, please stop calling me.” I’m just glad that I could help this client with getting insured, scheduling appointments, and getting her medication covered.

— Deanna Williams, *Health insurance navigator in middle Georgia*

AHEAD IN 2023:

During the [“Medicaid unwinding.”](#) GHF’s navigators are helping some of Georgia’s 2.7 million Medicaid members—most of whom are children—stay in charge of their coverage. As Georgians renew their Medicaid coverage, transition to new insurance, or look for safety net programs if they become uninsured, GHF’s navigators will be there to assist them.

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A LONG HORIZON FOR SOME ADVOCACY

Sometimes years pass before the impacts of advocacy show up. Even when the odds seem steep or the goal far away, GHF lays the groundwork to realize the changes that Georgians say they want for their health and well-being. In 2022, GHF achieved an aim that was only possible because of time, energy, and advocacy invested in previous years.

After three years of public education, mobilizing partners and Georgia consumers, and other advocacy led by GHF, the federal government halted Gov. Kemp's proposal to separate Georgia from healthcare.gov with no replacement. Georgians will continue to have a reliable health insurance marketplace where they can see what financial assistance they qualify for, find affordable, quality health plans from different insurers, and enroll in coverage—all in one place!

This success may not have been possible without your advocacy and GHF's committed leadership.



Meet the 2022 GHF team:

Knetta Adkins
Organizing Manager

Laura Colbert
Executive Director

Treylin Cooley
Health insurance navigator

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Health Policy Analyst

Lois Hairston
Content Development Manager

Alex McDoniel
Strategic Communications Manager

Daniel Nguyen
Administrative Assistant

Deanna Williams
Health insurance navigator

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Your support makes our work possible!

GHF is deeply grateful to the individuals, organizations, and foundations who donated to GHF's mission in 2022. We are so appreciative of your generosity regardless of the size of your gift.

We would additionally like to thank those who gave their time, talents, expertise, and advocacy.

Thank you for all the ways that you give to GHF!

Resource Spotlight



To help state and community leaders make effective and informed decisions about the health and well-being of Georgians, Georgians for a Healthy Future created the illustrated **What the health, Georgia** guide.

This publication is a reference that decision makers can go back to again and again as they consider new health laws and policies and determine how to invest public funds in health care and public health.

It covers rising health care costs; mental health; changes Georgians want to see for their health care; policy recommendations; and more! If you missed its October 2022 release, you can find it in our [online library](#).