

# Health Equity Fellowship: Young Harris

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**GEORGIA**  
College of Public Health

PURSUE UNDERSTANDING. TAKE ACTION.

# Overview

1. Introduction to Young Harris
2. Substance Use
3. Youth Leadership Development



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# Young Harris

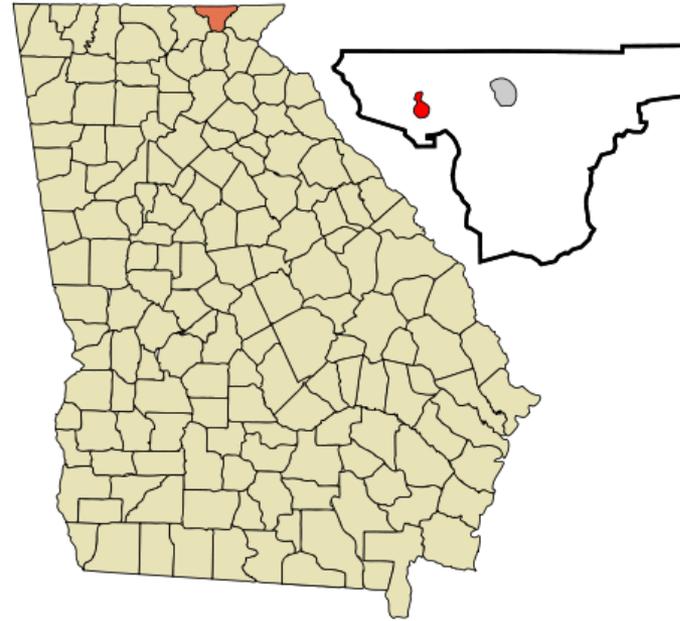
Towns County

Population: 1,029

Median Household  
Income: \$38,250

96% White

Young Harris College



# Substance Use Report



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# Rationale

The opioid overdose death rate in Appalachian counties is **72%** higher than that of non-Appalachian counties

Opioid prescription rates are up to **50%** higher in Appalachian counties

Substance use is one of the most commonly mentioned public concerns in Towns county

Specific data for Young Harris/Towns county is scattered



# Findings

## Towns County Rankings:

High School Binge Alcohol Use: **154/159**

High School Methamphetamine Use: **154/159**

High School Heroin Use: **156/159**

Any Opioid-Related Deaths: **145/159**



# Treatment

**Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)** refers to the use of medication to treat substance use disorders. Buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone are used to treat opioid use.

**Naloxone (Narcan)** is an emergency medication used to rapidly treat opioid overdoses



# The Good News

Narcan training and access provided to  
first responders in Towns county on March  
30, 2021



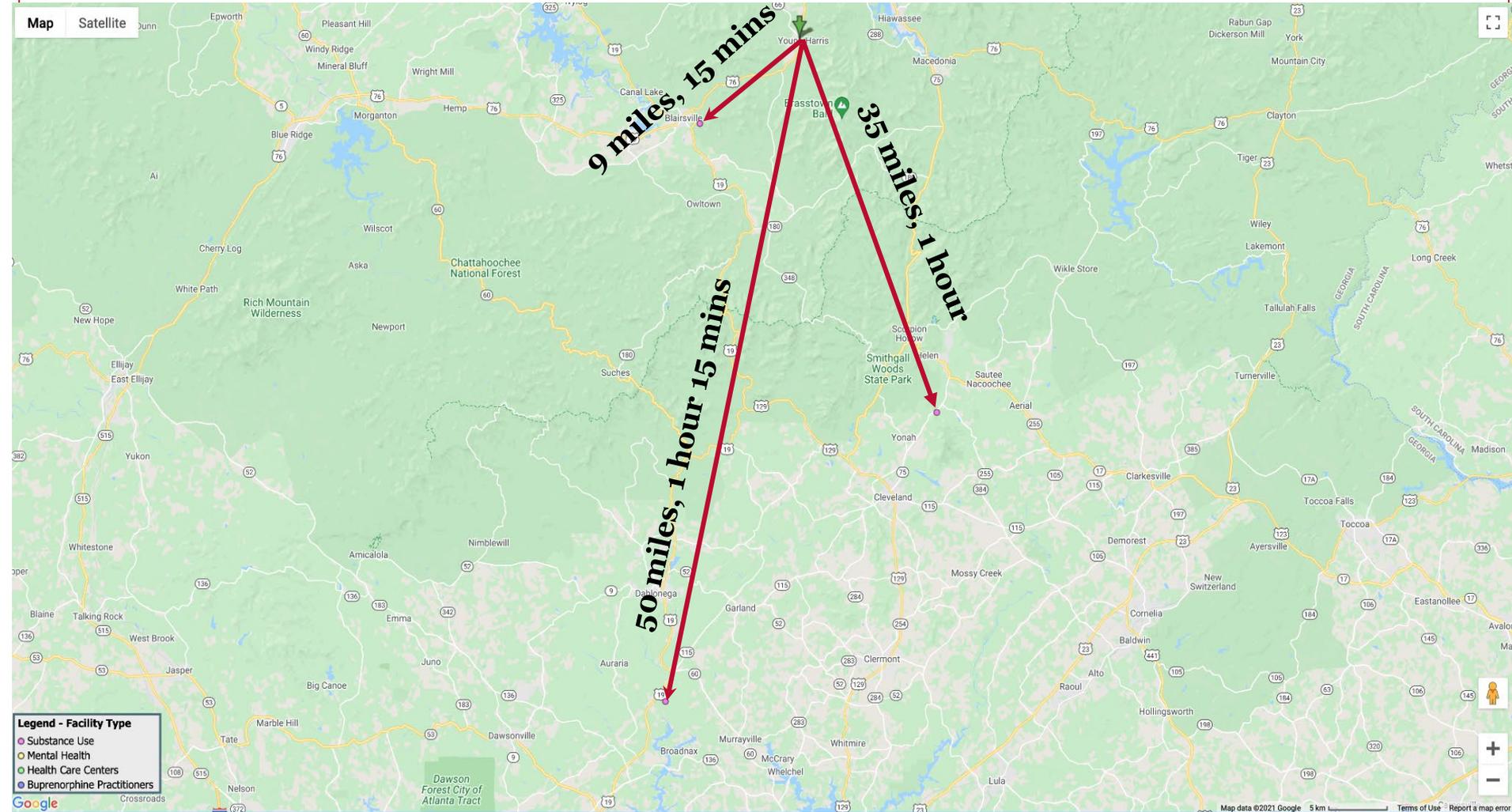
# The Bad News

## **Zero** Medication Assisted Treatment programs in Towns County

- Little accessibility in neighboring counties
  - Very frequent visits are required



# MAT Clinics in North GA



# Recommendations

Inclusion of faith-based leadership

Increase accessibility to care

Early intervention and prevention through  
youth development



# Faith-based leadership

- Importance of churches
- Removal of **stigma**
- Role in prevention, treatment, and recovery



# Accessibility to care

- **MAT and naloxone** access
- **Telehealth**
- Invest in **behavioral health** programs



# Youth Leadership Development



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# Rationale

**Interdisciplinary** nature of public health

Workforce development

Positive social and cultural norms

Filling **gaps in service**

- Outside of employment, positive youth activities was the most commonly mentioned service that needed improvement



# Implementation

## Partnerships

- J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development
- Towns County Civic Association
- Joint Development Authority
- Young Harris College



# Implementation

Target Population: Late elementary school students

## Curriculum

- Understanding leadership
- Promoting positive social and cultural norms
- Looking beyond Young Harris



# Acknowledgements

**Dr. Mel Garber**, Archway Partnership Director Emeritus

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**Amy Rosser**, Towns County Family Connection Director

**Denise McKay**, Economic Development Director

**Dr. Laura Whitaker-Lea**, Student Development VP

**Lauren Healey**, Public Service Associate

**Dr. Marsha Davis**, College of Public Health Dean

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# *Thank You / Questions*

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