



*helping people grow and recover*



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



# sharing a vision.

Unison envisions healthy, vibrant, caring communities where all persons have the opportunity to live productive, meaningful lives.

**To make this vision possible,** we create health and wellness in our communities by providing quality mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disability services.



# Message from the CEO



This past year has been marked by workforce recruitment and retention challenges which have severely reduced Unison's capacity to serve our community. That is particularly unfortunate given the evidence that the pandemic has increased the need for mental health services. Unison's response has been to prioritize the preservation of much needed services as far as possible by raising compensation to match the market, and to apply for grants to sustain and expand services. That effort, however, has brought other financial challenges because

reimbursement rates have not kept up with the ever-increasing cost of providing care. With the help of COVID relief funding, Unison was fortunate to end FY2021 with a positive margin and to have built up cash reserves to cover more than 50 days of operations.

**Throughout the pandemic, Unison has remained committed to providing quality care and to using data to demonstrate our accountability to clients, the wider community and to payers.** As in previous years, Unison's client satisfaction scores on benchmarked surveys were consistently better than Georgia and National benchmarks. Although our staff turnover rate has increased it remains lower than the CSB average, possibly due to our efforts at providing a supportive work environment. Accordingly, Unison was again a top performer compared to other Georgia CSBs on the anonymous organizational climate survey conducted annually by the CSB Association. **Our**

**CARF accreditation survey conducted in the fall of 2020 also confirmed the high quality of Unison's services and operations.**

Unison conducts regular community needs assessments, which in recent years have indicated the need to increase mental health and addictive disease services in the City of Douglas and Coffee County. Up to now, expansion has been constrained by Unison's relatively small clinic in Douglas. To expand capacity, Unison partnered with the City of Douglas in a successful application for a Community Development Block Grant which will fund the construction of a brand new clinic for adults and allow the existing facility to be used exclusively for children and adolescents. Construction of the new clinic should be completed by late summer in 2022.

**In an initiative that should greatly improve the quality and range of services to our**

**communities, Unison has spent much of 2021 preparing to transition to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC).** A CCBHC is a federal designation which sets standards for access to and quality of services, and offers funding to support these enhancements. Unison has revised policies and procedures and applied for grant funding to prepare for this eventual transition.

**As we approach the end of 2021, I want to announce some forthcoming leadership changes.**

I will retire as CEO at the end of December 2021, and the Board has selected Tiffany Henderson to be the new CEO from January 2022. Tiffany has demonstrated outstanding clinical leadership as Unison's Clinical Director and has proved to be a thoughtful and insightful manager. She will be replaced as Clinical Director by Viva Steed, also with a long record of managerial success at Unison. I wish to thank Kevin Rodgers, Unison's Director of Developmental Disability Services, for his years of successful service as he approaches well-earned retirement

from the end of December 2021. He will be replaced by Belydia McCarty who has for many years successfully managed Unison's developmental disability services in Bacon County.

**Going forward, Unison is very fortunate to have a strong and experienced management team and committed Board Members to set strategy and guide policy.**

I particularly wish to thank Eugene Dyal for continuing to serve as our Board Chair, Carlos Nelson for serving as Vice-Chair, Lowell Williamson for representing Unison on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Association of CSBs, and Bob Porter for wise and experienced legal counsel. Finally, I would like to recognize the wonderful support that I have received from everyone on the team, and especially from Angie Mock who is a marvelously efficient Executive Assistant.

**Glyn Thomas, Ph.D.**  
*CEO, Unison Behavioral Health*

## OUR BOARD

Atkinson County  
**Dr. Calandra Holmes**

Bacon County  
**Ginger Manning**  
**Eugene Dyal, Chair**

Brantley County  
**Len Davis**  
**Selena Strickland**

Charlton County  
**Dr. John Lairsey**

Clinch County  
**Derek Herlocker**

Coffee County  
**Chief Shane Edmisten**  
**JoAnne Lewis, Treasurer**

Pierce County  
**Kristi Mercer**

Ware County  
**Dr. Faye Mathis**  
**Carlos Nelson, Vice-Chair**



# Message from the Board Chairman



As I write this message at the end of 2021, we see a new COVID-19 surge from the Omicron variant beginning to impact our communities in South Georgia. We hope that 2022 will see the pandemic resolving and the restoration of more normal activities. Unison has adapted to the pandemic by implementing rigorous infection controls and selective use of telehealth. As a result of these actions, Unison has slowly been able to restore the services that were so severely restricted early in the pandemic last year. To support this effort, Unison was successful in securing a 2-year grant of just over \$3 million from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to help sustain and restore services that had been impacted by the pandemic.

Currently, though, like other employers, Unison has found that recruitment and retention of key personnel has

become a major obstacle to maintaining services. This is particularly unfortunate given the evidence that the stresses of the pandemic have increased the need for mental health services. Recognizing this problem, the Unison Board approved substantial pay increases for key positions to make Unison more competitive in the market. It is encouraging to learn that recruitment and retention are improving as we near the end of the year.

**Despite COVID-19, in 2021 we have still accomplished a great deal towards our goal of better services for our communities.** A key partner has been the City of Douglas, which with Unison support this year secured a Community Development Block Grant to build a new mental health clinic on existing Unison property in Douglas. This new clinic is due to open in the summer of 2022 and will enable Unison to serve better the communities in Atkinson and Coffee Counties.

I am pleased to report that Unison's efforts to provide quality care were again recognized this year by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities with the Region 5 award for Outstanding Crisis Services in 2021.

**To our Leadership Team and staff, I say a big SPECIAL THANKS for all that**

**you do to serve our communities.**

Dr Glyn Thomas will retire as CEO at the end of this year and over the years has assembled the high-performing team responsible for much of our success. On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank him for his years of service. **The board has selected Tiffany Henderson (currently Clinical Director) to be the new CEO, and I wish to assure her of the Board's support as she leads Unison forward into the New Year.**

I also wish to recognize the Unison Board members who have worked together to set policy and support the management team. I particularly wish to thank Patricia Roberts who announced her retirement at the end of 2021 as the longest serving member of Unison's Board of Directors, and Lowell Williamson who plans to retire in January 2022 for his dedication and past service as Unison's Board Chair and Vice Chair, and President and Vice-President of the Georgia Association of CSBs.

It is with the spirit of loving the ones that need our help that we all continue to serve and press forward to always reach for the GREATER GOOD for all the clients we serve. I believe it is a SPECIAL calling to be willing to serve those with special needs. **GO UNISON!**

*Eugene Dyal*

*Chairman, Unison Board of Directors*

# What We Do



*everyone deserves a  
chance to live their best.*

Unison Behavioral Health provides a wide-range of community-based behavioral health services for individuals of all ages who struggle with difficulties at work, home, or at school.

Services are available for adults and youth with emotional problems, psychiatric emergencies or mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression. Developmental Disability Services include residential programs, community access group programs, pre-vocational training, job coaching and placement.

## OUR SERVICES

24/7 Crisis Stabilization Unit

Medical Detox Program

Individual, Group, and Family  
Outpatient Counseling

Peer Support

Psychiatric and Medication  
Services

Day Treatment

Hospital Alternative Programs

Pre-Vocational Training  
and Skills Training

Transitional and Supported  
Employment

School-based Services

Case Management

Accountability Court Services

Home-based Services

Advocacy

Residential Programs

Addictive Disease Residential  
Treatment Program

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

23-Hour Temporary Observation Unit

ROOTS: After School and Summer  
Youth Services

*working to enrich lives  
& strengthen communities.*



## What We Provide

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIVE DISEASE SERVICES**

to help persons move forward on the path of recovery.

### **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

helping persons with disabilities succeed in the workplace.

**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY  
SERVICES** helping persons live to the fullest extent of their abilities.

**HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL  
SERVICES** that help persons with disabilities find safe, affordable places to live.



# Annual Numbers



**11,521**  
therapy sessions



**49,916**  
services in  
community

**7,195**  
evaluations



**17,714**  
physician  
services



**32,273**  
Residential  
Services



**25,287**  
prescriptions  
filled



**47,638**  
Developmental/  
Disability Services



**16,303**  
nursing  
services



**5,442**  
group  
sessions



**5,854**  
crisis  
services

# my recovery story



I started my use of drugs and alcohol in middle school and continued for another 20 years after high school. I learned to take care of myself. I was never very close to my family; I was on my own aside from the small friendships and relationships I had. I enjoyed my life. It was full and exciting. I had many friends and I was never bored. I didn't realize until much later that these friendships and relationships only had one thing in common and that was alcohol. **I told myself for a long time that I didn't have a problem.** I was maintaining life and my job and I was fine. I was not addicted to anything and I could stop whenever I wanted to. However, the love that I had for alcohol would eventually consume me and it would ultimately cause depression, anxiety, and hatred for myself that I never thought would change. I thought I was worthless; I did not deserve love and I would die a wasted human being. I let alcohol take over my personality. I would numb my senses and tell myself that everything was fine.

In the beginning, alcohol gave me confidence, courage, and turned me into a person that people loved and wanted to be around. And it was legal; I could walk into any store and get it. I started to drink every day. Everything I did involved alcohol. **When I finally knew I might have a problem, I did not know how to stop.** If I didn't drink, I felt awful and when I did drink, I felt great but that feeling was overshadowed by depression and loneliness. I just wanted things to be over.

There wasn't any certain reason for my drug and alcohol use. Maybe childhood trauma, low self-esteem and just wanting to fit in. I started self-medicating at an early age, and forgot who I was. Alcohol use was something I thought I could control but I finally lost that control, and I began to drink alone. The social drinker I had been no longer existed. I wanted to be left

alone. Hangovers became more frequent, and they began to affect my work performance. I felt as though I could not maintain life. My addiction held supremacy over my life.

One day, after many failed attempts at trying to break my habit, I stopped glamorizing alcohol use and I stopped identifying myself with it. I stopped and told myself: **"You are much more than this thing that has taken over your persona. You do not need it. You can be happy without it".** I was ready to quit. So when I was jailed for driving under the influence and given a chance to enter therapy at Unison, I gladly took that chance. With the help of therapy and medication, I am now 2 years sober.

**It has not been easy, but therapy has helped me tremendously. Unison practices unconditional positive regard and I don't feel ashamed or scared to talk about anything that I might be feeling or thinking.** I am happy with the decision I made to get sober, although some days drinking is all I think about. Those are the days I stop and think about all the mental and physical pain my dependency has caused, and how much happier I am without it. Regardless of how things went, I do not have any regrets; I have made many mistakes, ruined relationships, friendships, wasted a ton of money on bar tabs, and spent more than I would like to admit in court costs, fines, and bailing myself out of jail. I think everything turned out exactly as it was supposed to. **After dulling my senses with alcohol for such a long time, I am finally awake. And I will continue to work hard to maintain that sobriety.**

# In Their Own Words

## **I have been coming to Unison for 2 years.**

I like Unison because I like when we do things like activities and when me and Miss Strickland go on walks. Miss Strickland has helped me with my depression and anger issues by coming up with new coping skills for me. My grades have improved and I am happier. - *Madison*

I like to be here at Unison with all my friends. I like being in class with Mrs. Kia because she is my friend. **We have a good time learning new stuff and making things.** I like the nice staff here. - *Jake*

I like coming because it's fun up here. I like to do stuff like crafts and making things. **I like going out to the park and other places in the community.** The staff are nice and fun so I like seeing all the staff. - *Kadie*

I started going to Unison many, many years ago. I was so lost in depression and many other problems. All I wanted to do was die or hurt myself. I went through points in life to where all I would do is sit in my room in the dark and cry. I was constantly in and out of many psych hospitals. I got put into intense therapy and

eventually the therapy started to work. I began hearing myself laugh again and seeing myself smile again. And I have to say now I am learning a new life. **I smile, laugh and I'm always on the go thanks to Unison working with me and being very understanding of my mental health.** Unison got me to open up to deal with my feelings like nobody ever could. Thank you, Unison, for everything. My life is back on track and going a direction I never thought I would see again. - *Elizabeth*

## **Garden Gate gave me time to stand still, time to focus, and coping skills to fight my inner battles.** - *Tashlya*

*Tashyla is a graduate of Garden Gate, a 6-month residential treatment program of Unison Behavioral Health. Addiction has been a generational struggle in her family for as long as she can remember. Since graduating Tashyla has found and maintained housing, and gained custody of her 3 children! She even has plans to write a book one day. She will rely on attending regular meetings and having a strong support system to keep her on track and focused on her goals. Tashyla is a premier example of a strong, resilient woman in recovery!*





I have enjoyed the change from just having CLS to coming to the center for CAG and moving into Residential. **Everyone is nice and so is the place that I am living.** - KT

Even though I love and miss living with my sister, since moving to the Group Home I feel so safe. **I know there is always someone there if and when I need them.** Having roommates is a bonus. - AP

After being in prison for 33 years, I was having problems adjusting to being out and communication with people, and being in crowds. I was also dealing with anxiety attacks, which was all affecting my relationship with my girlfriend. She told me about getting some counseling. She communicated with my parole officer, who referred me to Unison. Because of Unison I have adjusted, maintained a steady job. My relationship with my girlfriend has grown better. **I recommend anyone to go to Unison if they are having anxiety or having trouble adjusting from one lifestyle to another.** - Roy

**Garden Gate is helping me get my life together. I've learned how to set boundaries, and worked hard on my attitude.** - Mandy

*Mandy has demonstrated positive progress in treatment, making recovery priority in her life! Mandy has gained her first ever employment, and her recovery skills earned her Employee of the Month! Since gaining custody of her daughter, Mandy has shown success in balancing daily responsibilities with rewards of becoming a loving, nurturing mother. Mandy is the first Garden Gate client to move into Transitional Housing and is grateful for the opportunity to gain stability in her life. She will rely on having accountability, attending meetings and working hard to keep her focused on her goals.*

*seeking help.  
finding purpose.*



# 2021 Accomplishments

**Maintained services** under the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency by extensive use of telehealth.

**Maintained financial position** despite the impact of COVID-19 and acute workforce shortages.

**Opened a new group home in Blackshear** (Kerrigan Way), shared by 4 women with intellectual / developmental disabilities.

**Continued phased improvements** to the Garden Gate and St. Illa residential treatment facilities.

Collaborated with the City of Douglas and Coffee County to secure a **Community Development Block Grant to expand currently inadequate behavioral clinics** for those communities. Completion expected in the summer of 2022.

Applied for two federal grants through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In September **SAMHSA awarded us a grant of just over \$3 million over two years to sustain and restore services impacted by the pandemic.** We await the outcome of an application to become a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC).

**Continued vehicle fleet upgrades** in order to maintain safe and reliable transportation by replacing older high mileage vehicles.

**Maintained Employee Assistance Program** for the City of Douglas.

**Maintained an opioid addiction program** with funding from DBHDD to use medication assisted treatment (MAT) combined with counseling groups and case management.

**Maintained infection control practices** for service delivery at the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency, using

telehealth and teleworking where possible to maintain essential services to the community.

Acquired HOCL disinfectant generators and electrostatic sprayers for **rapid sanitizing of facilities and vehicles.**

**Offered MyStrength on-line wellness support** for clients and staff – “a health club for the mind.”

**Provided Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)** for regional law enforcement.

**Provided Mental Health First Aid Training** to local communities.

Partnered with primary care practices to offer **behavioral health assessments and services to the patients.**

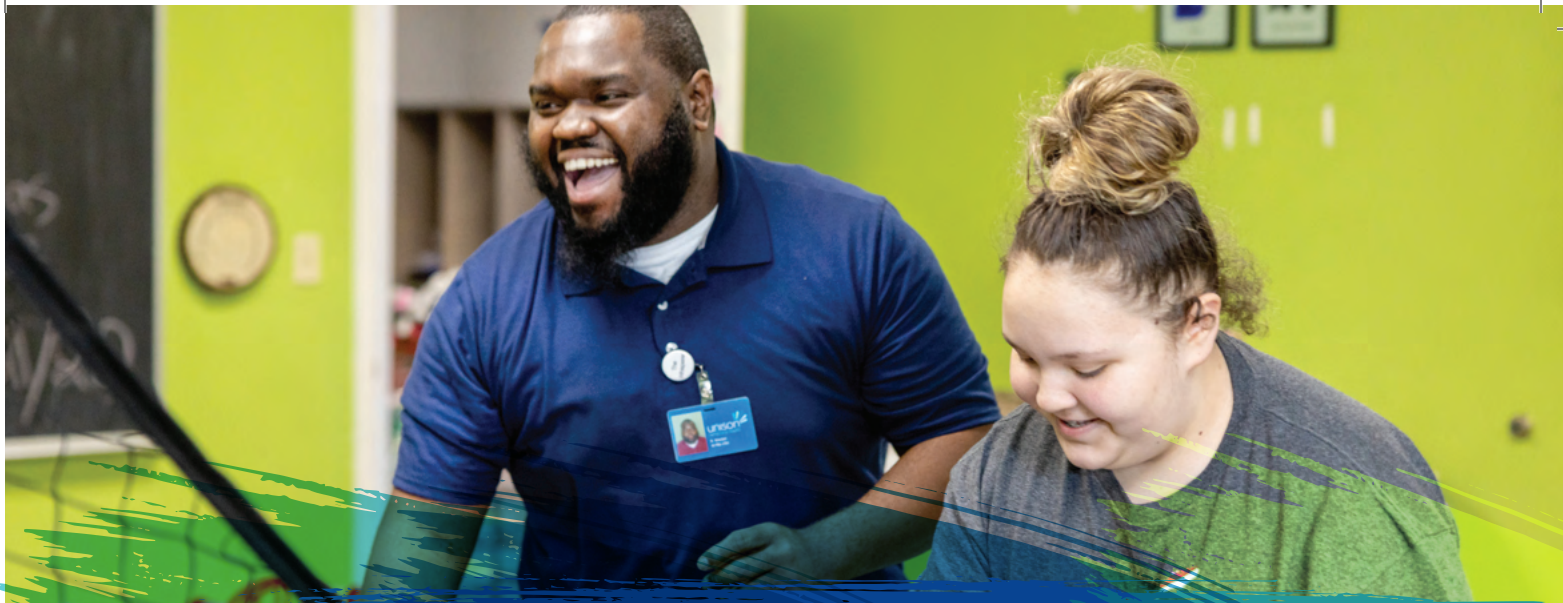
Hosted Regional Community Collaborative video conferences for **shared problem solving around adult mental health and addictive disease services.**

**Supported initiatives to address homelessness** in Brantley, Pierce, and Ware counties (“Okefenokee Alliance for the Homeless – OATH”).

**Supported Family Connection Partnerships in all 8 counties** – serving on the Boards of Brantley and Ware Partnerships and fiscal agent for Pierce.

Initiated the implementation of **new Human Resources and Payroll software** (Ceridian Dayforce) to improve efficiency of these operations.

Initiated a tiered response to workforce recruitment and retention challenges with **bonuses and pay raises for selected mission critical positions.**



*restoring and expanding services.  
meeting the needs of our communities.*





# Fiscal Year 2021

## CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL POSITION

### Revenue

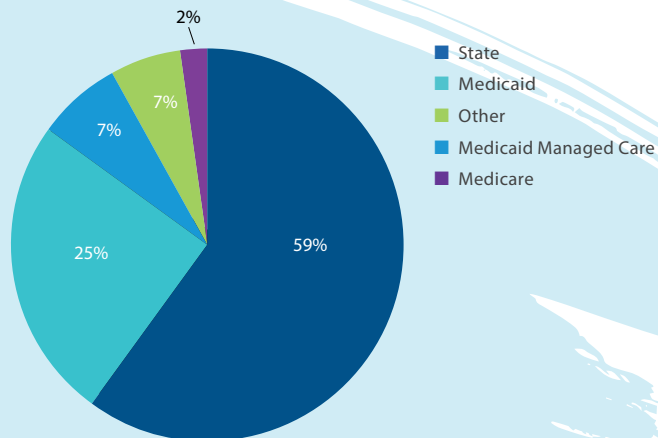
Grant Revenues & Contributions	\$15,150,535
Charges for Services	9,976,315
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>25,126,850</b>

### Expenditures

Salary & Fringe Benefits	\$17,516,124
Other Operating Expenses	6,040,787
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>23,556,911</b>
Increase/(Decrease) in Net Assets	1,569,939
Beginning Balance, Net Assets	3,882,725
<b>Ending Balance, Net Assets</b>	<b>\$5,452,664</b>

### Revenue by Payer

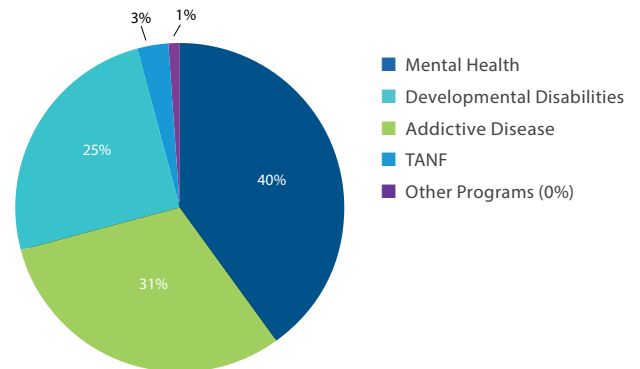
Medicaid	25%
Medicaid Managed Care	7%
Medicare	2%
State	59%
Other	7%



## UNDUPLICATED CLIENTS SERVED: 5,029

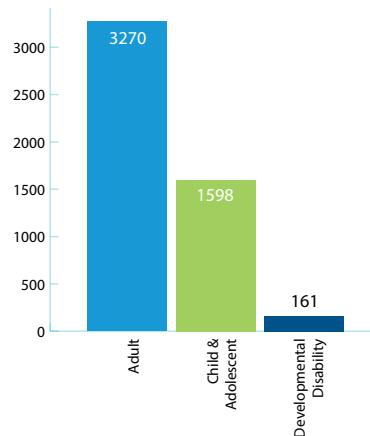
### Expenditure by Program

Mental Health	\$9,401,410	40%
Developmental Disabilities	5,914,784	25%
Addictive Disease	7,255,262	31%
TANF	678,061	3%
Other Programs	307,394	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,556,911</b>	



### Unduplicated Clients Served

Distinct Consumers	Count
Adult	3,270
Child & Adolescent	1,598
Developmental Disability	161
<b>Total Unduplicated Served</b>	<b>5,029</b>



# Client Satisfaction

**Our average client satisfaction for 2021 was higher than both state and national benchmarks.**



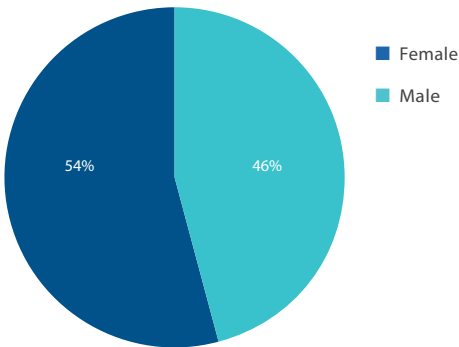
Unison client satisfaction scores are calculated using the % positive responses across various aspects of clients' experiences. The graphs presented here reflect the Unison % positive means in comparison to the mean % positive scores of other Georgia behavioral health providers, as well as the mean positive % scores of such providers across the country.

# Behavioral Health

## UNDUPLICATED CLIENTS SERVED: 4,868

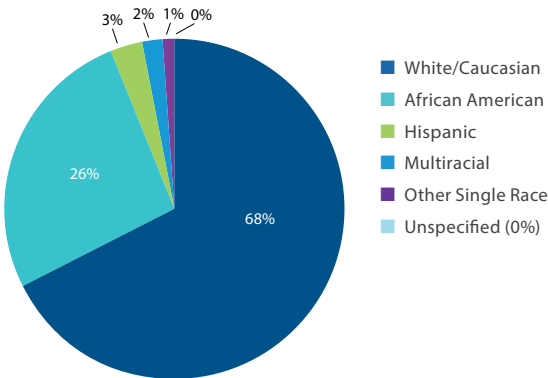
Distinct Consumer

Female	2,627	54%
Male	2,241	46%

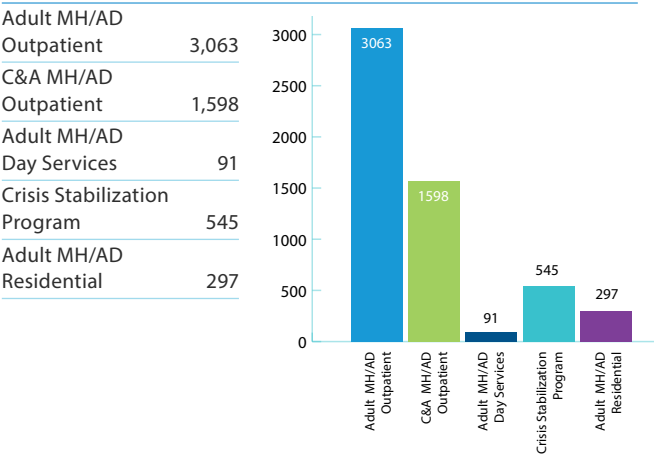


Race/Ethnicity

African American	1,254	26%
Hispanic	151	3%
Multiracial	96	2%
Other Single Race	32	1%
Unspecified	24	0%
White/Caucasian	3,311	68%

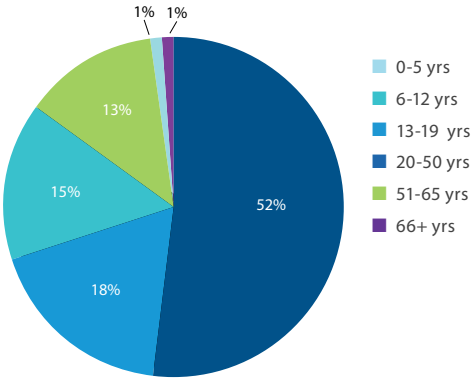


Distinct Consumers by Service



Age Group

0-5 yrs	50	1%
6-12 yrs	753	15%
13-19 yrs	854	18%
20-50 yrs	2,511	52%
51-65 yrs	645	13%
66+ yrs	55	1%



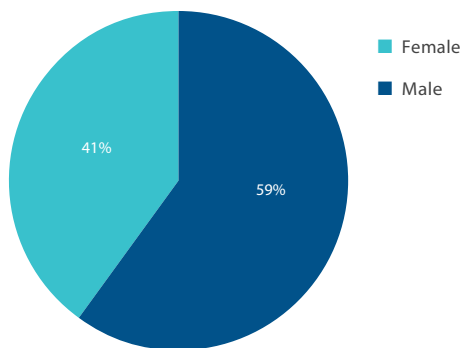


# Developmental Disabilities

## UNDUPLICATED CLIENTS SERVED: 161

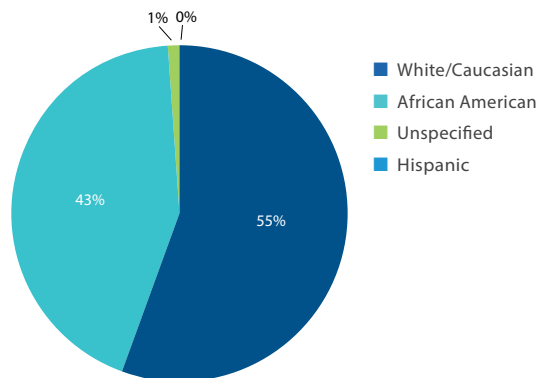
### Distinct Consumer

Female	66	41%
Male	95	59%



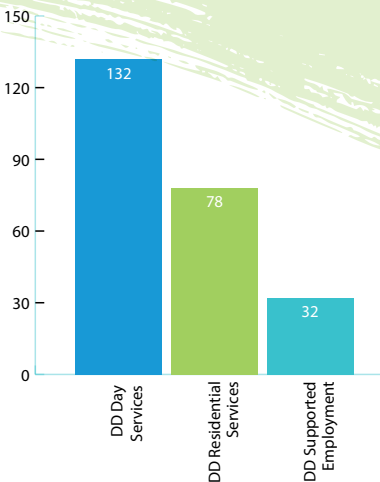
### Race/Ethnicity

African American	71	43%
Hispanic	2	1%
Unspecified	0	0%
White/Caucasian	89	55%



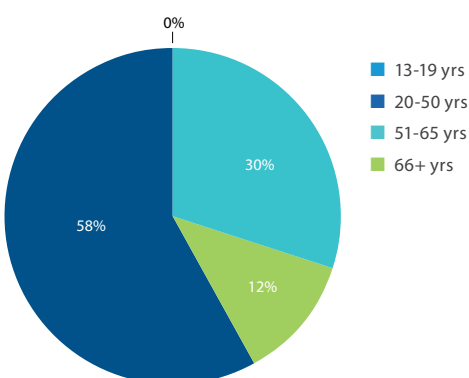
### Distinct Consumers by Service

DD Day Services	132
DD Residential Services	78
DD Supported Employment	32



### Age Group

13-19 yrs	0	0%
20-50 yrs	93	58%
51-65 yrs	49	30%
66+ yrs	19	12%



# Senior Management Team



Tiffany Henderson  
Chief Executive Officer



Melissa Hood  
Chief Operating Officer



Katrina Wheeler, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer



Dr. Kayln Lane  
Medical Director



Laura Fullard  
Director of  
Human Resources



Shonda Miller  
BH Residential Services  
& CSU Director



Belydia McCarty  
Director of Developmental  
Disability Services



Viva Steed  
Behavioral Health  
Clinic Director



Hannah Davis  
Behavioral Health  
Outpatient Director



Angie Mock  
Executive Assistant



Jason Wilkerson  
Quality Improvement  
Manager, CPS



Holly McLeod  
Corporate Compliance  
Officer

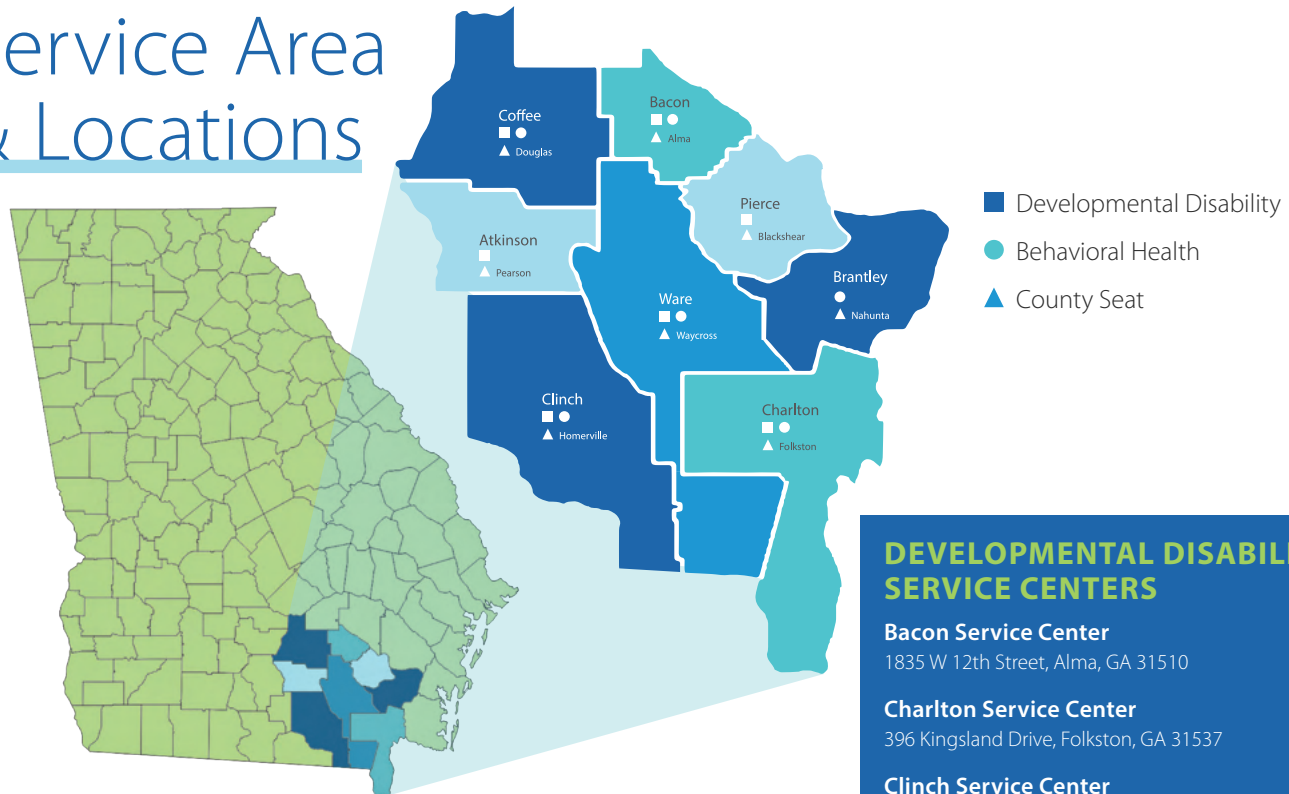


Blake Carter  
IT Director



Dr. Paige Wildes  
Pharmacist

# Service Area & Locations



## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

### Bacon BHS

108 E 5th Street , Alma, GA 31510

### Brantley BHS

434 Bryan Street , Nahunta, GA 31553

### Charlton BHS

396 Kingsland Drive, Folkston, GA 31537

### Clinch BHS

551 Old Pearson Road , Homerville, GA 31634

### Coffee BHS

1005 Shirley Avenue, Douglas, GA 31533

### Garden Gate Residential Treatment Center

852 Tiffany Lane, Waycross, GA 31503

### ROOTS Youth Resiliency Clubhouse

310 Williams Street, Waycross, GA 31503

### St. Illa Crisis Stabilization Unit

3455 Harris Road, Waycross, GA 31503

### BH Supported Employment

506 Brunel Street, Waycross GA 31503

### Supported Living

3455 Harris Road, Waycross, GA 31503

### Ware BHS

1007 Mary Street, Waycross, GA 31503

### Ware Child and Adolescent Services

1003 Mary Street, Waycross, GA 31503

### Ware Day Services

506 Brunel Street, Waycross GA 1503

### Waycross Accountability Court

800 Church Street, 216B, Waycross, GA 31501

## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICE CENTERS

### Bacon Service Center

1835 W 12th Street, Alma, GA 31510

### Charlton Service Center

396 Kingsland Drive, Folkston, GA 31537

### Clinch Service Center

551 Old Pearson Road, Homerville, GA 31634

### Coffee Service Center

920 W College Park Drive, Douglas, GA 31533

### Ware Service Center

3201 Harris Road, Waycross, GA 31503

## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

### Bacon County

Cypress Hill Group Home

### Coffee County

Northwood Group Home | Peachtree Group Home

### Pierce County

Camellia Group Home | Oakwood Group Home  
Kerrigan Way Group Home



I NeVeR ThOUGHT I  
WouLd GeT CLEAN!

But Here I Am

KILLINg It!



  
unison  
behavioral health

we believe in you.

[unisonbehavioralhealth.com](http://unisonbehavioralhealth.com) 

contact us : 800.342.8168

1007 mary street • P.O. Box 1397 • waycross, georgia 31503



Unison is nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and is supported with public and private funds.