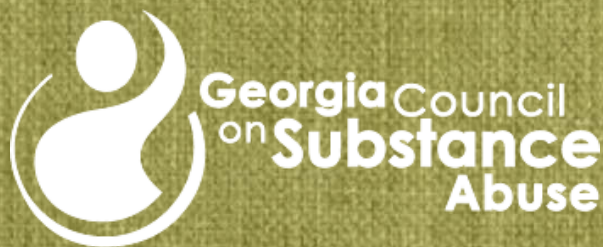


2021

IMPACT REPORT

one mission many voices





To all members of the Georgia recovery community, our allies, friends and neighbors,

Thank you for your continuous support during a year that presented plenty of difficult challenges. Communities of color, communities representing LGBTQ members, young people and many other vulnerable groups of citizens have been shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as situations of unrest and social injustice. This has been a tough year for all of us. And while GCSA had to quickly adapt, our work never, ever stopped. And the importance of staying connected has never been so clear.

We often hear the phrase, “connecting the dots,” and it might be in the running for the most overused phrase in business today. The connections that were critical for our work this year weren’t about dots as much as threads. Dots sit alone with lines between them. Threads weave together. And when many threads come together, they are more beautiful and strong than they ever were alone.

This past year, we saw the power of hope and connection woven together to change lives, heal families and transform communities. We have continued to have great impact across our state and across the country. We have cultivated partnerships and have deepened our commitment to being more inclusive in our outreach and more comprehensive in our approach to building communities that support all recovery. While our tactics may have had to change, our message remains loud and clear: recovery is real, and recovery is happening here.

Thank you for being part of the GCSA fabric. We are proud to tell you about this year like no other, and we remain grateful for your continued support.

With Gratitude,

Neil Campbell
Executive Director

SHOUT OUT TO OUR BOARD:

Executive Committee:

Gwen Skinner, Chair
Marcea O'Brien, Vice Chair
Bryan Ramos, Secretary
Tom Roeck, Finance Chair

Members:

Hines Brannon
Pierluigi Mancini
John Zoller
Jim Emshoff

Our Mission

The mission of the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse is to increase the impact of recovery in our communities through education, advocacy, training and peer recovery support services.

We are guided by the belief, value and principle that through many pathways of self-directed care, recovery is possible for everyone. We nurture hope by supporting others with empathy, compassion and integrity.



Our Impact

120

Peer support
specialists trained

19,789

People reached through the
CARES Warm Line

6,828

Peer interactions
through Hospital Peer
Recovery Coaching

23,405

People attended Virtual All
Recovery Meetings (VARM)

185

Participants in listening
sessions across six counties

241

School professionals trained
to have compassionate
conversations with students

17,177

Followers on
social media platforms

868

CARES trained, one of the
largest SUD peer workforce
in the United States

numbers are just part of the story

At GCSA, we know these numbers reflect a mere glimpse of people and their stories. They represent people living with substance use disorder and those in long-term recovery, allies and friends of the recovery community, family members affected by addiction, and the entities, systems and communities that inform the way we experience our daily lives.

These numbers represent a movement.

A movement of hope.
Mobilized by the message of connection.
Amplifying the power of recovery at work across Georgia.



Education



In partnership with Dr. Jessica Tuttle, an epidemiologist with the Georgia Department of Public Health, GCSA developed a training called **Promoting Cultures of Recovery in the Emergency Department**. As an extension of our work providing peer recovery support services in the emergency department, which you'll read about on page 12, this program equips providers with education, in turn, connecting peers to patients in the moments that matter.

8	15	8	55
educational sessions have been facilitated	Recovery Community Organizations trained	hospitals served and counting	emergency department personnel trained



The **Compassionate Conversations Training** is a partnership with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council-Opioid Affected Youth Initiative (CJCC-OAYI) to give high school personnel across Georgia the tools needed to have meaningful conversations and make impactful connections with students experiencing a substance use disorder. Thirty-two counties across Georgia have received this training.

241

teachers, educators, counselors, school resource officers, and administrators have been trained to have compassionate conversations with students about substance use disorder. As a result, **94%** of respondents reported they are more likely to create a positive recovery message and engage in compassionate conversations with students.



GCSA has worked in partnership with the Fulton County Accountability Court (FCAC) for the past three years to provide support to peer coaches in the drug court and educate FCAC staff on recovery in various ways. This year, we focused on a **Cultures of Recovery Training**.

50

peer coaches, clinicians, compliance officers, investigators, district attorneys, and public defenders trained from FCAC. As a result, **98%** of respondents reported that they were satisfied with the training, stating the training "helped me take an in-depth look within myself and conduct a self-evaluation as it relates to the service I'm providing to my clients."



This past year has been challenging. The impact of the pandemic on people in recovery has been especially hard, with limitations on in-person meetings and ways to be connected to one another. For many, it was time to be resilient and creative, and the team at GCSA was no exception. From meetings and events to campaigns and projects, it was a year of perseverance during a year when the voice of recovery has never been so important.

I'm proud to share more about what WE (all of us) accomplished this past year. Thank you to everyone in the community - in Georgia and across the nation - who joined us in the critical work of advocacy through sharing your stories and raising your voice."

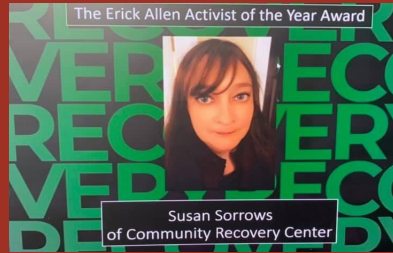
With gratitude and commitment,

Jeff Breedlove
Chief of Policy and Communications

Rally for Recovery, hosted by the advocacy team, in support of Valor Station, a treatment center for First Responders in Augusta Georgia, that attracted over 150 people in support of Georgia's first responders.



Our virtual statewide Recovery Month Gala on September 2, 2020, with 123 people in attendance from across Georgia. United States Congresswoman Lucy MacBeth and DBHDD Commissioner Judy Fitzgerald joined us as VIP speakers.



In 2020, GCSA awarded 60 peers and community leaders with the Recovery Champion Award to honor and highlight those who support recovery in communities across Georgia by breaking stigma.

Georgia Votes Recovery. Alexia Jones from Atlanta in Fulton County, Georgia... See More



To educate Georgia on the importance of participating in the electoral process and voting, GCSA created the Georgia Votes Recovery Project, posting 21 videos of peers from across the state who shared why they vote for candidates who support the recovery community.

“Having the leadership of GCSA means never having to do recovery advocacy alone. GCSA is a family and has a network that provides a unified front across the great state of Georgia.”

Hank Arnold, Executive Director of Coweta FORCE Recovery Community Organization



Nothing about us without us.

In recovery advocacy, this is a phrase we believe in wholeheartedly. Recovery voices belong in the rooms where decisions are being made about us.

At GCSA, we give recovery voices a platform to be heard.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our advocacy team was busier than ever adapting to new ways to advocate virtually, developing new platforms, forums and conversations to amplify the message of recovery.

Here's how we put our collective voices to work this year.

8

Town Hall Meetings held with the Georgia General Assembly

8

Town Hall Meetings hosted in communities in Georgia

17

Virtual Town Hall Meetings in partnership with elected officials

18

Meetings with elected officials attended by GCSA team members

3

Virtual Advocacy Training Sessions hosted, reaching over 120 people

6

Virtual Recovery Community Connections hosted

6

Times that our team testified before the General Assembly

187

Events attended to advance the message that recovery is real

“For over a decade, GCSA has been a leader in Georgia and across the country in the advocacy of people in long-term recovery. They have helped lift the stigma and help so many find their voice and tell their stories of empowerment and recovery.”

Representative Erick Allen



Advocacy

2021 Addiction Recovery Awareness Day (ARAD) Georgia Recovers Together

We hosted the 13th Annual Addiction Recovery Awareness Day (ARAD) on February 2, 2020. Held virtually, the event hosted over 1,100 people with Governor Brian Kemp delivering the keynote address. Other VIP speakers included Attorney General Chris Carr, Speaker David Ralston, a bipartisan group of legislators from the General Assembly Working Group on Addiction and Recovery, and DBHDD Commissioner Judy Fitzgerald.

1,100

attendees at
the 13th Annual
ARAD



After the event, we continued the conversation by adding a series of **12 virtual sessions**, engaging hundreds of peers and highlighting our belief in multiple pathways and diversity in recovery.



DON'T MISS ARAD 2022 on January 25, 2022!

Visit gasubstanceabuse.org/arad-2022 to learn more.



Training

The CARES training model is nationally renowned, and has resulted in the largest SUD peer workforce in the United States.



The **Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist Academy** was developed by the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse to create a workforce of peers to provide recovery support services to the communities of Georgia. Funded by Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the CARES Academy is the first of its kind in the country to be Medicaid billable.

6

academies held in 2021

467

applications received

120

CARES graduates

868

CARES trained to date

"This training has changed the way I will live my life, work with my coworkers, and with peers."



Successful peer recovery support services include support not just for the peer, but also for the peer recovery coach. **CARES Connect** is a continuing education program designed to provide ongoing education in established and emerging techniques for providing exceptional peer support services while providing opportunities for personal growth and professional development.

3

programs facilitated

381

peers in attendance



Celebrating **10 years** of CARES!



Training

Recovery Community Organization (RCO) Development Engaging peers, sharing expertise



GCSA and Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (GMHCN) with the support of Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) have been at the forefront nationally in training and supporting local recovery peer leadership. **Recovery Community Organizations** driven and supported by these local leaders are emerging across Georgia.

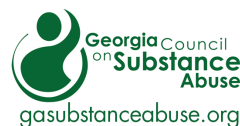
6	8	12	35	64
Community Listening Sessions	RCOs established	Learning Collaborative webinars	RCOs served and supported	Support meetings for RCOs



Serving the Hispanic Community

- 31 Participants joined two virtual listening sessions for Hispanic, Immigrant and Refugee communities
- 32 Spanish All Recovery Meetings were held through our Virtual All Recovery Meetings Initiative
- 40 Outreach calls and support meetings facilitated and counting

RECUPERACIÓN ES
LIBERTAD CAMBIO
OPORTUNIDAD
VIDA REAL
PAZ APRENDIZAJE
BIENESTAR
AMIGOS FAMILIA
ESPERANZA AVENTURA
ACEPTACIÓN
CONEXIONES PROPÓSITO
ELECCIONES ALEGRÍA
¡LO QUE SEA QUE HAGAS!



La conexión es lo opuesto a la adicción

¿Necesitas alguien con quien hablar?
¡Estamos aquí para escucharte!

CARES

LINEA DE AYUDA

Llámanos o envíanos un mensaje
1-844-326-5400

La línea de ayuda es respondida por personas con experiencia en el uso de sustancias y en la recuperación. Estamos aquí para escucharte, y para apoyarte en tu camino a la recuperación individual.

Horarios de Operación
Todos los días, 8:30am-11pm

El financiamiento para la Línea de Ayuda CARES es facilitado mediante contrato con GCSA, a través del Departamento de Salud Conductual y Discapacidades de Desarrollo del Estado de Georgia.

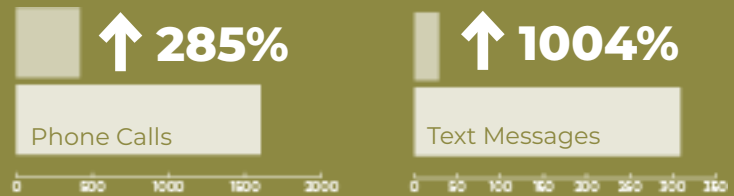


Peer Recovery Support

At the heart of our work is peer recovery support services, the work of connecting people living with substance use disorder to a person who has lived experience in recovery.



This year, COVID gave rise to a dramatic increase in the volume and utilization of the **CARES Warm Line**, a pathway for individuals to reach out and connect with a CARES peer.



Connections through calls and texts increased from 2019 to 2021

“My peer has been fighting hard for her recovery. She has not given up. She knows what recovery looks like, she knows where she wants to go, and she wants wellness and recovery. She had so many barriers and troubles along the way, but she has made it. She has called me several times this week, and every call warms my heart.”

CARES Warmline Peer Coach



At the beginning of the pandemic, in communities across the country, there was a great need for recovery support. In response to this need, GCSA stepped up to create **Virtual All Recovery Meetings (V-ARMS)** to connect people with recovery support virtually.



“So many pathways of recovery are represented in these meetings. There are no requirements for entry to this recovery resource.”



Peer Recovery Support

Surviving an overdose can be the first step on a pathway to recovery

CARES in the Emergency Department



In partnership with Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) and Georgia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), GCSA provides peer support to individuals having experienced an opioid overdose or any substance use disorder related incident in NGMC’s three campus emergency departments in Gainesville, Braselton, and Winder.

By placing Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialists (CARES/CPS-AD) in the NGMC emergency departments our goal is to connect people to a pathway of recovery.

This year was full of challenges and learning experiences for our emergency department team. COVID-19 exacerbated loneliness, setbacks and serious challenges in accessing services. Overdoses and substance-related incidents were on the rise across the country, and it was no different for our peers in Gainesville, Braselton and Winder.

935
patient
encounters

3,791
peer
follow-ups

“Since the CARES program came to NGHS, this population of patients now have a voice and special people who understand how to help them. That is a huge win for the patients and their families and our community. I am a mother with firsthand knowledge of how addiction affects people. My son is a person living in long-term recovery, and I couldn’t be prouder of him and how far he has come. As a healthcare provider, I believe in the power of healing. I have seen, firsthand, that people are capable of being productive members of society.”

NGHS Nurse and Mom



Peer Recovery Support

Hospital Peer Recovery Coaching

Providing peer support within hospital settings provides a unique opportunity to cultivate relationships among medical staff and individuals living in long term recovery. These relationships play a vital role in decreasing the stigma that prevents many individuals from seeking help before the negative impacts of an individual's substance use disorder are realized. The benefits of individuals finding and maintaining recovery include less financial strain on the medical and justice systems; becoming contributing members of society; societal, community and family stability.

CARES in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)



This program connects parents with infants in neonatal intensive care units to peer support services. Substance-using parents often do not access, engage in, and complete treatment or participate in recovery support services.

We are on a mission to change that, by reducing stigma, providing hope, and offering connection.

This year, we saw moms and families show an incredible amount of resiliency. Despite limited family visitation in the NICU due to COVID-19, moms were continuing to show up for their infants while also engaging in the recovery process through CARES peer support.

As a result, mothers were connected to resources they needed, including inpatient treatment, medication assisted treatment, clothing and more.

255

encounters in
the NICU

1,847

peer follow-ups

Thank you

to those who partnered with us in 2021

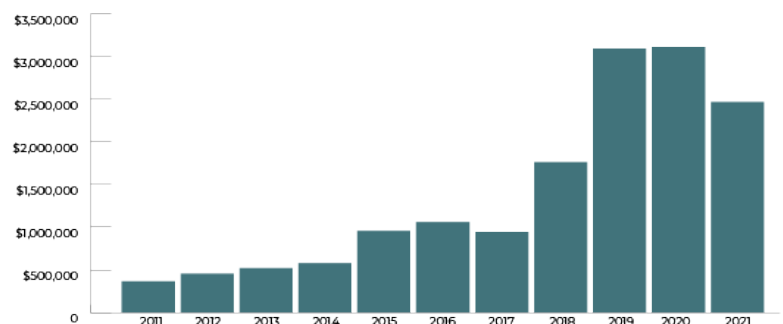
- Addiction Alliance of Georgia
- Advent Health Murray
- American Counseling Association of Georgia
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention – Georgia
- Athens Piedmont Regional
- Atlanta Harm Reduction
- Augusta University
- Cartersville Medical Center
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Center for Pan Asian Community Services
- Community Health Care Systems
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)
- Department of Community Supervision
- Department of Family and Children Services
- Douglas Baby Steps Recovery Program
- Dr. James Paul Seale, MD
- East Georgia Helth Care Center
- Emory Centers
- Emory University Healthcare
- Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
- Family Connections of Georgia
- Family Treatment Court of Hall County
- Floridians For Recovery
- Floyd County Medical Center
- Georgia Addiction Counselors Association
- Georgia Association of Community Service Boards
- Georgia Association of Recovery Residencies
- Georgia Communities Working Group on Addiction and Recovery
- Georgia Department of Public Health
- Georgia General Assembly Working Group on Addiction and Recovery
- Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network
- Georgia Mental Health Policy Partnership
- Georgia Overdose Prevention
- Georgia School of Addiction Studies
- Georgia Statewide Opioid Task Force
- Georgians For A Healthy Future
- Hall County DFCS
- Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation
- ICF.com (Inner City Fund)
- Imagine Hope
- Jefferson Hospital
- Kennesaw State University Center for Young Adult Addiction and Recovery
- Kia Plant - West Point Georgia
- Learning Curve Consultants
- Medlink Federally Qualified Health Center
- Mental Health America of Georgia
- Metaphorically Speaking
- NAMI – Georgia
- Navicent Health
- Northeast Georgia Health System
- Opioid Treatment Providers of Georgia
- Optum Health Foundation
- Phoebe Putney Hospital
- Piedmont Newnan Hospital
- Tendercare Clinic
- The Carter Center
- The Center for Victims of Torture
- University of Georgia

Georgia Department of Education:

- Berkmar High School
- Bibb Foothills Charter
- Central High School
- Clarkston High School
- Coastal Pines Technical College
- Columbia County Alternative School
- Columbia District Office
- Columbia Middle School
- Columbia Virtual Academy
- Evans High School
- Foothills Charter High School
- Foothills Charter High School, Walton Campus
- Foothills Charter School, Madison County
- Foothills Charter School, Social Circle Site
- Forest Park High School
- Frederick Douglass High School
- Gilmer High School
- Greene Foothills
- Grovetown High School
- Harlem High School
- Josey High School
- Lakeside High School
- Lee Arrendale High School
- Mountain Education Charter
- Murray County Schools
- NGARESA
- North Clayton High School
- Pleasant Valley Innovative
- Southwest High School
- Stone Mountain High School
- Towers High School
- Twigg's High School

Financial Growth Through the Years

GCSA is extremely grateful for all of our financial support. Whether the funding comes from a government agency to support one of our large programs, or from an individual who donates in order to support a virtual support group, we are truly appreciative. Each dollar we receive is put to good use and it is our goal to be an excellent steward of all contributions. We also recognize that there are many worthy causes that need financial backing and recovery from substance use disorders is just one of many. As you can see by our steady growth over the past 10 years, many others feel the same way.



The impact of recovery increases as our financial support grows, and together we are creating healthier and safer communities.

Hope

“On Friday, I will have 11 ½ months, almost a year. Before this, nothing ever worked... I just never believed it would happen for me. But the day I met you, I heard the word ‘hope.’ Finding you and your organization in that emergency room... connecting with people who were like me on the warm line.
You all gave me hope.”

At GCSA, these stories are not uncommon. We see everyday the reality of hope at the hands of genuine connection that stands opposite of addiction.

Now, as we go forth and continue our mission of providing education, advocacy, training and peer support services to provide hope and connection to communities across Georgia, we acknowledge this would not be possible without your support. To our generous donors, invested community members, like-minded grantmakers, and most of all, the individuals we are fortunate to serve, thank you.

We are guided by the belief, value and principle that through many pathways of self-directed care, recovery is possible for everyone.

**Because of you, last year, over 100,000 people in Georgia heard that message.
This coming year, we hope to reach even more.**

We look forward to the year ahead with courage and commitment as we bring the message of recovery to the people, family and communities who will be transformed as a result.

Thank you for your support.

You can donate to GCSA by visiting gasubstanceabuse.org/donate-to-gcsa