

A black bear is standing on its hind legs in a forest, looking towards the camera. The bear is the central focus of the image, with its front paws held slightly away from its body. The background consists of dense green foliage and trees, creating a natural, outdoor setting.

Rural Workforce: Barriers and Economic Development

Rural Development Council
Blue Ridge, GA
December 8, 2021

*Jean R. Sumner MD, FACP, Dean
Mercer University School of Medicine*

Mission

To educate physicians and health professionals to meet the primary care and health care needs of rural and medically underserved areas of Georgia.



The Healthcare Workforce Strategic Plan through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Required by the CARES Act, the plan focuses on four goals:

- expanding supply;
- ensuring equitable distribution;
- improving quality; and
- enhancing the use of data and evidence to improve program outcomes.

Seeks to increase the health workforce in rural and underserved areas. The plan focuses on physicians, nurses, and behavioral health providers.

Nov. 1, 2021 [Julie Kozminski Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\) HHS workforce](#)

Rural Health Workforce:

Nursing

Pharmacy

Medicine

Mental Health Providers

Public Health

UGA Extension



Nursing



The Georgia Board of Nursing: Proposed Rule Changes

A faculty/student ratio of at least one (1) full-time nursing faculty member for each twenty-five (25) students enrolled in the nursing education program (including audited courses) shall be maintained. (Presently 20)

For any given academic term, the nursing education program must be able to provide evidence that at least the majority of faculty members are full time in didactic settings with an **exemption for clinical settings** and that at least three-fourths of individual full-time and part-time faculty members hold one (1) or more earned graduate degrees in nursing

A faculty/student ratio of at least one (1) registered nurse faculty member providing direct supervision for no more than ten (10) students engaged in direct patient care in inpatient practice settings must be maintained to provide for the safety of patients/clients, students, and faculty members (Presently 8)

The nursing workforce will lose more than 2 million years of nursing experience each year between 2020-2030 as the remaining estimated 640,000 baby boomer RNs retire.

Buerhaus, P. (September/October 2021). Current Nursing Shortages Could Have Long-Lasting Consequences: Time to Change Our Present Course. *Nursing Economics*, 39(5), 247-250.



There has been a rapid growth of the advanced practice nursing workforce, particularly nurse practitioners (NPs).

—Auerbach et al., 2018.

“...interest in becoming a NP was associated with a reduction of about 80,000 RNs from the nursing workforce between 2010 and 2017, Auerbach et al., 2020).”

Buerhaus, P. (September/October 2021). Current Nursing Shortages Could Have Long-Lasting Consequences: Time to Change Our Present Course. *Nursing Economics*, 39(5), 247-250.

Workforce Data: A Continued Problem

Nursing licensure - Nurses are relicensed every other year.

Problem: Not a requirement to complete the survey and therefore data is incomplete

Solution: Require the licensure survey for all health professions related to actual practice, location, employer and hours worked.



Pharmacy



Pharmacy and Medically Underserved Areas Enhancement Act

April 2021

Bipartisan with original co-sponsor Rep. Buddy Carter

House of Representatives: Bill # 2759

Senate: Bill #1362

Allows Provider Status under Medicare for Pharmacists in Medically Underserved Areas

1. Defers to state law
2. 80-85% fee
3. HPSA/MUA

2032, the U.S. could see a shortage of as many as 55,200 primary care physicians.

American Association of Medical Schools: 2019

Pharmacist may be part of a solution:

90% of the nation's \$3.5 trillion in annual health care expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.

\$1,000 per patient per year with pharmacist interventions for patients with chronic conditions.

KFF: 2019	Commercial: \$7,446,728,553 (54%)
Georgia \$13,791,505,382	Medicare: \$4,982,467,293 (36%)
	Medicaid: \$1,031,885,917 (8%)
	Cash: \$330,423,620 (2%)

Could pharmacists provide first aid for minor injuries?



Physicians

The Decline in Rural Medical Students

Many rural physicians are nearing retirement.

25% fewer may be practicing by 2030.

Medical school students from rural areas declined by 28% between 2002 and 2017,

This decline occurred when the overall number of medical students increased by 30%.

In 2016 and 2017, students from rural backgrounds made up just 4.3% of the incoming medical student body.

Health Affairs Dec.2019; 38 (12) Scott Shipman, MD, AAMC director of primary care initiatives and clinical innovations.



Admissions Consideration

2017 Admissions Cycle

- Academics
- Mission Potential
- Personality

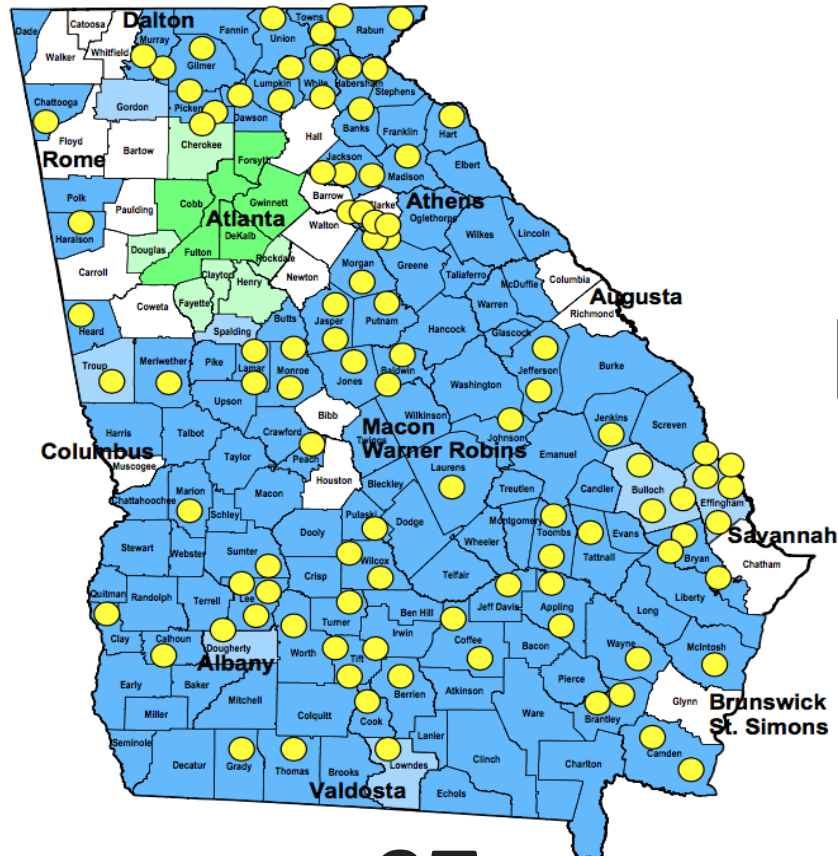
2019 Admissions Cycle

- Mission
- Attributes
- Academic Qualifications



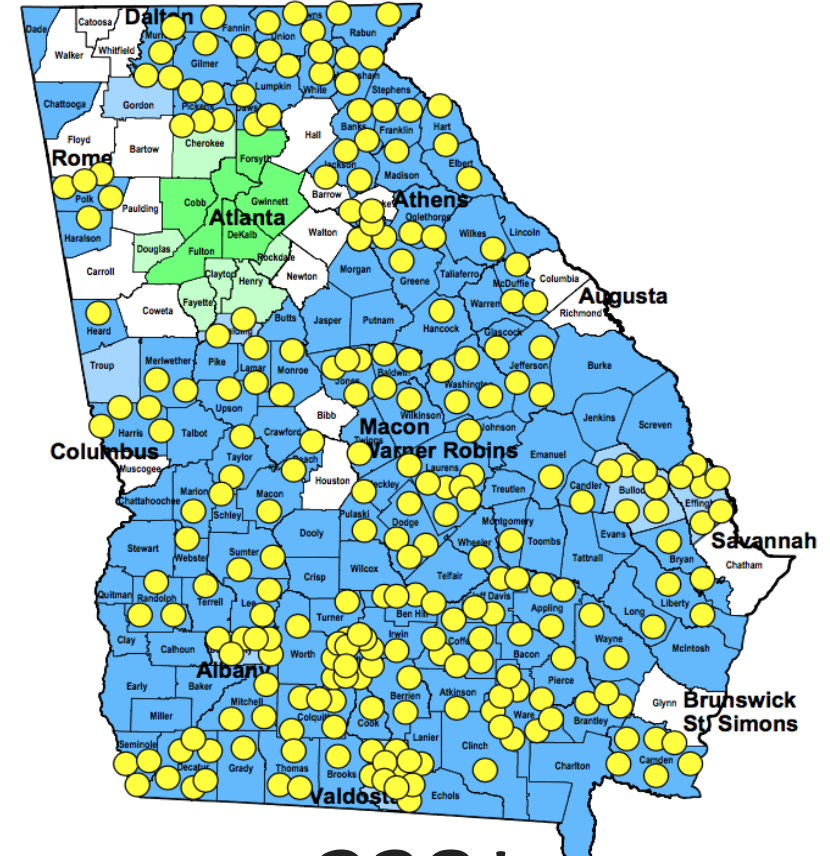
Rural Admissions: Before and After

2014-2015-2016-2017

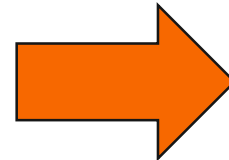


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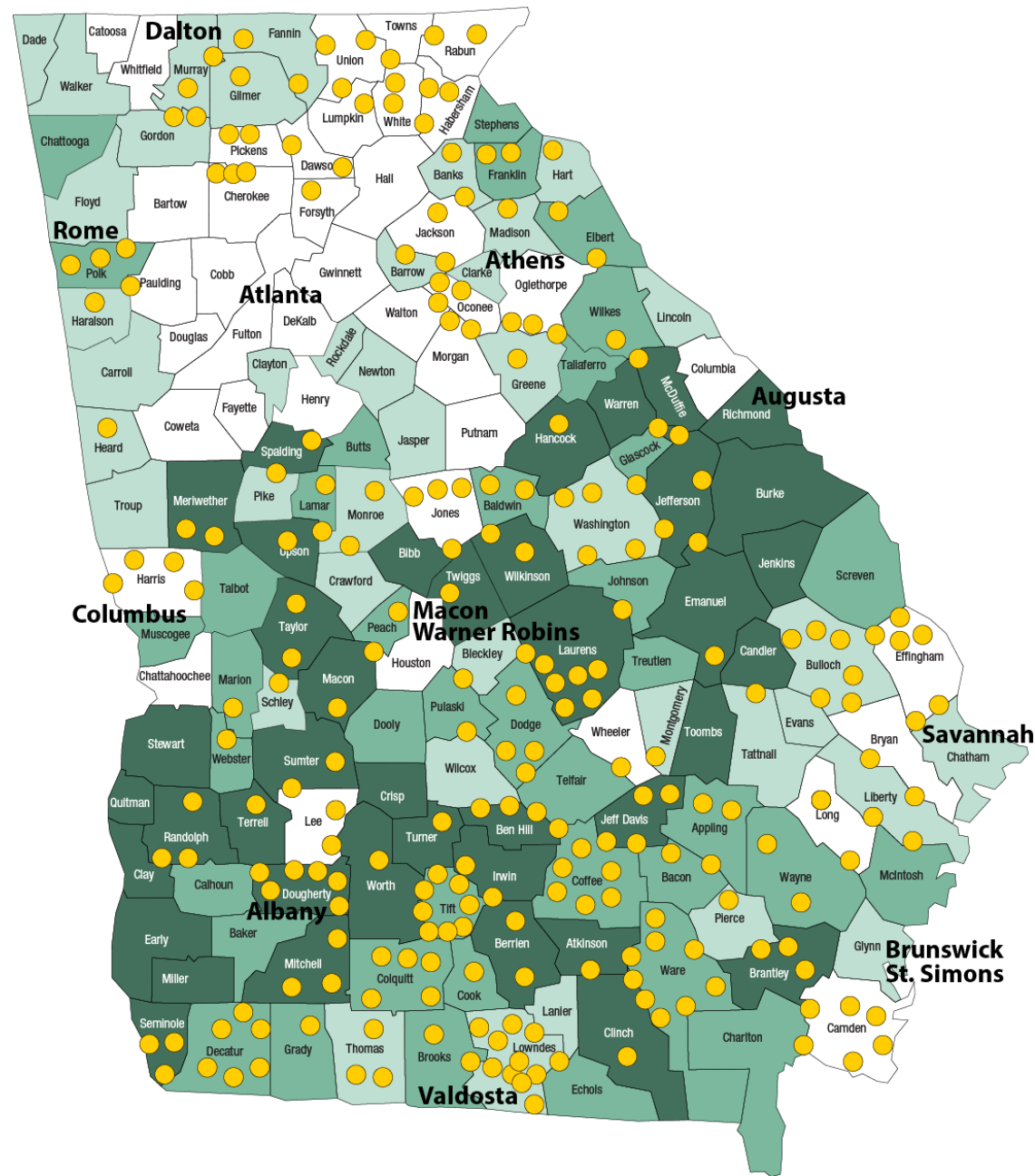
2019-2020-2021-2022*



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2021 Health Outcomes - Georgia



Robert Wood County Health Rankings

MUSM: Rural Students



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

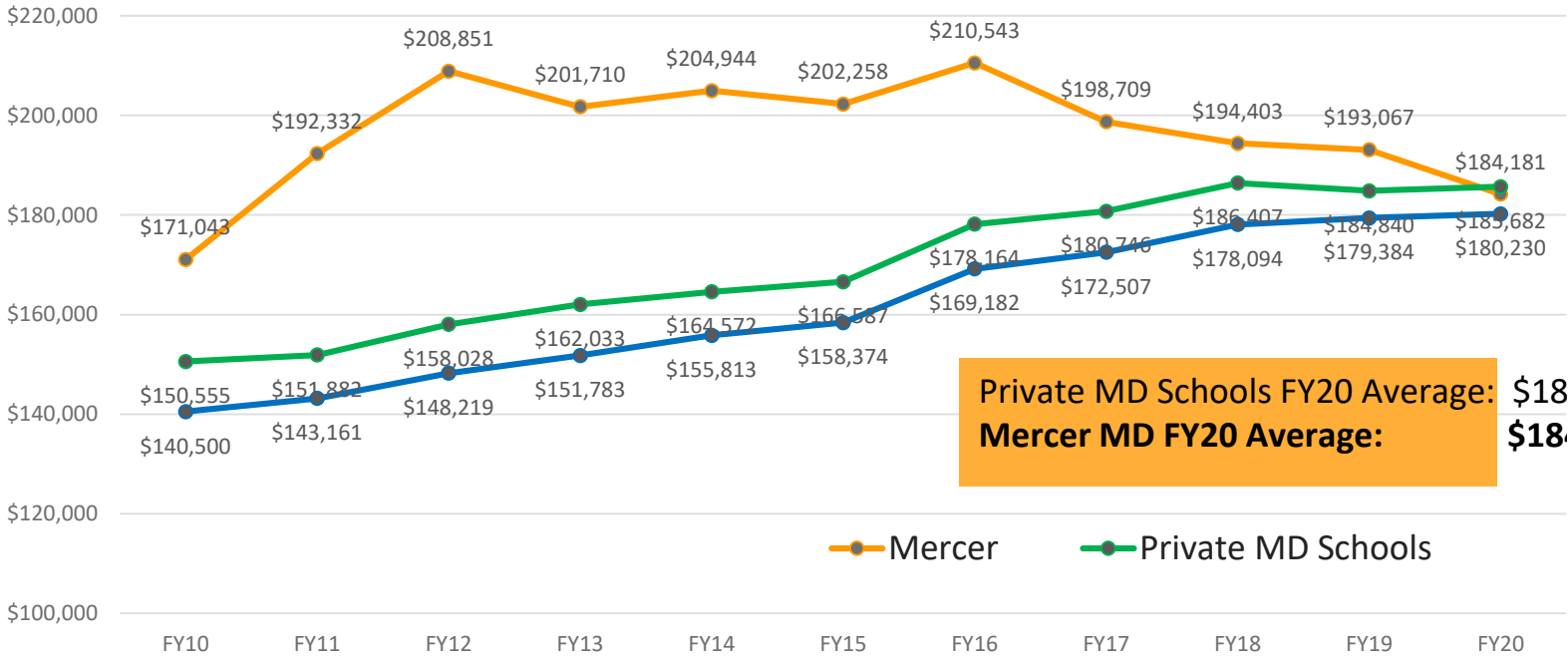
Residency Selection by Class by Core Specialty 2019 - 2021

	2019		2020		2021	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Entered a Core Specialty* Program	94	87%	91	80%	112	89%
Total Number Entering Residency	108		114		126	

** Indicates the Student's selection for 1st year of residency training.*

CORE Specialties are Family Medicine, General Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN , General Surgery, Psychiatry and Emergency Medicine

Average MD Student Loan Debt



Private MD Schools FY20 Average: \$18
 Mercer MD FY20 Average: \$18

* Only includes students who borrow - approximately 85%

DREAM BIG!

**MEDICINE
NEEDS YOU.**



Rural Hospitals Matter

Rural Hospitals Matter

Dr. Dennis Ashley Atrium Navicent Health, surgery residents and Dr. Anne Montgomery at the GRHIC

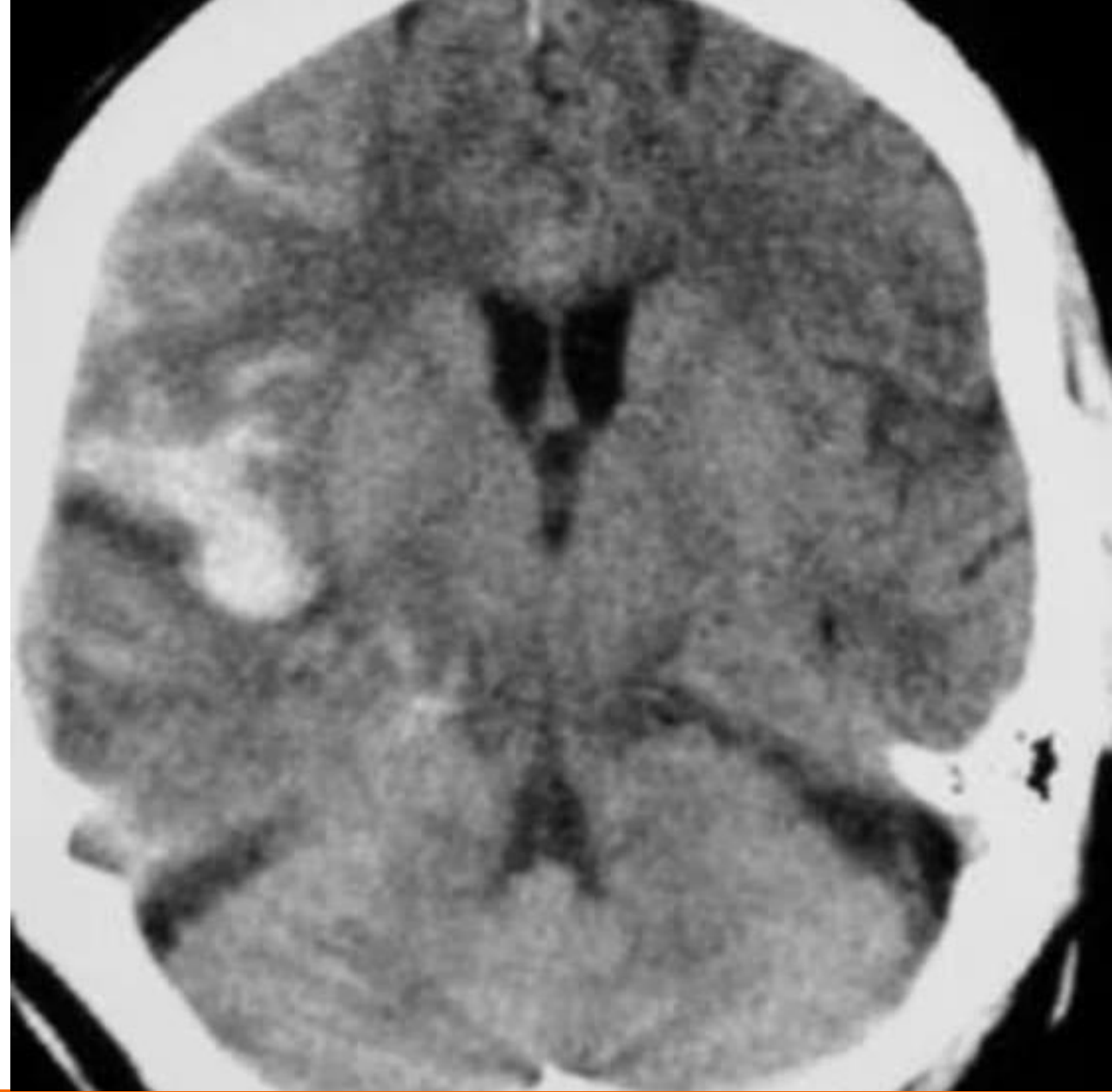
Study of 120 isolated traumatic head injuries with bleeding

80 % falls/ 16% MVA

9 hours in ER

4 Days in the Hospital

1.5 days in ICU



Solutions

Ask for a comprehensive look at legislation, rules and customs that undermine rural hospitals.

CON modification:

Tennessee Model

Emergency Medical Response Studied

Telehealth



Rural Hospitals Matter

- Rural Emergency Hospitals
- Created in 2020: rules being written
- Too small for full hospital need more than ambulatory care
- CAH can convert

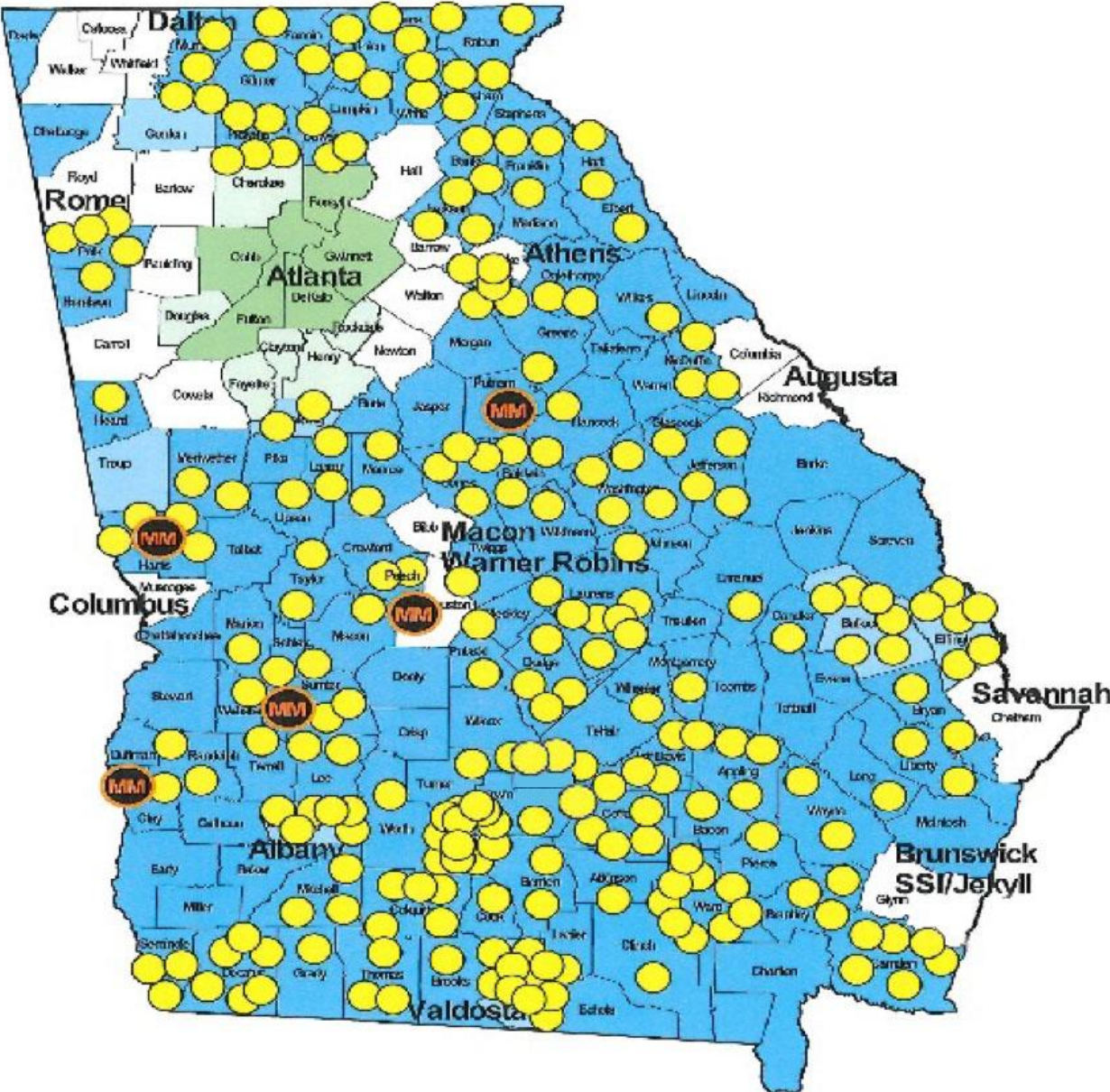


Mission Specific Rural Clinics

Harris County – Opening Early 2022



Mercer Medicine Clinics & Rural Matriculants: 2019-2022



Mental Health Providers

Ben Hill County Mental Health Initiative

Four Public Schools:

Primary, Elementary Middle, and High School

Students: licensed professional
Counseling

GPT and CPA

Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center



Mental Health Providers

CSBs: Agree on deliverables for every county served and show evidence of provision

Gateway CSB:

Same day appointments

Emergency waiver for EMS

Outstanding quality of care



Public Health

159 counties in Georgia

159 Health Departments

SHAPP: Discontinued

Maternal Health Service in every county at least Monthly

Partner with OB-Gyn Residencies or regional physicians to provide this service

Trial with Georgia OB-GYN residencies

Or FM/ Fellowship in Maternal Care

12 counties without doctors: Must provide primary care services in those counties



UGA Cooperative Extension Agents

Extension agents:

- Respected
- Educated
- Culturally Knowledgeable
- Problem Solvers
- Access to Experts
- Based in Rural Georgia



MERCER
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Thank you!