

# **NECESSITY OF RESTORATION OF FUNDS FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**

Supported employment provides opportunities for people with severe disabilities to have meaningful and competitive paid employment in the community. People with severe mental illness can recover with treatment, earn wages, and pay into the tax system rather than draw from it. **Work is an essential part of recovery; for people with mental illness, loss of support means loss of jobs.**

A person receiving supported employment services said, "They helped me to turn my life around. They were with me every step of the way...all the way through to finding and keeping my job. Who would believe I could do all of this?"

## **Governor Perdue's Mental Health Service Delivery**

**Commission Final Report** (12-4-08) noted that *if all available funding sources are not used for maximum impact, individuals with mental illness will have a devastating impact on the state's basic infrastructure.* Although the report included the recommendation that supported employment programs should be developed statewide to work jointly with other needed services, the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, & Addictive Diseases decided to cut 100% of state appropriated dollars to mental health supported employment programs.

**Elimination of state funds for supported employment services for people with mental illness will cost the state of Georgia much more than it will save.**

- . In Georgia, nearly 1 ¾ million people experience mental health disorders in a given year.
- . 75,000 have schizophrenia,
- . 180,000 have bipolar disorder,
- . 463,000 have depressive disorders,
- . 312,704 have anxiety disorders, and,
- . 29,369 have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.

## **Homelessness**

- . 31% of people using homeless shelters report having a combination of mental health disorders – 6200 Georgians in January, 2008.
- . **Costs of homelessness:**

*poor development for children  
uninsured medical treatment  
public safety, sanitation and litter control  
emergency housing and supportive services  
crisis services and inpatient hospitalization  
lost wages for those who could work if provided supported  
employment and other services.*

Hospital care for homeless individuals with mental illness:

- . At least \$3.8 million In 2005 in Clarke County
- . Probably more than \$200,000,000 statewide

Fifteen per cent of county jail inmates and 15.5 % of state prison inmates have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness and many of these individuals are also addicted to drugs.

**Sadly, Georgia's per capita spending is now less than ½ the national state average for care of those with mental illness.**

***GAPSE: The Network on Employment promotes mainstream employment for people with disabilities through supported & other customized employment services for individuals and their employers.***

***For more information:***

***GAPSE: 850 College Station Road, Athens, GA 30602***

***1-866-248-4764***

**[www.gapsenetwork.com](http://www.gapsenetwork.com)**