



Georgia Department
of Human Services

Serving Children with Complex Needs in Rural Georgia

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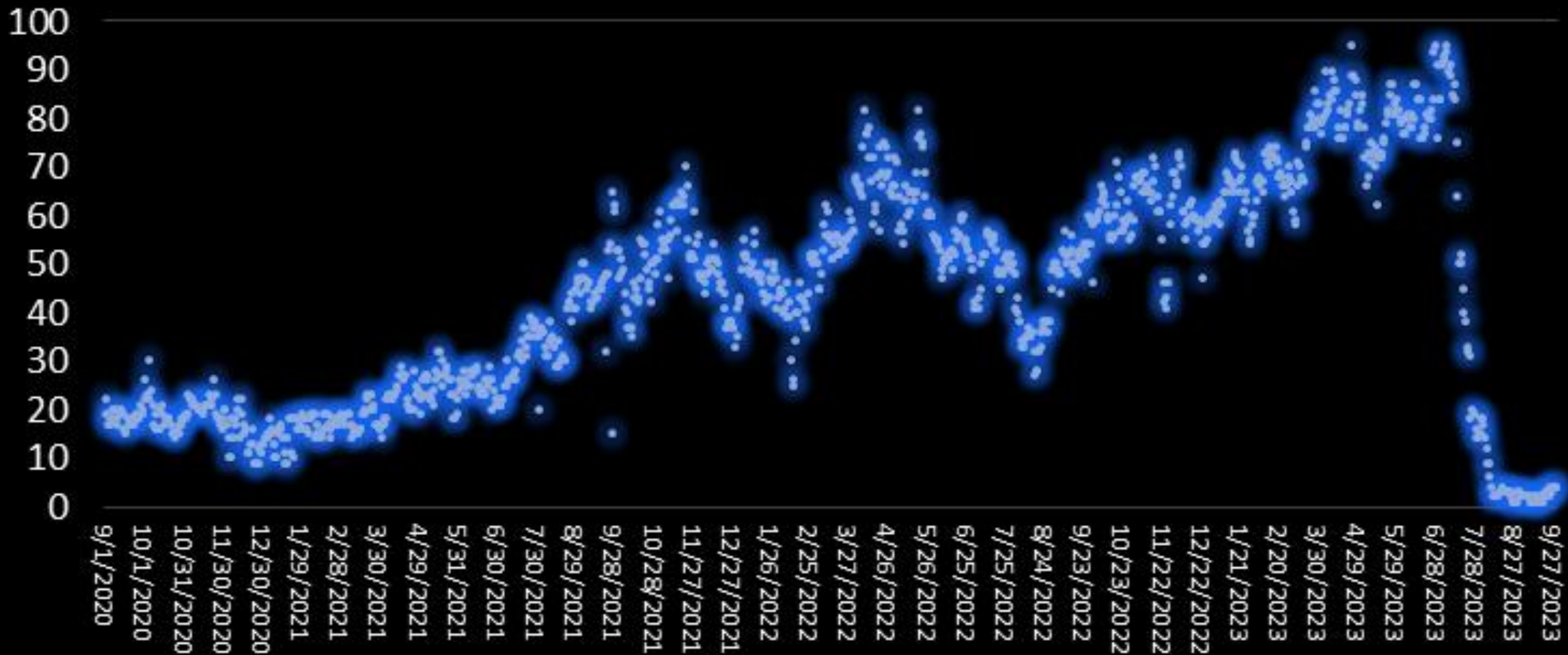


stronger families

FOR A STRONGER GEORGIA



Total # of Children Without Placement / per Day



Note: Data verification began in August 2021– prior data may not have been accurate.



Types of Placements Available to Youth in Care

- DFCS foster homes
- Private Agency Foster Homes (Child Placing Agencies or CPAs)
 - Bethany Christian Services, Seeds That Grow, Coastal Harbor CPA, Wellroot, Sevita, NECCO, NYAP
- Congregate Care (Child Caring Institutions or CCIs)
 - Can range from base-level group homes with six residents up to large facilities like Twin Cedars, The Methodist Home, Georgia Baptist, Kidspeace
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities or PRTFs
 - Hospital level care– managed by DCH and funded by health insurance provider (Amerigroup)



Characteristics of Youth with No Placement

- Youth with extensive criminal histories, violent offenses (designated felons, sexual crimes, juvenile and adult charges)
- Youth with placement restrictions (can't be placed with other kids)
- Youth with complex medical needs (diabetes, seizures, etc. combined with behavioral challenges)
- Often entered care often without agency-initiated actions (from the bench, at delinquency hearings)
- NOW/COMP Waiver Youth (ages 18-22 with developmental disabilities)
- Youth with Dual-Diagnoses
 - Mental health needs combined with developmental delays (IQ 70 and Below) and/or Autism



How did we get here?

- Families First Act
 - Plan to reduce congregate care for youth in foster care and divert federal money to preventative services
- Reduction in new congregate care providers being approved in preparation
- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Workforce Issues Post-Pandemic
 - Facilities unable to find staff to stay within required 1:6 ratios specifically during less desirable shifts (evenings, weekends, etc.)
- Providers slow to increase pay rates Post-Pandemic
 - Summer 2022 many providers still paying direct care staff \$13-\$15 per hour
 - Many providers have the physical capacity for additional youth but not the staff
- Reduction in Community Based Services, resulting in more crises for complex youth and their families



How is the agency addressing youth with complex needs?

Case Specific Strategies

- Hired attorneys to assist in systemic navigation and change (Well Being Attorney, Medicaid Attorney, Others)
- Complex Care Coordinator – Employee with clinical credentials and 20+ years in child welfare dedicated to this issue
- PASS – Weekly collaborative staffing with state office staff and county/regional staff for all youth without stable placements
- Education for Providers around the issue-- Amerigroup, DCH, PRTF's and other child welfare partners-- about need; sharing list of kids without placements

Systemic Strategies

- Rate Enhancement
 - Additional \$150 added to per diem for complex care youth to CPA and CCI providers with 6-month commitment
 - Approval for \$150 per diem for 30 days to DFCS foster homes to prevent hoteling
- State-Supported Provider Staffing – utilized staffing company to provide staffing for seven complex-needs providers
- Increased accountability and engagement with Amerigroup for youth in care, including appealing all service denials
- Increased DBHDD engagement on youth requiring long term support due to developmental disabilities
- Increased DJJ engagement around youth entering custody at delinquency hearings or with extensive criminal behavior



Hoteling is Not a Placement

- In July 2023, Deputy Commissioner Havick required executive-level leadership approval for any youth to be hoteled, a written summary to be included, and engagement of all state office units to address the youth's need for placement.
- Requirement of providers giving less than a 14-day notice to self-report that notice to the child's County Director
- Requirement that Multi-Disciplinary Team calls be held prior to any placement disruption
- Increased emphasis on system accountability for youth without placement and need to stop the “churning” of youth with complex needs
- Geography does not change a youth's behavior – they must stay put to address the therapeutic needs
- Executive level leadership involvement when providers contracted to provide care for complex care youth denied placements despite having bed space available



Rural Foster Care Needs

- Increased mental health services for adults and youth.
- Increased accessibility to resources that provide intensive supports to youth who experience mental health crisis that cannot be managed through outpatient services.
- Inpatient and outpatient drug rehabilitation facilities for parents who struggle with addiction.
- Additional placement resources services for youth in foster care with complex needs.
- Always a need for more foster parents – in particular to foster teens, complex kids: fostergeorgia.com + 877-210KIDS



Questions?

For follow up questions or concerns, please contact the Governmental Affairs Team listed below.

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