

# Overview: 2026 Fiscal Year Budget for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

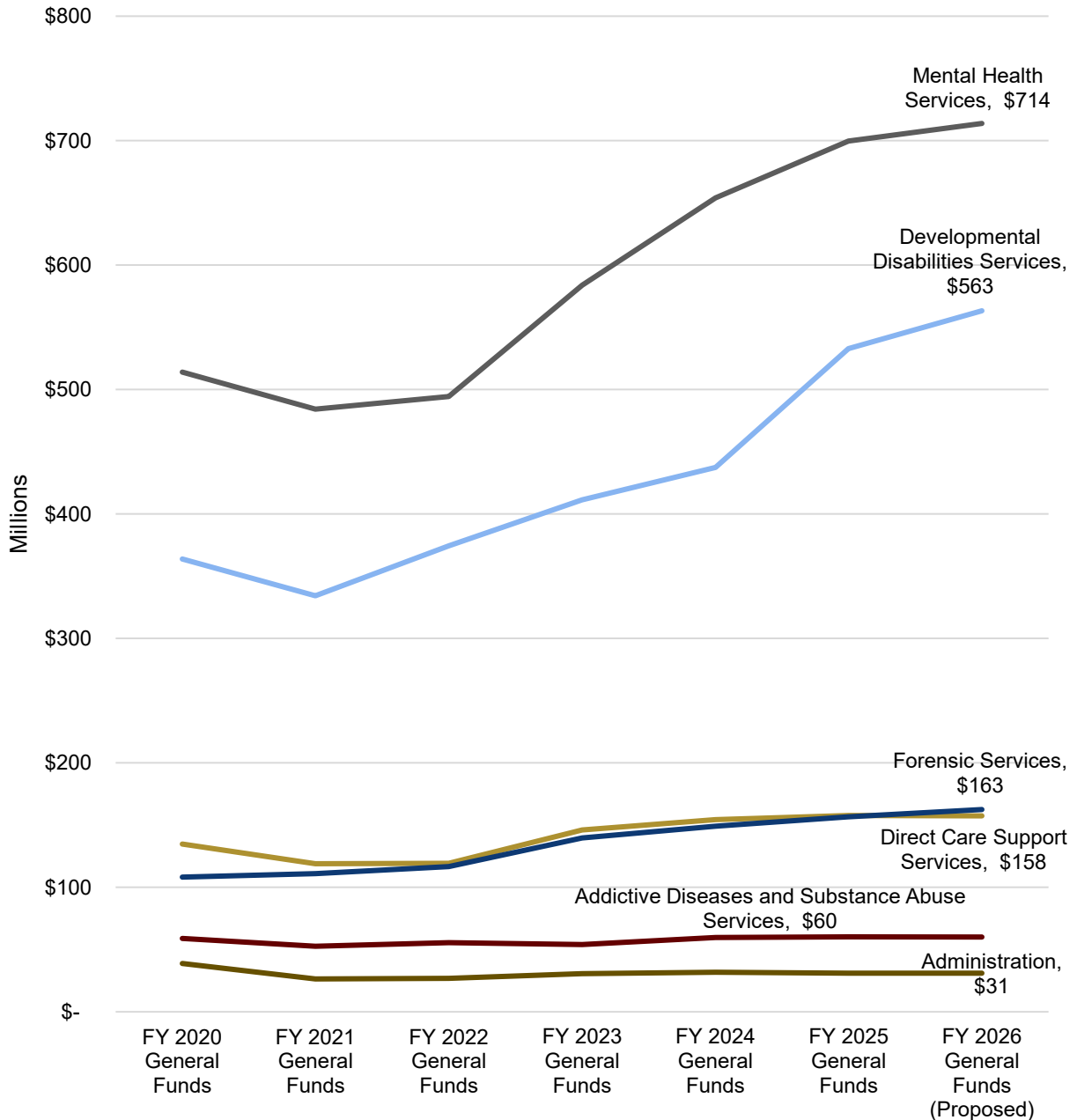
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## Introduction

Among a range of duties, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities operates five state psychiatric hospitals, provides evaluation and treatment for individuals under the jurisdiction of the court system to determine their competency to stand trial and provides community-based services to Georgians living with mental health conditions, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities. Governor Kemp's proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget proposal provides the Department with **\$1.7 billion in state funds**. The proposal increases the Department's state funding by almost \$50 million, or 3%, above the FY 2025 budget. More than half of the proposed state funding increase annualizes waivers slots to support home- and community-based services for Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities and increases compensation for their providers.

State general funds for mental health and developmental disabilities services for children and adults have grown since FY 2020. Developmental disability services, which have grown by 55% since FY 2020, experienced the largest increase. In contrast, addictive diseases and substance abuse services have remained relatively stagnant with only a 1% increase over that same time. Georgia and various local governments are slated to receive about \$638 million over the next 18 years due to settlements of lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies and others involved in distribution and sales of prescription opioids. The Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust was created to receive Georgia's portion of those funds. Organizations can apply for those funds through a competitive application process; the first awardees were announced in 2024.<sup>1</sup> While these funds represent a crucial opportunity to address addiction prevention, treatment and recovery, they do not replace long-term investment of state general fund dollars.

**General Fund Appropriations Over Time by Budget Category,  
DBHDD, FY2020 – FY 2026 (Proposed)**



Source: Governor's Budget Report FY2026 and AFY2025; Office of Planning and Budget's Budget in Briefs FY 2005 – 2025.

## Budget Highlights

### *Fiscal Year 2026 Budget*

- **\$31 million increase** to expand home- and community-based services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
  - **\$26.7 million increase** to annualize provider rate increases recommended by NOW/COMP waiver provider rate study
    - Paying providers a living wage has been a primary barrier to filling additional waiver slots<sup>2</sup>
  - **\$4.7 million increase** to annualize the cost of 100 existing slots and add 100 more slots for the NOW/COMP waiver program
    - As of 2024, there were still more than 7,000 people on the planning list awaiting services<sup>3</sup>
- **\$12.5 million increase** to annualize the provider rates increase recommended by the Community Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services provider rate study
- **\$4.8 million increase** to operationalize forensic units, which support evaluation and treatment for individuals who are under the jurisdiction of the Superior and State Courts of Georgia, at Georgia Regional Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility (Atlanta), West Central Georgia Regional Hospital (Columbus), and Central State Hospital (Milledgeville)
- **\$3.1 million increase** to annualize operations of the Macon Crisis Stabilization and Diagnostic Center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- **\$1.8 million increase** to annualize operations of the new Gateway Child and Adolescent Crisis Stabilization Unit (Savannah)
- **\$1 million increase** to annualize jail-based competency restoration program pilot (Dodge County), which provides mental health treatment and other services to individuals charged with a crime but found by a court to be incompetent to stand trial

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust. (n.d.) *About the funds*.  
<https://www.gaopioidtrust.org/about-opioid-settlement/>

<sup>2</sup> Tanner, K. (2024). *Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities budget overview* [Testimony for Joint Appropriations Committee starting at 1 hour and 17 minutes]. <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8988927?video=905727322>

<sup>3</sup> Tanner, K. (2024). *Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities budget overview* [PowerPoint slides]. [https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/document/docs/default-source/house-budget-and-research-office-document-library/2024-joint-budget-hearings/wednesday-presentations/dbhdd\\_2024\\_joint\\_budget\\_presentationf1776c4b230148b8b872066849b188bc.pdf?sfvrsn=d476244f\\_2](https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/document/docs/default-source/house-budget-and-research-office-document-library/2024-joint-budget-hearings/wednesday-presentations/dbhdd_2024_joint_budget_presentationf1776c4b230148b8b872066849b188bc.pdf?sfvrsn=d476244f_2)