



PARTICIPANT DIRECTED
ADVOCATES OF GEORGIA

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*Direction.
Dignity.
The Future is Ours.*

TUESDAY
AUGUST
25
2026

9:00 AM – 3:15 PM
The Carter Center
Atlanta, GA

PDAG LEADERSHIP

KAREN ADDAMS
Board Chair

RITA YOUNG
Executive Director

MITZI PROFFITT
Deputy Director

LEADING CHANGE

The Participant Directed Advocacy Forum

CONFERENCE AGENDA

9:00 – 10:00 AM	Registration, Networking & Exhibits
10:00 – 10:15 AM	Welcome & Opening Remarks <i>Rita Young, Executive Director</i> <i>Participant Directed Advocates of Georgia</i>
10:15 – 10:30 AM	Special Welcome <i>Commissioner Kevin Tanner</i> <i>Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities</i>
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Keynote Address <i>Ron Wakefield, Director</i> <i>Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities</i>
10:45 – 11:45 AM	Spotlight Panel: Support Brokers <i>The Missing Link to Sustainable Self-Direction</i> <i>A conversation about how support brokers strengthen participant direction, support families, and help create sustainable systems of support.</i> <i>Panelists</i> • Marian Frattarola-Saulino, MSW <i>Co-Founder & CEO, Values Into Action</i> • Caitlin Kendrick <i>Support Broker, Learning Opportunities Quality Works (LOQW)</i>
11:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Lunch Transition <i>Participants pick up lunch and return to their seats</i>
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Lunch

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12:05 – 12:35 PM

Lunchtime Healthcare Panel

Beyond Access: Healthcare in Real Life

A moderated conversation about healthcare access, communication, technology, dignity, and practical solutions for people with disabilities.

Panelists

- **Jonathan Smith, MD**
Medical Director, Mercer University Center for IDD Care
- **Julie Eshleman, PhD**
Researcher in Artificial Intelligence, Assistive Technology, and Disability
- **Janelle Adams**
Governmental Affairs, Georgia Dental Association

12:35 – 1:00 PM

Lunch, Networking & Afternoon Transition

1:00 – 1:55 PM

Participant Direction Community Forum

Participants will join facilitated conversations focused on strengthening participant direction and home- and community-based services in Georgia.

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Legislative Panel

Where Do We Go From Here?

A moderated conversation with Georgia legislators about participant direction, HCBS sustainability, workforce challenges, family engagement, and opportunities for policy action.

Panelists

- **Georgia State Senator Sally Harrell**
- **Georgia State Representative Katie Dempsey**
- **Georgia State Representative Mary Margaret Oliver**
- **Georgia State Representative Scott Hilton**

3:00 – 3:15 PM

Closing Remarks & Call to Action

Rita Young, Executive Director
Participant Directed Advocates of Georgia

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Karen Addams
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