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THE GEORGIA APEX PROGRAM: SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

OVERVIEW

Over the course of the 2015–2016 school year, the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families, provided funding to 29 community mental health providers throughout the state to build capacity and infrastructure for school-based mental health services.

SCHOOL BASED MENTAL HEALTH FRAMEWORK

Most students can have their needs met through universal supports and services (Level 1), like Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). About 7-10% of students will need more targeted services that can be met with early intervention services, like groups for at-risk youth and targeted prevention services (Level 2). However, about 3-5% of students have a higher level of need that requires clinical intervention (Level 3). The Georgia Apex Program was designed to increase engagement for these students by locating behavioral health providers in schools.

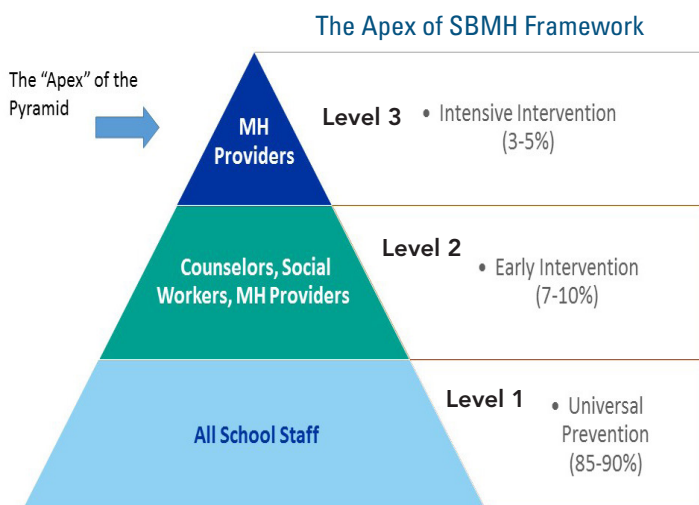
PROGRAM GOALS



Detection: Provide early detection of child and adolescent behavioral health needs

Access: Improve access to mental health services for children and youth

Coordination: Sustain increased coordination between Georgia's community mental health providers and local schools/schools districts in their service areas



School-based mental health programs lead to a variety of positive outcomes for students, their families, and their schools. The programs are shown to have positive, school-wide effects on school climate and mental health stigma, and to integrate well with both school-based health centers and PBIS.

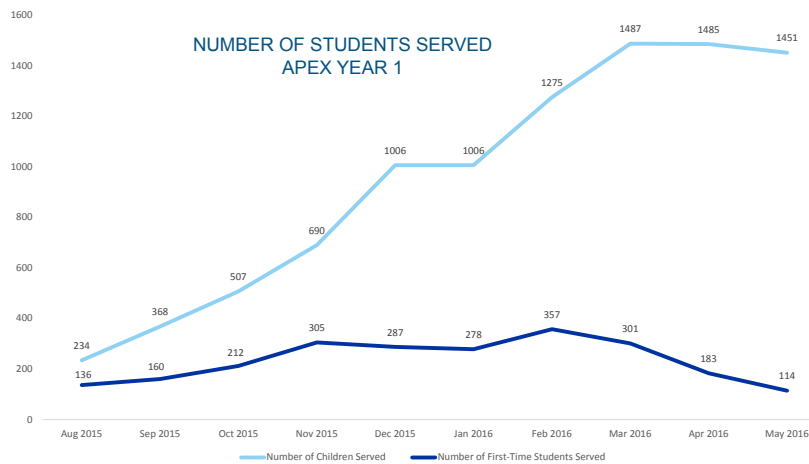
Benefits of SBMH Programs



Adapted from: Bieber B, Hotchkiss & Palmer, B. (2007). A Guide to School Mental Health Services. Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education.

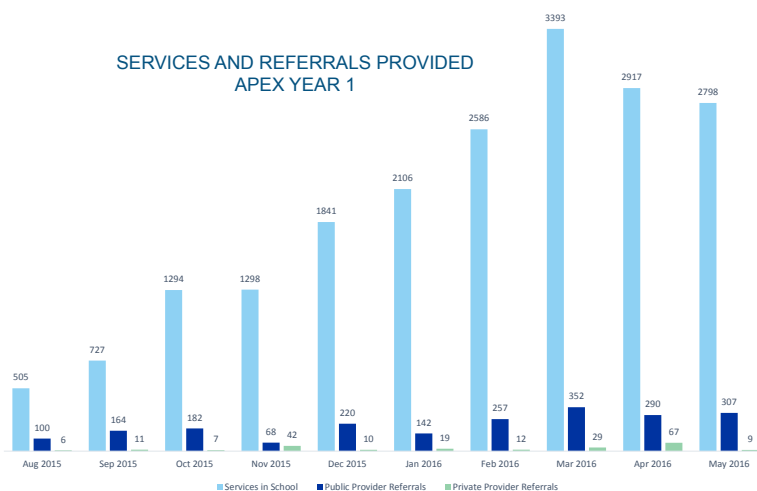
THE GEORGIA APEX PROGRAM IMPACT

The 29 community mental health providers administering Apex programs began serving 104 schools in August 2015, increasing to 136 schools by May 2016, the end of the first school year. The program served more than 900 students per month, on average. Over the first year, the program increased access to care for more than 2,400 students who had not previously received behavioral health services. As of December 2016 (mid-point, second year), Apex programs were operating in over 170 schools and served an average of over 1,800 students per month. In total, 3,809 students had been referred for services for the first time.



Over the course of the first year, the Georgia Apex Program provided more than 10,000 service encounters. The vast majority of services were provided in the school setting. Some students were referred to community providers, while a very small number were sent to private providers.

SERVICES AND REFERRALS PROVIDED APEX YEAR 1



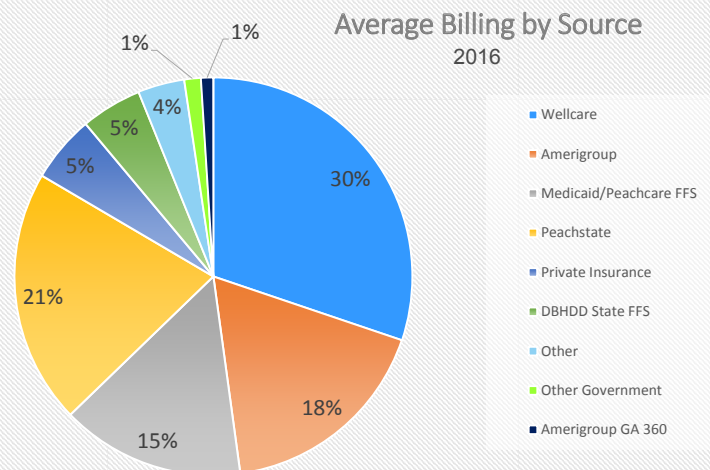
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A key to building a sustainable school-based mental health program is having the ability to bill for services. Apex funding gave providers the ability to build their infrastructure and set up billing practices while getting up and running. Some Apex programs are already sustainable, with many expanding during the second year of the grant.

Apex providers were able to bill for 75-90% of the students they served each month.

(Includes Wellcare, Amerigroup, Medicaid/Peachcare FFS & Peachstate).



By December 2016, the Georgia Apex Program served 170 schools reaching each of the six DBHDD regions and 51 counties.

