



## 2014 Legislative Agenda and Talking Points

The following 2014 legislative agenda and associated talking points were approved by the Board of Directors of the Association on October 20, 2013. The Executive Committee, on the recommendation of the Public Improvement and Policy Committee, is authorized to modify this agenda on an emergency basis as circumstances dictate prior to and during the 2014 session of the General Assembly.

### 1. **DBHDD-Sponsored CSB Legislation**

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) indicates it will seek legislation to address findings from its emergency management of Gateway CSB. Included will be amendments to OCGA § 37-2-10, the statute that allows DBHDD to administer such programs on an emergency basis. DBHDD indicates the bill will address CSB governance. The Association's support for such legislation is contingent upon a review of the proposed bill after it is made available for comment.

### 2. **Amended FY 2014 and FY 2015 Appropriations Acts**

The Association supports DBHDD's Amended FY 2014 and FY 2015 Appropriations requests. For FY 2015, \$34,808,983 in additional state funds are sought to enhance or expand community mental health services as well as \$15,166,286 for community developmental disability services. The FY 2015 request includes an additional \$9,409,552 to prevent a delayed community services funding reduction avoided last year when DBHDD redirected one time available funding and an additional \$2,250,000 to cover the cost of expanded Medicaid reimbursed services to behavioral health consumers. No additional funds are sought in the Amended FY 2014 request.

### 3. **Governor's Criminal Justice Re-Entry Initiative**

During the past year, CSBs, the Department of Corrections, and DBHDD have been engaged in expanded activities to support the re-entry of former inmates with behavioral health challenges into community life. The Association has and continues to participate on The State Reentry Task Force of the Governor's Office of Transition, Support, and Reentry in addition to the Reentry and Recidivism Reduction Committee of the Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform, all of which are addressing the needs for successful reentry and recovery. The Association advocates for increased funding for housing, employment, and service delivery should the Governor recommend appropriations 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.

### 4. **H.B. 290 – Family Care Act**

Rep. Katie Dempsey (R-Rome) introduced legislation in the 2013 session of the General Assembly to require any person or entity with 10 or more employees and who provide sick leave to those employees to allow an employee to use up to five days of such earned sick leave for the care of an immediate family member. The Commissioner of Labor would be required to issue rules and regulations governing the provisions of the bill. Eight states have similar legislation. The Georgia Job/Family Collaborative has endorsed the bill. H.B. 290 was favorably recommended by the House Human Relations and Aging Committee in 2013, but was reassigned to the committee at the end of the session after it failed to be considered by the House of Representatives. The Association supports H.B. 290.

### 5. **Good Samaritan Legislation**

The Georgia Council on Substance Abuse is promoting legislation so that individuals who experience a drug overdose or persons who witness an overdose and seek help for the victim cannot be prosecuted for possession of small amounts of drugs, paraphernalia, or underage drinking. Such legislation might seek to remove civil liabilities from physicians who prescribe or bystanders who administer an opiate antidote to reverse drug overdose from opiates. Law enforcement officers would not be able to arrest anyone carrying an overdose reversal kit. The Association generally supports legislation that encourages treatment over incarceration.