Georgia’s Crisis in Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health

THE PROBLEM:
More than 40% of children ages 3-17 have trouble accessing the mental health treatment and counseling they need.

Behavioral Health is at the core of the majority of the problems we see in education, juvenile justice, and child welfare. And the challenges don’t stop there - they continue into adulthood.

Schools often serve as the primary point of access to behavioral health services and supports.

of Georgia’s 159 counties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>do not have a licensed psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>do not have a licensed social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>do not have a licensed psychologist OR a licensed social worker</td>
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</tbody>
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Schools currently have:

- 1 Social Worker for every 2,475 students
- 1 School Psychologist for every 2,475 students
- 1 School Nurse for every 1,088 students

Schools need:

- 1 Social Worker for every 250 students
- 1 School Psychologist for every 700 students
- 1 School Nurse for every 750 students

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WHY WE NEED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Untreated behavioral health illness in children and adolescents can lead to:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Violent or self-destructive behavior
- Low educational attainment
- Much lower rates of employment in adulthood

WHAT WE NEED:

1. All children and adolescents have access to behavioral health services.
2. Schools are equipped to meet the need early and effectively.
3. Georgia has the workforce to help children and adolescents with behavioral health needs.

WHAT NEXT: We need to fully implement Georgia’s Comprehensive three-year System of Care State Plan for child and adolescent health and support the work of Behavioral Health Innovation Commission to develop policy which can improve children’s behavioral health outcomes.

Sources: https://tinyurl.com/CrisisRefsv22019

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