NASMHPD National Dialogues on Behavioral Health

Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Health: Impact on the Workforce

Commissioner Kevin Tanner
Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities



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The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities is a $2 billion state agency, leading Georgia's efforts in prevention and behavioral health crisis response. As the state's safety-net provider, DBHDD delivers mental health care, substance use treatment, and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities across Georgia.



Challenges DBHDD is Facing

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Staffing Challenges

- The Department faces a 34.5% turnover rate (July 2021–June 2022), well above the state average of 25%.
- State hospitals experienced a net loss of over 1,200 employees (January 2020–June 2022), creating gaps in behavioral health and developmental disabilities services.
- Current reliance on contracted staff costs $1.6M/week, primarily for nursing staff, a costly supplement for workforce needs.

Increased Demand for Services

- Georgia is expected to need 8 new crisis facilities over the next decade to meet growing needs.
- DBHDD experienced a 16.7% increase in forensic hospital admissions from FY 2025 – FY 2026.
- More than 830 individuals awaiting admission for restoration services (Oct. 2026).
- Wait times for admission ranges from 415 for males and 475 for females.

Our Strategy: AI as a Force Multiplier

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FIVE-YEAR PLAN

A longer-term roadmap for technology and operational modernization.

FIND THE BOTTLENECKS

Target high-volume, repetitive work and hard-to-staff functions.

HUMAN EXPERTISE FIRST

Use AI to assist professionals—not replace their decisions.

AI to Enhance Enterprise-Wide Operations

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Enterprise AI Strategy	Employee Productivity	Clinical Oversight & Prevention	Systems & Case Management
Integrating AI into DBHDD's core strategic pillars and five-year modernization plan.	Piloting ChatGPT and exploring AI-assisted HR, policy and administrative support.	Testing AI alerts to identify clinical risks and support earlier intervention for individuals with IDD.	Exploring AI capabilities for Human Resources requests, agency policy management software, and case management workflows.

USE CASE 1 | Violence Risk Assessments

Using AI to organize extensive clinical records while preserving professional judgment

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THE CHALLENGE

600–700 pages of clinical records

6–8 hours per annual inpatient assessment

Manual review of progress notes, diagnoses, medications and assessments.

THE AI OPPORTUNITY

Closed-system AI consolidates information into a structured draft summary.

- Medication history and changes
- Diagnoses and clinical assessments
- Progress notes and treatment records

GOALS: Less record gathering, more consistent documentation, and more time for clinical analysis

USE CASE 2 | Death Investigations

Using AI-assisted drafting to accelerate reporting and improve consistency

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THE CHALLENGE

74 days

Current investigation time cycles

- DOJ mandate to shorten community and hospital investigations
- Manual document review and report drafting
- Multiple levels of review and extend completion time

THE AI OPPORTUNITY

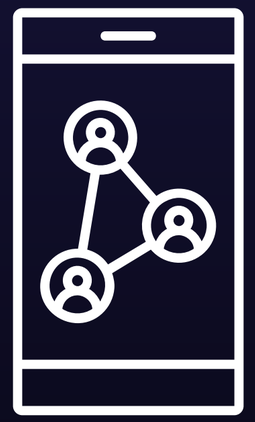
AI-Assisted Report Drafting

- Generate initial investigation report drafts from collected information
- Reduce staff hours spent on manual drafting
- Standardize report structure and content
- Retain investigator review and responsibility for findings

TARGET: 30 DAYS 44 fewer days | Approximately 59% shorter cycle time

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