

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL – REGION 4

County Board of Health Representative

Recommended by the Georgia Department of Public Health

John (Jack) Paulson

Board of Health (Lanier County)



John (Jack) Paulson has been serving in the health and public safety sector since 2001 in roles ranging from volunteer firefighter to flight paramedic. As a paramedic who deals hands on with the opioid epidemic daily, Paulson has a deep understanding of the current needs and processes deployed. Paulson currently works full-time as EMS District Commander for South Georgia Medical Center Health and is also the Lanier County Volunteer Fire Chief. Additionally, Paulson serves as the Vice Chair of the Lanier County Board of Health and as Parliamentarian for the Region 8 EMS Advisory Council. Paulson also takes a special interest in literacy and workforce development serving on both the Lanier County Library Board and Lakeland-Lanier County New Direction Commission.

Community Service Board Representative

Recommended by the Georgia Association of Community Service Boards

Dana Glass, LCSW

Chief Executive Officer

Albany Area Community Service Board / Aspire Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Services (serving Baker, Calhoun, Dougherty, Early, Lee, Miller, Terrell and Worth counties)



Dana Glass, LCSW, serves as Chief Executive Officer for Aspire Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Services in Southwest Georgia. She joined Aspire BHDD Services in August 2014 in Utilization Management and Billing. In 2016, she was promoted to Chief Clinical Officer where she supervised, managed, and directed the clinical/social service activities of mental health and addictive disease services in an 8-county geographical service area. By January 2019, Dana was promoted to Deputy Director for the organization and then to Chief Executive Officer in June 2019.

Glass is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with over 20 years of clinical experience serving a broad range of diverse populations from children and adolescents to the geriatric population in rural South Georgia. Her previous professional experience includes work in child welfare with the State of Georgia, clinical external reviews, as well as management and direct care experience in behavioral health and addictive disease settings. She also enjoys being at the forefront of new program implementation and service delivery. When asked what she loves most about her job, Glass shared, "I feel that one of the greatest opportunities we have as a Community Service Board is the opportunity to lift others up. This includes staff and the individuals we serve! By encouraging staff to use their gifts and abilities, learn new skills, and allowing them opportunities to demonstrate these, we create an environment that fosters positive outcomes."

Sheriff's Office Representative

Recommended by the Georgia Sheriffs' Association

Gene Scarbrough

Sheriff
Tift County



Before becoming Tift County's 9th Sheriff, Gene Scarbrough served with the Georgia State Patrol (GSP) for 34 years. During his State Patrol career, he became one of the most successful troopers in the United States for drug interdiction, earning him numerous local, state and national awards for his efforts.

Scarbrough retired from the GSP in 2000 and went to work as a contract inspector for Georgia Power until 2012 when he retired to run for Sheriff of Tift County. He was elected Tift County Sheriff in 2012 and will begin serving his 4th term on January 1, 2025.

University System

Karen Dasher, PMHNP-BC

College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Valdosta State University (Lowndes)



Karen A. Dasher, PMHNP-BC, is a dedicated faculty member at Valdosta State University College of Nursing and a board-certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner. With her extensive experience in telemedicine medication management for a Community Health Board in Atlanta, Georgia, Dasher actively serves clients with opioid addiction, both those in active use and those in recovery.

Dasher's background includes working in a dual diagnosis psychiatric hospital, Turning Point, where she managed clients during opioid detox and residential treatment. This hands-on experience has equipped her with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by individuals struggling with opioid addiction.

As a member of the Georgia Opioid project regional advisory council, Dasher aims to collaborate with fellow council members to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. Her primary goal is to mitigate the deleterious effects of opioids on the community, drawing upon her expertise and passion for helping those affected by addiction.

Through her role on the council, Dasher seeks to contribute to the development of innovative solutions and initiatives that will support individuals in their recovery journey and prevent further harm caused by the opioid crisis in Georgia.

Provider

Recommended by the Opioid Treatment Providers of Georgia

Jewana Lowe

Program Director

Bainbridge Treatment Center (Decatur County)



Jewana Lowe holds a Master's degree in psychology/counseling and is a certified clinical supervisor. Presently, she is the program director of Bainbridge Treatment Center in Bainbridge, Georgia. In addition, she works as a CARF surveyor (Accreditation Organization that certifies MAT and other health profession programs). Lowe also serves as the parliamentarian for the Opioid Treatment Providers of Georgia.

Lowe's passion in life is to help others move from one level of grace to a higher level of grace. Indeed, she has been in the helping profession for over 30 years, and has held positions as a counselor, intake counselor, program director, and accreditation surveyor. Such positions have broadened her understanding of addiction and provided her with the means to be a more affective behavior health specialist.

Lived Experience

Recommended by the Georgia Council for Recovery

Marlisa Nixon

Empowerment Catalyst and Creative Visionary

Albany Area Community Service Board (Dougherty County)



Marlisa Nixon is an Empowerment Catalyst and Creative Visionary with a passion for making a positive impact in the lives of others. She has personally experienced and overcome substance use disorder, including opioid use disorder, giving her invaluable insights into the challenges and complexities of addiction, and living in recovery.

Nixon's possession of an active CPS-AD certification not only underscores her expertise but also affirms her dedication to aiding individuals in their recovery journey. This certification empowers her with the necessary knowledge and skills, ensuring inclusive and supportive assistance based on her lived experience.

Along with her personal experiences and professional certifications, Nixon has a strong willingness to speak up in a professional and collaborative manner for the inclusion of recovery support services. She firmly believes that recovery extends far beyond crisis intervention and treatment and that ongoing support services are crucial for long-term success. Nixon is dedicated to advocating for the availability and accessibility of these services, ensuring that individuals have the tools they need to thrive in their recovery.

Nixon was honored as a 2022 Statewide Recovery Ambassador for the Georgia Recovers Billboard campaign, playing a crucial role in spotlighting, and advocating for the specific needs of rural areas of the state. She actively engages in events like Addiction Recovery Awareness Day, the Rural Recovery Rally, and proclamation signings for Recovery Month and Mental Health Month across 8 counties within Aspire's service area. She also is instrumental in coordinating the Albany stop of The Mobilize Recovery Across Georgia Bus Tour, and her story was prominently featured for one of the community connections sessions for the DEA Traveling Museum Exhibit.

In July 2021, Marlisa assumed the role of Director of Employee Experience and Change Management. As a vital member of the Aspire Executive Leadership Team, Marlisa consistently showcases reliability and accountability, understanding the crucial role of trust in nurturing and sustaining robust relationships. Her proficient skills in conflict resolution equip her to navigate challenging situations with grace and diplomacy.

Judiciary

Recommended by the Georgia Council of Accountability Court Judges

Victoria Darrisaw

Judge

Dougherty Judicial Circuit Superior Court (Dougherty County)



Victoria S. Darrisaw was appointed to the Dougherty Superior Court on August 8, 2018, by Governor Nathan Deal. She was re-elected county-wide in 2020. Previously, Judge Darrisaw served as Chief Judge of Dougherty State Court from 2012 to 2018 (after her election to an open seat) and as a Magistrate Judge from 2009 to 2012. Before taking the bench Judge Darrisaw served as a prosecuting attorney in both the Dougherty Judicial Circuit (ending her prosecutorial career as a Senior Assistant District Attorney) and in the South Georgia Judicial Circuit.

Judge Darrisaw was born in South Carolina but reared in Atlanta where she obtained her undergraduate degree from Spelman College. She earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer University, where she was a member of the Moot Court Board, the ABA moot court competition team, and upon graduation she received the International Academy of Trial Lawyers Student Advocacy Award.

Following her graduation from law school, Judge Darrisaw served as a judicial law clerk to Bibb Superior Court Judges W. Louis Sands and Tommy Day Wilcox. Thereafter, she served as a federal law clerk to U.S.D.J. W. Louis Sands in the Albany Division of the Middle District of Georgia.

In addition to maintaining a full civil and criminal caseload, Judge Darrisaw currently presides over the Dougherty County Mental Health Substance Abuse Treatment court. This accountability court was started by the late Judge Steve Goss and has the distinction of being the first felony level mental health court in Georgia. Under her leadership the Dougherty Treatment Court has been designated to serve as a Model Mental Health Court by the Council of Accountability Court Judges from 2024-2026. Judge Darrisaw also acts as presiding judge for the Dougherty Department of Community Supervision's Day Reporting Center, a program which offers an alternative to incarceration for active probationers.

She is an active member of the Council of Superior Court Judges and the Council of Accountability Court Judges. Judge Darrisaw serves on the boards of, or is a member of, the following organizations: Easterseals of Southern Georgia, Inc., Albany Rotary Club, Boys and Girls Club of Albany, Junior League of Albany (sustainer), Albany Area Primary Health Care, Albany Bank and Trust. She is a member of the Leadership Albany Class of 2009, as well as the Leadership Georgia Class of 2013. In September 2021, Judge Darrisaw was appointed by the Georgia Supreme Court to serve on the Investigative Panel of the Judicial Qualifications Commission. She was re-appointed and confirmed by the Georgia Senate to serve her first full term in 2024.