



**Georgia House Rural
Development Council
Meeting Update**

November 16, 2023

Who Are We?

The Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center (GRHIC) was established in 2018 with HB 769 of the Georgia legislature and tasked to partner with rural Georgia to improve health care through reliable research, creative strategies, and sustainable solutions.

We develop relationships with the 120 rural Georgia counties.

We work to find sustainable solutions to health care, health care access, health disparities, and health outcomes in rural Georgia.

We partner with local organizations, government, and agencies to implement projects to build health care infrastructure and capacity in the community.

Mental Health Facts



More than half of Americans report that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their mental health.

In February 2021, 44.3% of adults in Georgia reported symptoms of anxiety or depression; 29.4% were unable to get needed counseling or therapy.



More than half of people with a mental health condition in the US did not receive any treatment in the last year.

Of the 391,000 adults in Georgia who did not receive needed mental health care, 45.4% did not because of cost. The others did not because of access.



Georgians are 4x more likely to be forced out of network for mental health care.

4,911,327 Georgians live in a community with few or no mental health professionals.



1 in 6 US youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year.

104,000 Georgians age 12-17 have depression.



7 in 10 youth in the juvenile justice system have a mental health condition.



High School students with depression are more the 2x more likely to drop out than their peers.

68.4% of Georgians age 12-17 who have depression did not receive any care in the last year.

Pediatric Mental Health Initiative

Connecting Workforce Development with Children in Need

- COVID revealed the critical need
- Children needed care and behavioral health professionals needed supervision for final licensure
- A free clinic was born
- Began in 2021 in Ben Hill County schools
- Now in 16 schools in 4 school systems
- The beauty is the benefit with no cost
- Only limited by how many providers and supervisors we recruit

How Can You Help?

Encourage the colleges and universities in your area of influence to join our free clinic and supervise their graduate students through this program so we can add more schools and students in rural Georgia!

Mental Health Training

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

- We offer training to anyone who will participate – toddlers to elderly
- We have ASIST suicide training, Mental Health First Aid, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) for suicide prevention, and Community Resilience Model Mental Health & Wellness Training
- Gives training to the community to support yourself and those in need
- To date: this year we have provided training for over 1,600+ rural Georgians

**How Can
You Help?**

Talk with everyone you know and encourage them to contact us and train your communities. Until the workforce can get to us – we can help one another!

Georgia Agricultural Wellness Alliance

Farmers' Mental Well-Being Project: Statewide Survey Report



STUDY METHODS

- Mental well-being = more holistic term
- Statewide after pilot: 153 counties
- Online; EN & ES
- Jan – April 2022
- Dissemination:
 - commodity groups
 - newspaper ads
- N = 1651
 - Farm Owners – 38%
 - Farm Managers – 19%
 - Farm Workers – 30%
 - Spouses – 12%
 - Other – 2%
- Georgia Ag Census

HEALTHCARE ACCESS

- 60% no access to basic medical care
- 50% no health insurance
- Farm managers and farm workers had significantly less access to healthcare than farm owners.
- Silent Generation & Baby Boomers less likely to seek mental health care than Generations X, Y, & Z.

FARM STRESSORS

- Top stressors for all farmers:
 - Balancing home and work life,
 - Weather and its effect on the farm,
 - COVID19's effect on income
- Farm owners – lowest stress scores
 - succession planning
 - changes to ag laws or policies
- Farm managers –
 - saving for retirement
 - working environment
 - problems with partner or children
- Farm workers – highest stress scores
 - obtaining operating certificates
 - experiencing microaggressions
 - lack of opportunities

SUICIDAL IDEATION AND NEGATIVE AFFECT

- At least once a month:
 - 47% - loneliness
 - 49% - sadness/depression
 - 39% - hopelessness
 - 29% - thoughts of dying by suicide
- 42% have thought about dying by suicide in the past 12 months.

GENERATIONAL STATUS

- First-generation farmers vs generational:
 - higher stress scores
 - fewer coping mechanisms
 - less healthcare access
 - suicidal ideation:
 - 61% in the past year (vs 10%)
 - 9% daily (vs. 1%)

NEXT STEPS

- Key informant interviews
- In-person survey collection of underrepresented groups (traveling farmers)
- Develop farmer-specific mental health interventions, with Ga Foundation for Ag.
- The pilot and statewide reports are available to download:
georgiaruralhealth.org/farmworkersurvey

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Co-Authors: Chris Scoggins, Director of Special Projects, GRHIC; Ben West, Ph.D. Student, Rural Health Sciences; Lily Baucom, Executive Director, Georgia Foundation for Agriculture



Georgia Agricultural Wellness Alliance

Helping Those Who Help Us

- From the research we had to do something
- Started with pulling together Georgia Department of Agriculture, University of Georgia, DBHDD, and the Georgia Foundation for Agriculture to form an alliance.
- Starting with resource gathering and then will move into bridging the gaps

How Can You Help?

Work and listen with those in agriculture in your community to assess needs and contact us so we can come alongside them and help!

Georgia's Opioid Crisis



From 2019 to 2021, fentanyl-involved deaths increased by 232.1%



Cobb county has the highest overdose rate in Georgia. Carroll and Henry have the highest fatal overdose deaths in Georgia.



The number of young Georgians who died from fentanyl-laced drug overdoses spiked last year by 800% compared to the year before.



Wayne County has had the most opioid-involved overdose rate in rural Georgia.



In 2022, Georgia had a record breaking number of overdoses due to fentanyl. 2023 is on track to break that record.



Georgians with chronic disease or a mental health diagnosis are more likely to misuse opioids.

Opioid Misuse Project

- Partnered with the Christopher Wolf Crusade with a million dollar Rollins grant
- Develop the LifeCare Specialist curriculum
- Offer continuing education to physicians and advanced practice practitioners
- Place two LCS's at 5 rural hospitals at no cost to the hospital for pilots
- The plan is to eventually place LCS's at all rural hospitals to educate and care for patient's pain

How Can You Help?

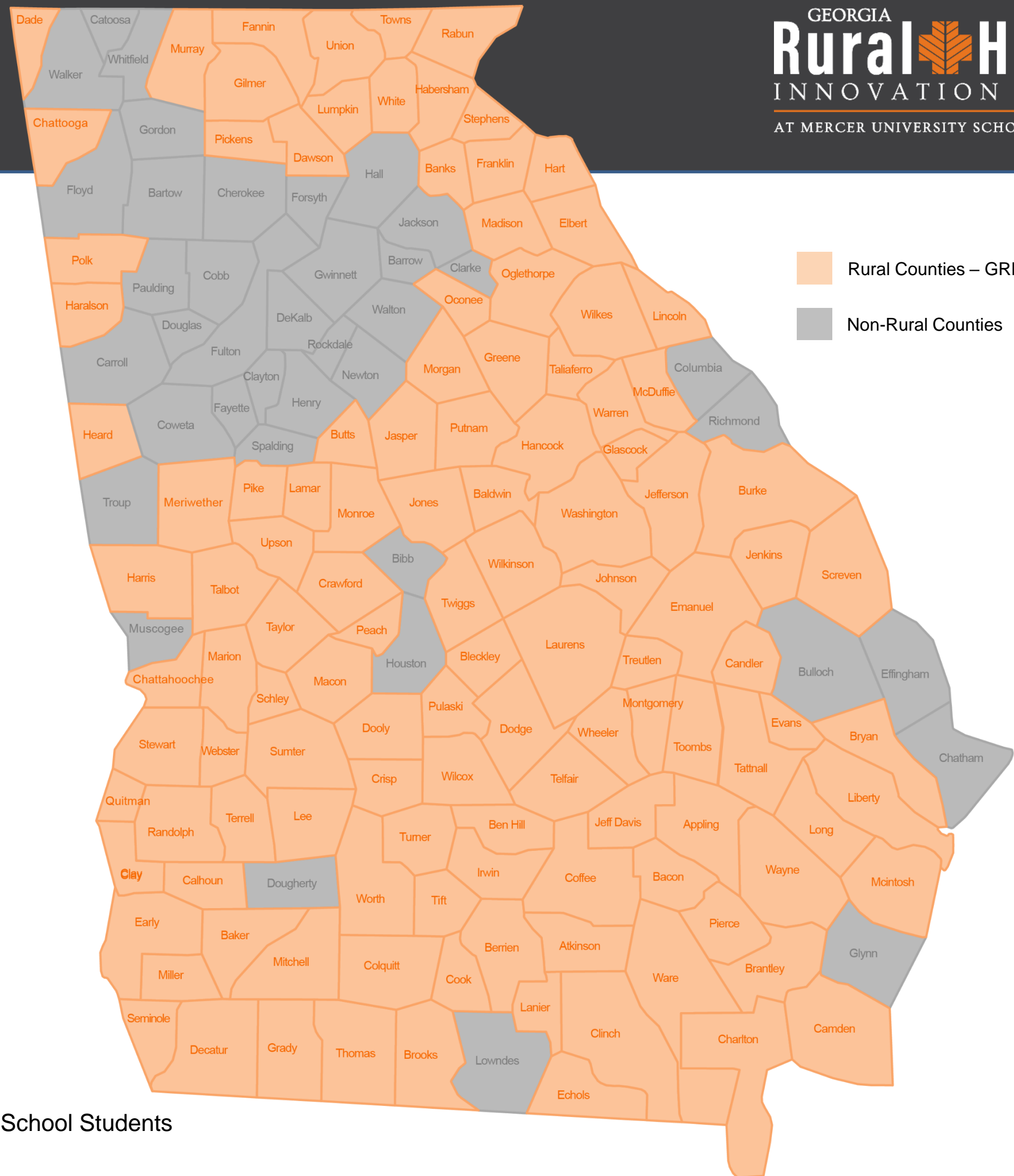
Continue to support efforts to educate your community on Narcan use and the importance of mental health training.

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Programs, Pilots, & Projects

The Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center programs impact every rural county in Georgia:

- Anatomy of Your Health
- ASIST Suicide Training
- Clinical Ethics ECHO
- Community Health Fairs
- Community Health Literacy Events
- Community Health Reporter Data Program
- Community Resiliency Model Mental Health Training
- Elbert Memorial Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment
- Faith in Rural Health Collaborative Student Internships
- Faith in Rural Health Farmworker Telemental Health
- Faith in Rural Health Volunteer Chaplain Training
- Georgia Agricultural Wellness Alliance
- Haircuts and Hams Barbershop Health Literacy Project
- Hospital Leadership Training
- Loss, Suicide, and Grief Support
- Maternal Health Improvement Project
- Maternal Health Observership
- Maternal Health Symposium
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Opioid Misuse Prevention Project
- Pediatric Mental Health Initiative
- Pediatric Mental Health Summit Training
- Perinatal Mental Health Symposium
- QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention
- Rural Pediatric Health Alliance Emergency Department Projects
- Rural Pediatric Health Alliance Mental Health and Wellness Projects
- Rural Pediatric Health Alliance Pediatrician Support Projects
- Vaccine Hesitancy Project
- Workforce Development Rural Medicine Pathways Events for Middle and High School Students



Rural Counties – GRHIC Program Sites
 Non-Rural Counties

Connect With Us

Contact Information



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GEORGIA
Rural Health
INNOVATION CENTER

AT MERCER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

FAMILY MEDICINE AND WALK IN CLINIC
MONDAY - THURSDAY 7:30 - 5:00
FRIDAY CLOSED