



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.

It is the only thing that ever has.

– Margaret Meade

A Note from the Commissioner

My Dear Friends,

We have so much to be thankful for in this season of gratitude. We are thankful for the lives of Tennesseans living with mental illness and substance use disorder who have found recovery. We are thankful for our amazing network of passionate and capable providers who provide truly life-saving services in community settings. We

are thankful for our hospital staff who work 24/7/365 to meet the emergency psychiatric needs of Tennesseans living with mental illness. We are thankful for our state employees who work long hours, who manage multiplying responsibilities, and who rise to the needs of the Tennesseans we serve. We are thankful for our families, consumer groups, and advocates who influence and shape our services and continue to support our goal of being our highest and best. And last but not least, we are thankful for Governor Bill Lee, his team, and the Tennessee General Assembly who truly have hearts for the work we do and their full support as we continue to move the needle.

It is with this spirit of gratitude that we humbly submitted our budget proposal for FY2021 to Governor Lee on November 8. In all, we asked for increases totaling \$20.7 million. You can see a breakout of all of the increases below, and [you can watch the video of the presentation at this link](#). While our ask is significant, the need we all see on a daily basis is great as well, and thankfully, we have a governor and leadership team who understand that. We are excited to work with them to develop the Governor's final budget proposal and then go to the legislature to advocate for that proposal in the months to come.

In this season of thanksgiving, we are grateful for your partnership and your work to improve the lives of Tennesseans living with mental illness and substance use disorder.

Blessings,

Marie

	Program	Total
1	Substance Abuse Clinical Treatment Enhancement	\$6,000,000
2	Children's Behavioral Health Safety Net	7,571,800
3	Mobile Crisis Services Expansion	354,300
4	Creating Jobs Initiative Expansion	900,000
5	Addiction Recovery Program Enhancement	1,000,000
6	Criminal Justice Liaison Expansion	625,000
7	School Based Behavioral Health Liaison Expansion	3,014,300
8	System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT)	330,700
9	Director of School Engagement	119,000
10	The Office of Housing and Homeless Services Program Manager	83,200
11	Suicide Prevention Programs Program Director	101,300
12	Juvenile Justice Program Director	125,300
13	Major Maintenance	250,000
14	Facilities Revolving Fund Rent for new Regional Intervention Program facility	238,700
	Total Cost Increases	\$20,713,600

TDMHSAS Announces New Grant to Expand Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Programs in Tennessee

Grant will bring new training and techniques to eight primarily rural counties

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), Department of Correction, and National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Tennessee announced today a new grant that will expand Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and techniques to eight new counties. The expansion is focusing on Sumner, Wilson, Smith, DeKalb, White, Putnam, Overton, and Cumberland Counties.

CIT is a specialized, 40-hour training for law enforcement officers. In conjunction with robust community partnerships, the goal is to improve outcomes of encounters with people living with behavioral health challenges. This three year, \$660,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice will take the lessons learned from a statewide study of CIT in Tennessee and implement them in this 8-county area.

[Read the press release in its entirety.](#)

[Hear CIT success stories in this TDMHSAS-produced video.](#)

New funding earmarked for the Suicide Prevention Lifeline



NASHVILLE, Tenn.— The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) is receiving more than \$200,000 in new funding to improve the response for Tennesseans seeking help through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

TDMHSAS is one of 12 states to receive the two-year capacity building grant funded by Vibrant Emotional Health. In Tennessee, the funding will go to three community-based behavioral health providers who answer calls through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Providers receiving funding include Volunteer Behavioral Health, Family and Children's Service, and Memphis Crisis Center.

[Read the press release in its entirety.](#)

Congratulations to the newest graduates of Commissioner's Leadership Academy

Congratulations to the latest graduates of the Commissioner's Leadership Academy! The second cohort was honored Oct. 2 with a ceremony at the Renaissance Center in Dickson. Four staff members were chosen from

each Regional Mental Health Institute and Central Office. Academy participants engage in a rigorous leadership development study that is based on core competencies identified by our executive leadership team. These competencies include: managing diversity, innovation management, self-knowledge, drive for results, conflict management, and organizational agility. The next Academy is scheduled for Spring 2020.

Photos by Kris Jernighan, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner



Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute: Corey Weldon, Crystal Sims, CEO Mary Young, Ryan Beckett, and Susan Feltman (not pictured).



Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute: Belisza Veatch, Tammy Thomas, CEO Joyce Kovacs, Jeffrey Poulton, and Dana Clark.



Western Mental Health Institute: Bridgett Nuckolls, Donny Hornsby, Commissioner Marie Williams, Karen Doles, and Sandra Richardson. Not pictured: CEO Roger Pursley.



Memphis Mental Health Institute: CEO Josh Carter, Sharonda Monix, Cheryl Stevens Manning, Cassandra Clariet, and Zachary Edmiston.



Central Office: Kirby Fye, Diana Kirby, Hannah Dieckhaus (Regional Intervention Program), and Jay Oziminski.



The fall graduating class of the TDMHSAS Commissioner's Leadership Academy are pictured with Commissioner Marie Williams; Assistant Commissioner Stephanie Penny, Department of Human Resources; and Alyssa Cave, TDMHSAS Assistant Director of Talent Management.

National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day brings in more than 32K lbs. of meds

Gov. Lee urged citizens to participate in a video message



We are thrilled to report the numbers from October's National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day.

Number of TN sites participating: 176

Total pounds collected: 32,695.27

Thanks to every coalition, organization, and site who hosted a Take-Back Day event. And thanks, especially, to everyone who participated and practiced safe disposal. If you missed October's event, no worries! Permanent disposal boxes are available statewide. [Visit our website to learn more and locate a site near you.](#)

Data courtesy of the Tennessee Dept. of Environment & Conservation

Tennessee schools, students celebrate Red Ribbon Week

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services joined schools across the state and nation to celebrate Red Ribbon Week, Oct. 23-31. The celebration is a time for youth, educators, parents, and communities to learn about the dangers of drug use and prevent addiction. Red Ribbon Week raises awareness of drug use and the problems related to drugs facing our communities and encourages parents, educators, business owners, and other community organizations to promote drug-free lifestyles.

[Read the press release in its entirety](#) and check out some highlights below!

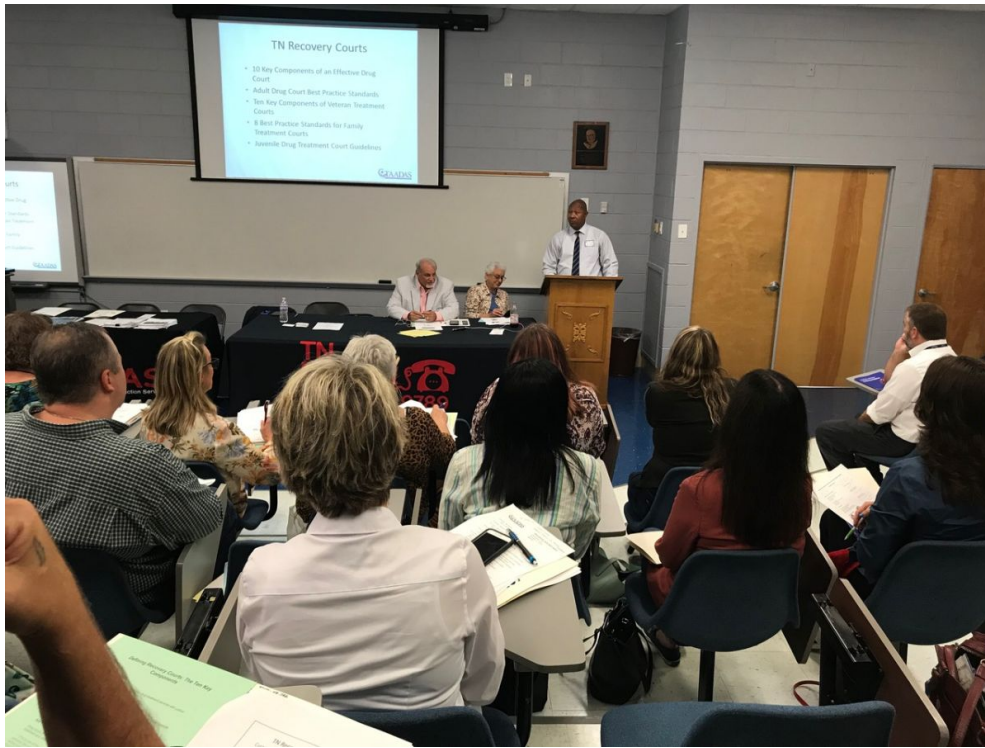


Staff at Helen Ross McNabb showing their support for Red Ribbon Week!



Left: E.O. Coffman Middle School (Lawrence County) decorated their doors with messages encouraging students to live drug-free. Right: Roane County Anti-Drug Coalition worked with county schools to create this massive message for the community.

Recovery Roundtable is well attended in Cleveland



TDMHSAS staffers Melvin Smith (at the podium) and Rebekah Provost-Emmons were among the presenters at a Recovery Roundtable held Oct. 4 at Cleveland State Community College. Attendees heard from service providers, learned about program and licensure rules, and brainstormed meeting the needs for a continuum of care of recovery. Panelists included Alana Morris, Bradley County Prevention Coalition; Faith-Based Coordinator Sarah Keel; and Vanessa Spotts, Regional Overdose Prevention Specialist. *Photo courtesy of TAADAS.*

Leadership Tennessee Opioid Summit convenes at Vanderbilt University Medical Center



Commissioner Williams presented and led a panel discussion on substance use disorder treatment at the Leadership Tennessee Opioid Summit held Oct. 22 at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. The keynote speaker was Sam Quinones, author of *Dreamland*. He spoke on the opioid crisis, its causes, and current opportunities. The event also featured a presentation from Department of Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey and panelist contributions from TBI Director David Rausch, Drs. David Edwards and David Markovitz from VUMC, and Dr. Chapman Sledge from Cumberland Heights.

Buffalo Valley recognizes 25-year partnership



Commissioner Marie Williams was proud to speak at the board meeting of Buffalo Valley, Inc. Saturday, Oct. 26. In addition to sharing encouraging news and stories at the meeting, the board presented Commissioner Williams with an award recognizing partnership over the last 25 years. Pictured with Commissioner Williams are Lynn Rooker, Board President; Debbie Hillin, President; and Jerry Risner, CEO.

Congratulations to Frontier Health's Julia Hanneken

This quarter's Crisis Services Outstanding Employee makes an impression with educators, students

Congratulations to Julia Hanneken, Frontier Health, who received this quarter's award for TN Crisis Services Outstanding Employee. Julia was nominated by a staff member who works at a Sullivan County elementary school. She wrote, "Julia has been the best Mobile Crisis worker I have worked with. I called Mobile Crisis for a suicidal student. She was so calm and supportive and so welcoming to our student ... I feel like she had so much compassion for our student. I can't say enough good things about Julia."

Julia says the mental health field is her second career. "I work in crisis, because I get to educate, advocate for, and motivate clients to move forward by getting help. I get to be a voice for those who don't feel they have one. And I get to show clients compassion and understanding that sometimes they have never been shown. My favorite part of the job is at the end of the consult when the client and family can relax. They can relax because I have answered all their questions about what is going to happen next and helped them devise a plan. In essence, I have taken away their fear and made them feel safe."



Julia is originally from North Carolina. She has two children, a son and daughter, who are the loves of her life. When not working, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, ACC basketball, and Hallmark movies.

Tennessee is serious about suicide prevention!

September was Suicide Prevention Awareness Month when Crisis Services staff and partners were busy hosting trainings and conferences, sharing resources with the public, and participating in awareness walks and events, with the sole purpose of saving lives. Scroll to see some of the highlights of this year's awareness day and how we are working to prevent suicide year round in Tennessee and beyond.



Former Director of Crisis Services & Suicide Prevention extends mission to Africa

This September, Morenike Murphy, our former Director of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention, spent time in West Africa as a member of a medical mission trip serving refugees and communities in Ghana. She was among healthcare professionals from across the United States which included mental health clinicians, social workers, and a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor. Morenike shared the message and tools of suicide prevention at every opportunity, including teaching Tennessee's "Be The One: Suicide Prevention in the Workforce" training (written by longtime TDMHSAS Crisis Services staffer Lygia Williams) to Accra Psychiatric Hospital.

These Train the Trainer sessions are "essentially embedding trainers within the Accra community, who can train employees across the city on how to recognize signs of suicide in a colleague, how to intervene, and get them connected to help," Morenike said. "This is how we change our world." She also taught QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) suicide prevention training to community members at a local church.

Earlier this month, Morenike left the Department to pursue another passion and extend her mission as Program Director at Dismas House of Nashville. We thank her for her service and wish her well in her new role helping recently-incarcerated men rebuild their lives.



These ladies are now trained in Tennessee's "Be The One: Suicide Prevention in the Workforce" curriculum.

"Be the One" Initiative continues to grow as more workplaces are trained statewide

Created by the Office of Crisis Services & Suicide Prevention, the "Be the One" training equips staff members with tools and resources to save lives within the workplace and beyond. It is based on the idea that colleagues can help build a supportive workforce which values and affirms life. It teaches how to recognize when someone may be thinking about suicide, how to ask the question directly, and offers tips on developing good listening skills, a key component of suicide prevention. Since its inception, the initiative and interest has grown. "We have over 50 trainers across the state who are able to provide the 'Be the One' training to their workplace, including Blue Cross Blue Shield and all of our Regional Mental Health Institutes," said Joanne Perley, Project Director of



Suicide Prevention Grants, who is pictured above teaching a class to Central Office Staff.

In addition to equipping colleagues across our Department, staff have been training colleagues in other TN state departments, businesses, and organizations as well. Preston Spencer from Cumberland Pediatric Foundation shared his feedback about the program. "The training can help you not only recognize the signs of depression or suicidal ideation in others – and give you tools to help – but it's a great reminder that paying attention to your own mental

health is an extremely vital piece of life that can sometimes go overlooked, especially in busy times of the year at work or at home. We all need periods of reflection to consider ways we can help improve our own health and assist the people around us," he said. "The Be the One training is important because there are so many people that are struggling in their daily lives – whether that be with depression, anxiety about finances, family, or a personal relationship, loneliness, chronic pain, loss, suicidal ideation – and it's important that even people who aren't struggling with these issues are aware that there are people in need of love and support, or even just acknowledgment that life is hard."

Preston continued: "People in need of help many times don't know how to ask for it or are unable. It's important that we all look out for each other. ... What I learned that I have taken home with me and think about every day is the importance of listening to people and paying attention to other people's body language and attitude. Many times, people who are struggling with depression will not say it, but can show signs of it through their actions and attitude. It's important that we pay attention."



For more about the "Be the One" initiative, including how to get trained, please [visit our website](#).



Diana Kirby sharing suicide prevention resources to more than 40 community and Vanderbilt pediatricians at a restaurant in Nashville via the Cumberland Pediatric Foundation.



Joanne Perley (far left) and Lygia Williams (far right) trained several state employees from various departments as "Train the Trainers" who can now show this life-saving curriculum with co-workers.

TSPN's Suicide Prevention Awareness Day honors Tennesseans working to save lives



The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network hosted Suicide Prevention Awareness Day Sept. 11 at Trevecca Community Church in Nashville. FOX 17 News anchor Scott Couch returned as Master of Ceremonies, and people from across the state gathered for the annual event that recognizes Tennesseans who are working to

prevent suicide and also remembers those lost to suicide.

Above: Rob Cotterman, TDMHSAS Assistant Commissioner for Mental Health Services (left); TSPN Executive Director Scott Ridgway; and Anne Stamps, TSPN Advisory Council & Upper Cumberland Regional Chair, hold the Governor's Proclamation of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Central Office staff gather to Speak Up! Save Lives!



On Sept. 27, Central Office joined Tennesseans across the state in the "Speak Up, Save Lives" campaign in the name of suicide prevention. Staff wore the suicide prevention awareness colors of teal, purple, and gray - as well as the 2019 t-shirt created by TSPN - to spread awareness. For information about how you can get involved in suicide prevention efforts and to learn more about ways to prevent suicide, visit tspn.org.

Suicide Prevention in the African-American Faith Communities Coalition hosts "Suicide and Trauma Prevention: Building Resilient Communities"

For many years now, the Suicide Prevention in the Faith Communities Coalition has hosted a biennial conference. This year's event was Oct. 18 at St. James Missionary Baptist Church. The conference is a full day of education, bringing together experts on many topics centering around suicide prevention and the conference theme. This year's theme was "Suicide and Trauma Prevention: Building Resilient Communities." The morning began with a screening of the film *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope*.

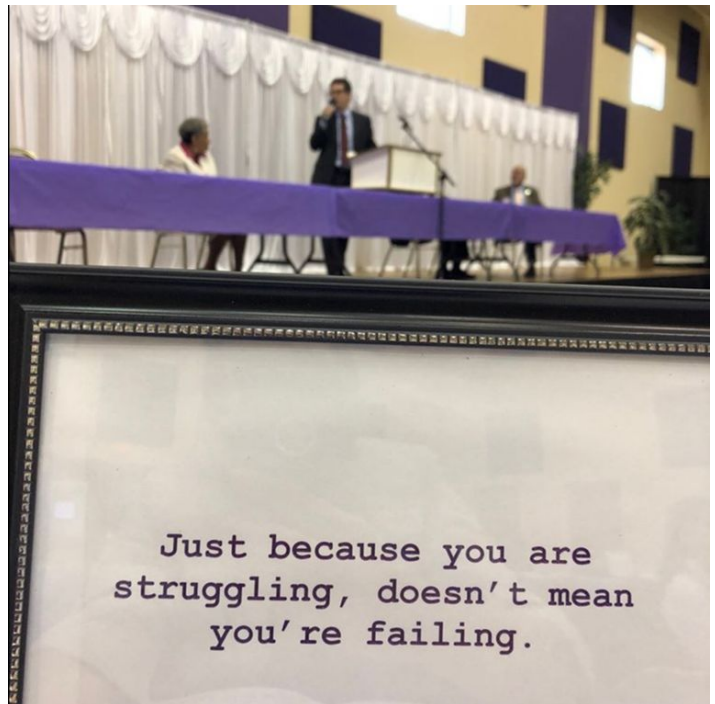


Several TDMHSAS staff and partners participate in the event, and Gwen Hamer, our Director of Education and Development, is one of the event planners. She is pictured with Dr. Donna Barnes, Howard University, (left) who spoke at one of the general sessions and taught a class titled: Comprehensive Community Approach to Suicide Prevention.

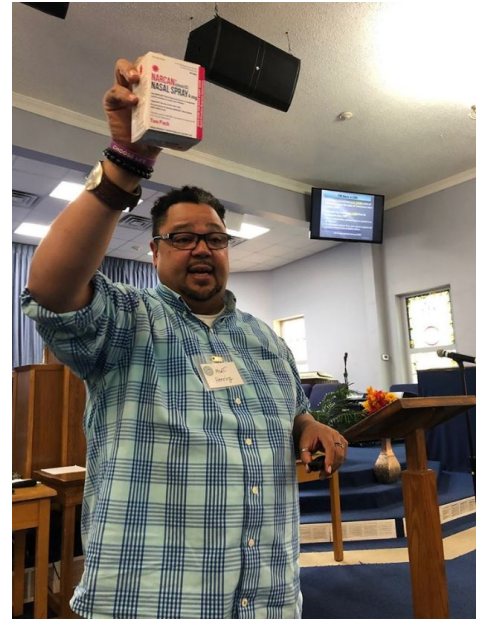
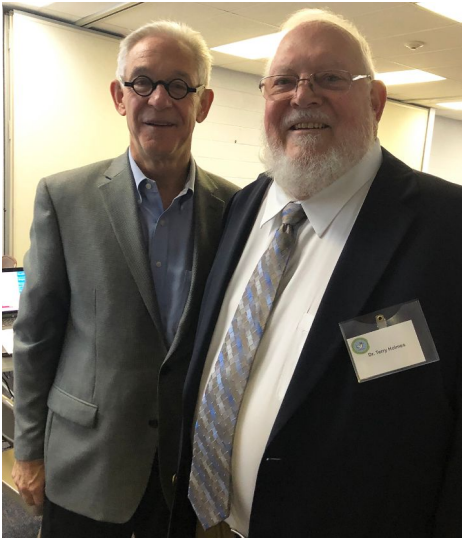
Conference goers were encouraged to visit the Comfort and Serenity Rooms. One room, staffed by Family and Children's Services, offered fun activities and a place to relax and have some fun. The other provided acudetox services by Angela Easterling and Judith Gibson.

Each table was decorated with an encouraging message (right). Pictured in the background is Deputy Commissioner Matt Yancey who helped welcome attendees to this year's conference.

[View more photos from this year's conference in our facebook album.](#)



Below, left: Catching a quick break between sessions is Dr. Terry Holmes, TDMHSAS Chief Medical Officer (right) and Roger Dinwiddie, STARS, Inc. Dr. Holmes taught a class on depression, including postpartum depression, and Mr. Dinwiddie shared "Supports and Safeguards for People Being Bullied."



It's been an exciting conference season!

System of Care Conference brings everyone to the table



Via Garrett Spurlin, Tennessee Voices for Children

The 7th annual SOC Conference, "Inviting Everyone to the Table," welcomed nearly three hundred professionals in the social service field. With 18 breakout sessions to choose from, attendees chose from a wide variety of sessions that covered a multitude of topics. Our first keynote speaker, Pastor Edward L. Palmer, Sr, spoke about Kentucky's juvenile justice reforms. Palmer was not afraid to talk about challenging topics and left the audience with the

understanding that criminal justice reforms must benefit everyone. Our second keynote speaker, Antoinette T. Donnelly, spoke about the importance of family engagement. Donnelly beautifully weaved her lived experience into her presentation in order to hit home that family and youth engagement does make a huge difference. She also emphasized that collaboration between all system levels is key to sustaining a system of care. Donnelly reminded us all that our lived experience should guide the work that we are doing and that our lived experience gives us knowledge, strength, and resilience. Thank you to all of our attendees who made this conference special. We appreciate the work you are doing to improve the well-being of Tennessee's children, youth, young adults, and families. See you next year!



"Red Table Talk" welcomed youth and young adults and the providers who serve them



Via Jules Wilson, TDMHSAS Youth & Young Adult Coordinator

A post-conference "Red Table Talk" event was held Sept. 19 for Young Adult Leadership Council members and providers who serve youth and young adults. Jessica Mullins, Diana Kirby, and Jules Wilson from TDMHSAS; Crystal Hutchins, Garrett Spurlin, and Will Voss from Tennessee Voices for Children; and Krystal Fortney from Vanderbilt Medical Center planned the day's programming that included two tracks. The Young Adult Track welcomed Andrea

Parrish who brings more than 30 years of system of care experience to the table. She broke down the components of leadership and taught the skill of inquiry. The Provider track had split breakout sessions. The First Episode Psychosis (FEPI) and Clinical High Risk for Psychosis (CHR-P) teams received a MIRECC GAF (Mental Illness, Research, Education, and Clinical Centers) training. The new Healthy Transitions providers heard from Ned Solomon about cultural awareness, resources, and education. In the afternoon, all the providers learned about Social Media and Marketing from local social marketing specialist (and young adult!) Britt Whidden.

The day closed with a combined networking hour as well as a celebration of the close of the first Healthy Transitions program. Rebekah Lewis, Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council member, ended the day by speaking on the experience of being a young adult advocate who lives with mental illness and physical disabilities. She shared: "Suffering is often invisible. And it's rich and it's deep. And it's also beautiful, because it can create really beautiful people and really vibrant stories. The people with lived experience, young as we may be, have lived a lot of life, and we have a lot of story. I encourage you to listen."



"Suffering is often invisible. And it's rich and it's deep. And it's also beautiful, because it can

create really beautiful people and really vibrant stories.

The people with lived experience, young as we may be, have lived a lot of life, and we have a lot of story. I encourage you to listen."

Rebekah Lewis, TN Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council

Tennessee trailblazers converge at the 2019 Certified Peer Recovery Specialists Conference



The 9th annual Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Conference was held Oct. 6-7 at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville. It is always a special time for reconnecting with friends, networking with peers, and learning more about sharing the hope of recovery with others. This year's theme was "Trailblazing the Peer Frontier." Commissioner Williams got us off to an inspiring start on Monday, followed by our keynote speaker, Dr. Stephen Loyd (pictured left wearing a t-shirt promoting the new Recovery Within Reach website which was unveiled at the conference). Attendees chose from a variety of educational sessions on topics that topics focused on stigma, quality documentation, ethics and more.

Thanks to the conference planning committee for all of their hard work and thanks, especially, to our sponsors! Silver sponsors were: BlueCare of Tennessee, Healing Hearts, United HealthCare, Cumberland Heights, Tennessee Mental Health Consumers' Association, and Amerigroup. Bronze sponsors were: Advanced Spine & Wellness and Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System. Titanium sponsors were: Park Center and the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network.

Conference attendees who could join us on Sunday evening enjoyed dinner, trivia, music by the wonderful John McAndrew, and our annual awards program. Scroll down to see this year's winners and [visit our website](#) for more pictures from this year's conference, coming soon!





Congratulations to Connie Ramsey, winner of the Patsy Cronk Mentor of the Year award, and Ken Barton, winner of the Advocate of Peer Recovery Services, Individual Award.



Congratulations to the Tennessee Recovery Navigators, winners of the Advocate of Peer Recovery Services, Group/Agency award, and to Tonya Holman, winner of the Community Service Award. Accepting on behalf of the Navigators (left) was Noelle Suarez-Murias, TDMHSAS Special Projects Director.



And this year's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist of the Year is William Odom, Jr. Congratulations, William! Congrats also to Stephanie Guthrie who was surprised with the inaugural Trailblazer Award!

Inaugural Faith & Recovery Conference inspires!



Thanks to everyone who participated in our first Faith & Recovery conference held Nov. 7-8 at Trevecca University. We had a sold-out crowd and are already discussing plans for future events.

Don't miss our next newsletter! We'll have complete coverage (and more pics!) in the next *Update*.

Office of Consumer Affairs shares National Depression Screening Day resources with state offices



October 10 was National Depression Screening Day. Once again this year, staff from the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services set up shop in several state office buildings, offering resource materials about depression and how to get help. (Pictured above: In the center is Director Lisa Ragan with Helpline Advocates Aijahlon Carden (left) and Kathy Haley.

Depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States, affecting nearly 10 million adults each year including all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. Depression is difficult, and it does not discriminate. The good news is that depression, once diagnosed, is highly treatable! The road to recovery can start with a quick and easy online screening. Several confidential screenings for adults and for youth are available through Mental Health America at <https://bit.ly/2MXfKkK>. Answer the questions and find information about depression and other conditions at the end of the screenings.

And for questions about mental health resources in the state of Tennessee, call the TDMHSAS Helpline and

Speak to one of our helpful consumer advocates who will be happy to talk with you or someone you care about. Call 800-560-5767 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST, Monday - Friday or email OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov.

MBMHI Trauma-Informed Care Committee completes phase one of staff training



Submitted by Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute

The MBMHI Trauma Informed Care Committee, chaired by Debra Weaver, has been working on a project to increase the hospital staff's understanding of mental illness. The program is based on a concept developed by Pat Deegan, a clinical psychologist with a



diagnosis of schizophrenia. Staff members listen to a 15-minute audio segment with headphones that simulates what it's like to experience audio hallucinations while working to perform tasks. This phase one of the project began in August and is mandatory training for all MBMHI staff members. Phase II will begin in the new year and will continue to focus on helping staff empathize with patients by educating on and promoting concepts of trauma recovery.

Staff News & Accomplishments

Moccasin Bend recreational therapist has a heart (and hope!) for patients post-discharge

Submitted by Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute

Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute is proud to recognize Blondie Johnson, Recreational Therapist II, for her innovative idea to provide patients with continuing care bags upon discharge. Blondie's idea for designing discharge bags for patients began while reading an email from the State of Tennessee. The email asked employees to share money-saving ideas. Blondie recalled the number of patients discharged from the facility who were later re-admitted. Very often, when she asked about aftercare, the patients revealed that paperwork was lost, making the continuity of care more difficult. The paperwork contains information on medication and follow-up appointments and is vital to recovery outside MBMHI.

Blondie's vision was to design a method to keep discharge instructions and other items for self-care in one place. After getting the go-ahead from leadership, Blondie collaborated with the Trauma-Informed Care committee to design discharge bags. They chose to put "HOPE" on the outside of the bags to encourage patients as they work toward recovery. The end result is the discharge bag (pictured) with Blondie. We want our

patients to know that we truly care about them. Our desire is that they receive quality care not only while they are here but also as they continue the journey to recovery.



NAMI Tennessee honors Mark Liverman, Jules Wilson at annual convention



Congratulations to two of our staff members who were honored at NAMI Tennessee's 2019 Convention. Youth &

Young Adult Coordinator Jules Wilson received the 2019 Professional Award, and Mark Liverman, Director of Wellness & Employment, received the 2019 Model Project Award for the work being done in Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment. Keep up the great work, Jules and Mark!

Caron Petersen joins the Office of Crisis Services & Suicide Prevention

Welcome Caron Petersen to the Office of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention. Caron will be overseeing and managing data collection and analysis, the Crisis Management database, supporting quality assurance, overseeing the development and revision of the training curriculum for the Crisis Data System, and leading special projects. Prior to joining the department, Caron served as Grants Fiscal Manager for the Department of Education, monitoring \$31 million dollars in annual federal and state grants; served as Director of Wellness Programs for the Department of Health and Environment; served as Director of Community Health for Tennessee Christian Medical Center, and served as Director of Families First at Tennessee State University. She brings 25 years of experience in data analysis and more than 30 years of grant writing, program design, and development. Caron received her Masters of Social Work degree from the UT Nashville accelerated program. Caron was raised in Brooklyn and enjoys quilting in her free time.



Tessa Antonelli joins the Division of Mental Health Services in dual roles

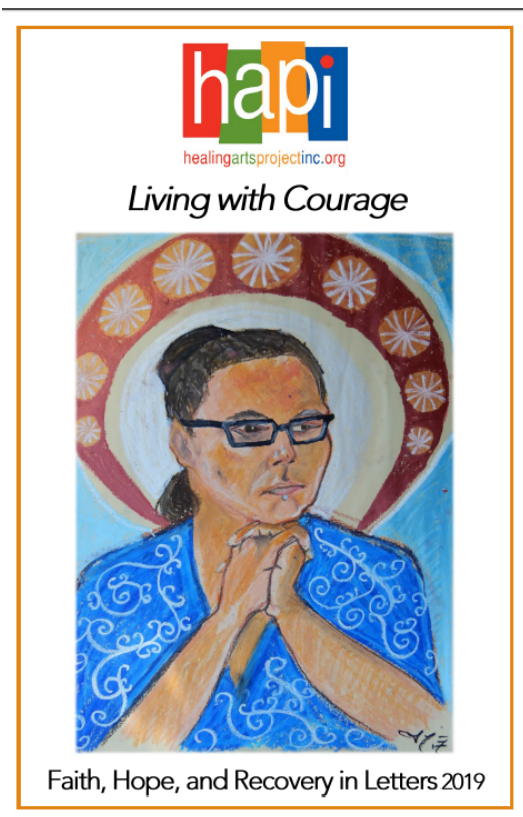
Welcome Tessa Antonelli to the Division of Mental Health Services. Tessa will be serving in a dual capacity as the Administrative Services Assistant III for the Office of Older Adults, Disaster Services & PASRR as well as the Office of Housing and Homeless Services. She brings administrative experience and organizational skills, including her most recent work with the Division of TennCare. Her experience with programs such as PASRR and Long Term Services and Supports, along with her exposure to public service in our state, provides for an ideal complement to the teams of both offices.

Tessa is originally from Los Angeles California and completed her education at Middle Tennessee State



University. She enjoys cooking and traveling and spoiling her dog, Blanche Devereaux.

MTMHI Standards Coordinator Dana Clark is one of the featured writers in HAPI booklet



Congratulations to Dana Clark, Standards Coordinator, at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. Dana's essay titled, *He Loves Me; He Loves Me Not*, was one of the pieces chosen for the annual booklet published by Healing Arts Project Inc. The booklet contains artwork and writing by people in recovery or those who support them. This year's theme was: Living with Courage.

Healing Arts Project, Inc. (HAPI) provides artistic opportunities for persons in mental health and addiction recovery to promote healing, community awareness, and inclusion. HAPI exists to fill a gap in recovery and rehabilitation services by providing free art classes taught by professional artists, art exhibitions, publication opportunities, and outreach events. These opportunities help participants express and externalize their personal struggles as they create art to tell their story, promoting healing in themselves and understanding in the community.

For more information on HAPI, visit healingartsprojectinc.org

Accounting Manager Don Smothers retires after 39 years of service

Congratulations to Don Smothers, Division of Fiscal Services, on his retirement. Don has spent 39 years serving the State of Tennessee and working for our Department. He began as an Accountant I and ends his career as Accounting Manager.

Don says, "I will miss the people I have worked with the most but also some of the challenges that kept my job interesting." In addition to continuing to serve on a 120-day assignment, he has been enjoying time with his 9-month-old grandson.

Don (left) is pictured with Department Controller Mike Walden.



Statewide Planning & Policy Council will meet Dec. 17 at MTMHI

What an awesome year for the Planning & Policy Council! We will close 2019 with a final Statewide Planning & Policy Council meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 17 at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. Members, please plan to join us from 10 am. to 2 p.m. CST.

Find information on the TDMHSAS Planning & Policy Council on [our website](#). A schedule of 2020 meeting dates will be posted asap. Dates are subject to change.

Recovery Court Conference is Dec. 11-13

CONNECTING TO CARE

15th Annual Recovery Court Conference

December 11-13, 2019



Embassy Suites
820 Crescent Centre Drive
Franklin, TN

Registration
TARCP Member: \$150
Non-member: \$250



Renew membership today! <https://tarcp.wildapricot.org/join-us>

This project is funded by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

To register, visit <https://tarcp.wildapricot.org/event-3519123>.

In the event of a **MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY:**

Call 855-CRISIS-1

*855-274-7471

For confidential help

from a caring crisis professional
in your area, available
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
This is a free call.
You can also text TN to 741741.



To learn more about Crisis Services in the State of Tennessee, [visit our website](#).

For questions about substance abuse treatment,
Call or Text the Tennessee REDLINE
800-889-9789

*We hope you've enjoyed this issue of the Update!
If you have news to share (a story idea, accomplishment, provider news,
etc.) or if you'd like to be added to the distribution list, please email:*


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