



## 2013 Legislative Agenda and Talking Points

The following are the 2013 legislative agenda and associated talking points approved by the Board of Directors of the Association on October 21, 2012.

### 1. Addictive Diseases - TANF

During the 2012 legislative session, the Association worked effectively to help restore federal TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) dollars that maintain addictive disease programs that support the recovery of women with children. The Department of Human Services FY 2013 and FY 2014 budget recommendations include the elimination of funding that is passed through to the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities to support these TANF programs. The Association supports all efforts to prevent the elimination of this funding and keep these programs operating.

### 2. FY 2014 Budget Reductions

The Governor directed state agencies to include a 3% reduction in their budgets for FY 2013 and FY 2014 budgets. For the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the cut is \$27,818,095.00 in each fiscal year. For FY 2014, the department included in its proposal a reduction of \$9,409,552.00 from community services to adults and children with a mental illness and adults with a developmental disability. The department indicates that this reduction could be eliminated if the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget did not apply the 3% reduction to those services funded pursuant to the federal Settlement Agreement and those dollars required for the state's matching share of the costs of Medicaid-funded programs. The Association supports the department's position that funds supporting these services and programs should not be subject to the 3% cut.

### 3. Amended FY 2013 and FY 2014 Improvements

The Association supports the FY 2014 Appropriations request of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to fund community-based services in the amount of \$19,206,334.00 for individuals with a developmental disability, and \$28,015,946.00 for individuals with a mental illness as well as the \$2,500,000.00 in both the Amended FY 2013 and FY 2014 requests for behavioral health waiver growth.

### 4. Criminal Justice

In the FY 2013 Appropriations Act, the Governor proposed and the General Assembly allocated funds to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to support the development and maintenance of accountability courts, i.e., mental health courts, drug courts, and the like. The Association advocates for increased funding for accountability courts and other initiatives that support diversion from incarceration as well as services that support the re-entry of former inmates with behavioral health challenges into community life, and further, such services should be integrated with the existing provider system of care.

### 5. Employee Health Benefits

OCGA § 37-2-6.1(b)(5)(A) requires a community service board to provide medical and hospitalization benefits to its employees only through the State Health Benefit Plan administered by the Department of Community Health under the same conditions as provided to state employees. Over the years since community service boards were created on July 1, 1994, the state has not provided adequate funding to cover the cost of the employer's share of these benefits. The Association seeks to engage the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Community Health during 2013 in a discussion of how best to fund employee health benefits so that the provision of such benefits does not erode funding for services.