

# Mental Health Program

THE  
CARTER CENTER



The Carter Center works to promote awareness about mental health issues, inform public policy, achieve equity for mental health care comparable to other health care, and reduce stigma and discrimination against those with mental illnesses.

## ABOUT THE CARTER CENTER

A nongovernmental organization, The Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 80 countries by resolving conflicts, advancing human rights, preventing diseases, and improving mental health care.



Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter has been a driving force in the field of mental health for more than 50 years and founded the Carter Center's Mental Health Program.

## HOW COMMON ARE MENTAL ILLNESSES?

Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the world. About 20% of U.S. adults experience some form of mental illness. Even the most serious mental health conditions can be treated, however, allowing people to better contribute to their families and communities. Mental health is a critical component to overall health and well-being.

## OUR STRATEGY



**Advocacy.** The Carter Center seeks to ensure that behavioral health and well-being are prioritized in public health policy. The Center's convening power can bring together health leaders and organizations to discuss **important public policy issues** facing mental health and substance-use care systems nationwide and in the state of Georgia.



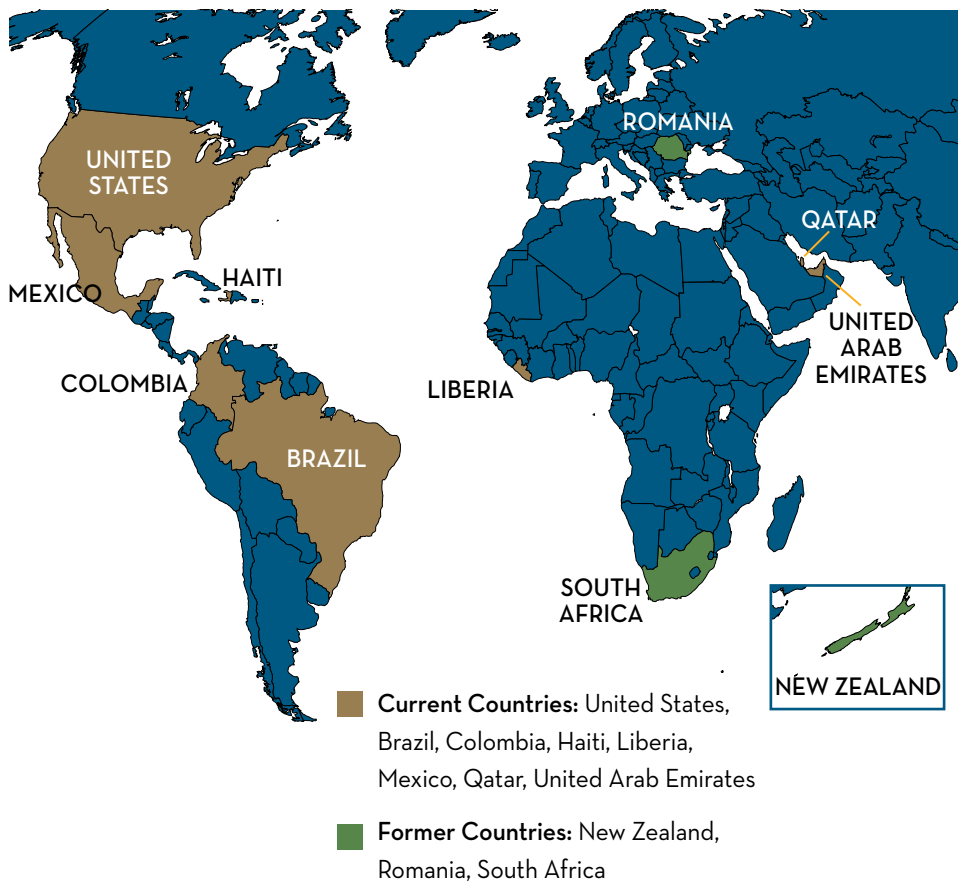
**Stigma Reduction.** The Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism support journalists from Latin America, the Middle East, and the United States in exploring society's mental health challenges. The fellowships **give journalists resources** to help improve practices and policy through investigation and to dismantle stigma through storytelling.



**Global Behavioral Health.** The Carter Center partners with governments and other allies to strengthen public mental health policy and care globally. In Liberia, the Center helps strengthen the **mental health workforce**, assists the Ministry of Health in implementing national policies, builds capacity of civil society organizations, and empowers mental health service users and family caregivers. In a pilot program in Haiti, the Center is implementing mental health interventions for people living with lymphatic filariasis, a disfiguring neglected tropical disease.

*The Carter Center is uniquely positioned to help people address the mental health aspects of neglected tropical diseases.*

## WHERE WE WORK



### OUR WORK IN GEORGIA

The Carter Center works to advance public policy in its home state of Georgia, using best practices that can inform national policy. Our Georgia public policy initiatives:

- Increase enforcement and implementation of behavioral health parity to improve access to care for all.
- Ensure access to school-based behavioral health interventions and services for youth.
- Advance capacity to provide services for older adults with serious mental illnesses.

The program holds the annual Rosalynn Carter Georgia Mental Health Forum and leads the Georgia Parity Collaborative, a group of over 30 organizations.

## RESULTS AND IMPACT

**300+** mental health clinicians trained in Liberia; at least 140 specialize in treating children and adolescents

**1500+** print, radio, television, and online stories generated by over 200 journalism fellows since 1996

**25** Georgia Mental Health Forum events, bringing together organizations from around the state to share ideas and push for change

**2008**

Year the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act was passed, with former First Lady and Carter Center co-founder Rosalynn Carter playing a key role; the act ensures that mental illnesses are covered by insurance at parity with other illnesses



A group of Liberian health professionals celebrate their graduation from an intensive six-month training program that accredits them as mental health clinicians.