



A Message from Commissioner Williams

The week of Valentine's was a busy one for TDMHSAS leadership as the team presented Governor Lee's FY23 budget for our department on February 14 and 16. The hearings went well, and lawmakers on the House Finance, Ways, and Means Committee and Senate Health and Welfare Committee expressed support and admiration for the life-changing work that you do. They also asked insightful questions to more deeply understand issues affecting the public behavioral health system including workforce challenges, increasing need for treatment, and rising deaths from drug overdose.

If you want to watch the legislative budget hearings, here are the links:

[Senate Health & Welfare Committee](#) Our hearing begins at about 29:00

[House Finance, Ways & Means Committee](#) Our hearing begins at about 1:42:00

Lawmakers will continue budget hearings for other departments, setting their priorities, and making possible amendments to the Governor's proposal. As you likely know, that process continues up through the end of legislative

session as the budget is near the end of items passed by lawmakers. As always, we appreciate your support through this process, and we are eager and excited to see how the final FY23 state budget shakes out.

As we seek to expand services to reach more Tennesseans and continue to deliver the amazing, life-changing services we currently have, we of course do so with an eye to serving all communities. February is Black History Month, and how fitting that this year's BHM theme is Black Health and Wellness. We all know that mental health is undeniably linked to a person's total health and wellness. On a recent Central Office all-staff meeting, our Director of Wellness and Employment Services, Mark Liverman, shared an inspirational message about a noteworthy piece of art he has in his office. [It's an American flag with lines from the Declaration of Independence and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech on alternating stripes \(link to image\)](#). As Mark eloquently explained, he has the print prominently placed in his office to spur conversation around progress in attaining the ideals of **both** historic documents. This month and every month, I want to encourage you to learn from, share with, and grow together with the people you meet, the coworkers on your team, and the people we are blessed to serve.

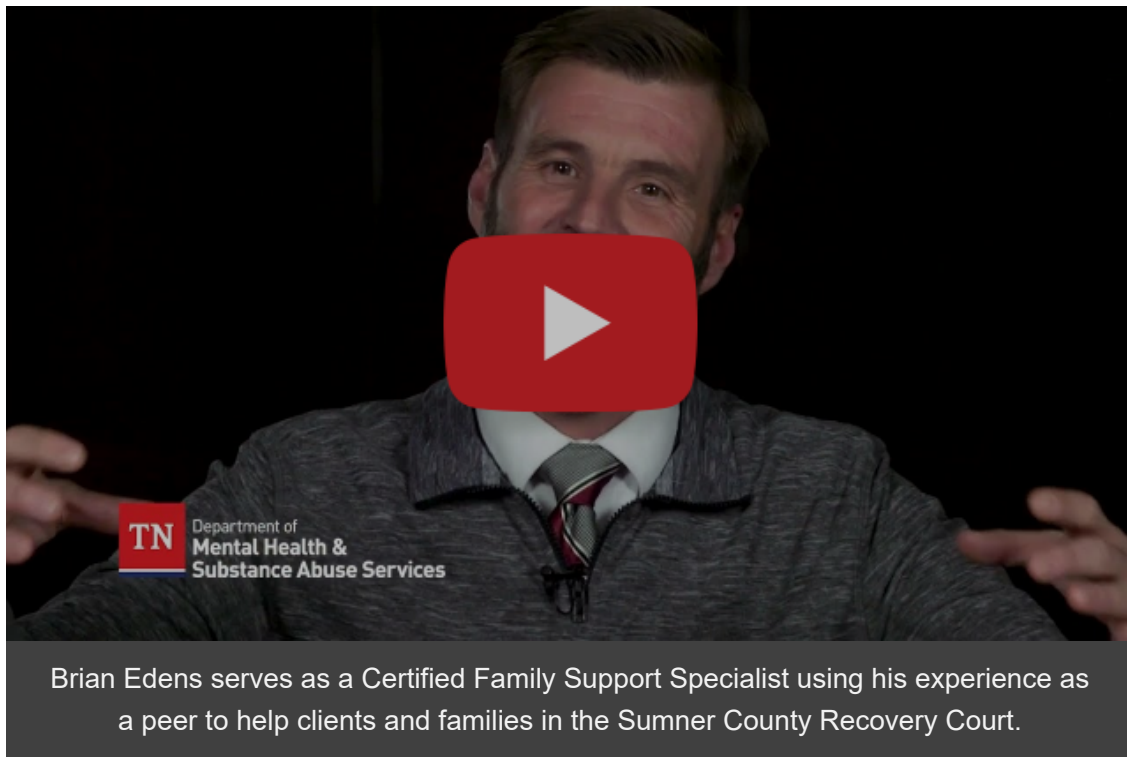
Have a blessed day,

Marie

New Videos Highlight Tennessee's Recovery Courts

Profiles show impact of alternative sentencing on program participants and communities





TDMHSAS is proud to publish a series of twelve new videos highlighting individuals who work in Tennessee's Recovery Courts. Tennessee has a total of 82 Recovery Courts, Veterans Treatment Courts, Mental Health Courts, Juvenile and Family, and DUI courts which offer a rigorous program of treatment, testing, and therapy as an alternative to incarceration.

The video profiles feature professionals at all levels of the court system from judges and prosecutors to program coordinators, case workers, and even one court graduate who is now employed providing peer support in a court. Courts featured in the profile serve a wide range of communities from the largest cities in Tennessee to some of the state's most rural counties. Counties covered by participants in the video profiles include Blount, Cannon, DeKalb, Hawkins, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Shelby, and Sumner.

[Watch the videos at this link on TN.gov](#)

Collegiate Recovery Academy

Collegiate Recovery Academies continue to build bridges to recovery on college campuses across Tennessee



All smiles from the crew that coordinated a successful event at Motlow State's campus in Moore County

It's been a busy month for the Collegiate Recovery Initiative as they hosted a pair of Collegiate Recovery Academy events at Motlow State Community College and UT Southern. Collectively, about 225 participants learned about addiction on college campuses, creating recovery resources, and suicide prevention.



The newest campus in the University of Tennessee System, UT Southern in Pulaski, is on board with collegiate recovery!

Upcoming Collegiate Recovery Academies are scheduled for Motlow State's McMinnville Campus, East Tennessee State University, UT Martin, and UT Chattanooga. Learn more about the Collegiate Recovery Initiative at this link: tn.gov/behavioral-health/collegiate-recovery.

MTMHI Employee Recognized with Governor's Excellence in Service Award



Congratulations to Danielle Atkinson for being recognized with the Governor's Excellence in Service Award! Danielle serves as Employee Health Nurse at MTMHI where she has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the last two years she has continually evaluated and updated the medical status of staff, assisted with patient testing, and supported contact tracing, COVID testing, vaccinations, and influenza vaccinations. Throughout the pandemic, Danielle has shown herself to be a compassionate leader to all MTMHI employees. Congrats, Danielle, and thank you for your service!

TDMHSAS New Hires and Promotions

Please join us in welcoming Tonya



Albert as the newest Fiscal Monitor for the TDMHSAS Division of Administrative & Regulatory Services, Office of Subrecipient Monitoring and Audit. Tonya brings substantial experience in accounting, planning, and professional development training preparation. Tonya started with TDMHSAS in June 2014 as an Accounting Technician and continued her progression through the State, working for the Department of F&A and DHS.

Congratulations to Karen Doles on her appointment as WMHI's Hospital Administrator. Karen has worked at WMHI since 2005 and has served in many roles. She has worked in Clinical Services, Utilization Management, served as the Payroll Officer for both WMHI and MMHI and most recently served as the Director of Procurement for WMHI and MMHI. Prior to coming to WMHI, Karen worked for many years as a Paralegal and Office Manager at multiple law firms. Karen possesses strong leadership skills and a vast knowledge of the operations of the hospital.



Mental Health Cooperative Receives

Joint Commission Accreditation



Congratulations to Mental Health Cooperative for receiving [The Joint Commission's](#) Gold Seal of Approval[®] for the Behavioral Health and Human Services Accreditation. TJC's Gold Seal recognizes an organization's commitment to providing the highest standard of safe mental health care, and anyone who's been through a review by the Joint Commission knows it's an honor not bestowed lightly!

Mental Health Cooperative is also getting ready to cut the ribbon on a new office in Manchester. The new location at 1415 Hillsboro Blvd will be a full-service site working with children, adolescents, and adults. It's scheduled to open March 1.

WHMI Announces Employee of the Year



JoJuan Walker has been named as Western Mental Health Institute's 2021 Employee of the Year. Mr. Walker has been an employee for the State of Tennessee 17 years. He started at WMHI in 2005 as a Psychiatric Technician and was promoted to the position of Lead Psychiatric Technician in January 2021. In addition to his duties as a Lead Psychiatric Technician, Mr. Walker serves as a Handle with Care trainer and is a member of the Patient Proactive Committee/Patient Right's Committee.

During the course of his career, Mr. Walker has developed into an amazing leader and all-around team player. Recently, Mr. Walker's swift and astute skills helped him identify a choking patient and respond by performing the Heimlich maneuver, potentially saving the patient's life.

The compassion that Mr. Walker displays extends to both his patients and coworkers. He is known as the go-to person when other staff members have questions, need assistance solving a problem, or simply need someone to talk to. His coworkers use words like exceptional, flexible, proactive, responsible, leader, humble, stable, understanding, and caring to describe Mr. Walker.

Outside of work, Mr. Walker enjoys spending time with his children, family and friends. He loves to ride bikes with his kids and play kickball or basketball with the children at his mom's daycare. Sunday afternoons are reserved for "Dem Boys" as he is an avid Dallas Cowboys fan.

Moccasin Bend Spreads Love



Love is lifting each other up, and that's exactly what Moccasin Bend did with their hall decorations for the month of February. Staff members wrote words of encouragement and inspiration to other staff members on paper hearts.

Shout Out!

Congrats on your retirement, Maureen!





(L to R): Maureen Sadler, Mary Beth Young, WMHI Nurse Executive, and Jo Ann Marcell, RN

Congratulations to Maureen Sadler who retired from WMHI with 53 years of State service! Maureen came to work at WMHI as a Psychiatric Technician, working in that position for 15 years before moving to a Unit Clerk. She worked as a Unit Clerk in the old Dunn Building (long-term care) and later on Unit B2. Her co-workers surprised her with a reception to wish her well and thank her for her years of service to the patients, families, and fellow staff at WMHI.

WMHI Recreation Therapy Staff

Shout out to the amazing WMHI Rec Therapy staff for all that you do each day for the patients you serve!





Standing (l-r): Aaron Tigner RT2, Gregory Hudson RT2, Cater Hamer RT2, Curtis Neal RT2, Michael Brown Director, Clifton Lockett Supervisor, Andrew Prather RT2, & Presley Griggs RT2
Seated (l-r): Regina Williams RT2, Stacy Ambrose RT2, Janet Brownlee RT2, Tasha Robinson RT2

MTMHI Unit F monthly cook off: January Chicken Salad

The judges chose Genieve Graham's chicken salad for being tasty and original. Congratulations Genieve, and keep on cooking!



If you'd like to "shout out" to a TDMHSAS colleague, please send an email

to Kearston.Winrow@tn.gov. Tell us who you'd like to recognize and why.

Save-the-Dates

Planning and Policy Council Meetings

The TDMHSAS Planning and Policy Council Committee meetings will resume in April

To listen to recordings of past meetings, and to verify the schedule and plans for future meetings, please visit the department website at these links:

[Statewide and Committee meeting schedule](#)

[Regional Committee meeting schedule](#)

TDMHSAS is committed to providing individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from TDMHSAS programs, activities, and services. To request reasonable accommodations or modifications, please contact Amy Holland at amy.holland@tn.gov at least 10 business days prior to the meeting. Requests for accommodations or modifications made after the deadline will be honored to the maximum extent feasible, but it may not be possible to fulfill them.

TNDepartment of
**Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services****SAVE THE DATE**

HEALTHY TRANSITIONS SUMMIT



**A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND
PROVIDERS
AS WE LEARN TO NAVIGATE
“THE NEW NORMAL”**

March 30th 9am- 12 pm CT

&

March 31st 12:30-3:30 pm CT

Virtual Meeting on Zoom

<https://tnhealthytransitions.org/>

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Save the date March 30 and 31st for a summit organized by TN Healthy Transitions. Join us as we explore and discuss “The New Normal” on youth and young adult mental health! During this mental health summit, our speakers and young adults will guide us in conversations about the influences of social media, finding employment, and managing finances during the pandemic. The summit is open to providers and young people who want to learn more about connecting with youth and navigating youth and young adult mental health during the pandemic. The summit has two learning tracks split into two days; a provider-focused day and a youth/young adult-focused day. We hope to see you soon. Please mark your calendars and Save the Date!

Resources

Call or text for emotional support for healthcare workers, first responders, and teachers

COVID-19 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT LINE FOR TENNESSEE

Need to talk to someone about feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, or depression related to work? Calltakers with the COVID-19 Emotional Support Line can help.



Tennesseans working in education, healthcare, or first responder roles can call or text:

888-642-7886

Calltakers are available: 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. (CT), 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. (ET)

The COVID-19 Emotional Support line is a collaborative project among National Association of Social Workers-TN Chapter and the following groups:



In the event of a mental health emergency ...

STATEWIDE
CRISIS LINE
HELP IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS
855-CRISIS-1 TN.gov/CrisisLine
855-274-7471 

For questions about addiction treatment/referrals ...



TN
REDLINE 
1.800.889.9789
CALL OR TEXT 

To talk with a TDMHSAS Consumer Advocate ...

Need help with mental health or substance use services?

Call the TDMHSAS Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services

HELPLINE

1-800-560-5767

We can help with:

- finding mental health and substance abuse resources in your area
- questions about insurance
- finding housing options
- communicating with mental health and substance abuse providers
- questions about the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program
- filing a complaint



We are available

- Monday through Friday
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CT
- Closed on state holidays



Department of
**Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**

OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov | [TN.gov/behavioral-health](https://tn.gov/behavioral-health)

OUR MISSION: CREATING
COLLABORATIVE PATHWAYS
TO RESILIENCY, RECOVERY & INDEPENDENCE
FOR TENNESSEANS LIVING
WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

OUR VISION:

A STATE OF *RESILIENCY, RECOVERY, AND INDEPENDENCE*
IN WHICH **TENNESSEANS**
LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS
AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS **THRIVE**

AS A DEPARTMENT, WE VALUE:

CUSTOMER FOCUSED:

An unwavering commitment to keep patients and those who serve them at the forefront of every decision.

INTEGRITY:

Honesty and truth in all we do.

INSPIRED PURPOSE:

The call to action in service of a cause greater than one's self.

EXCELLENCE:

The highest standards for services, efficiency, and conduct.

COMPASSIONATE

AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

The commitment to make effective decisions and inspire others through active listening and empathy.

SOLUTIONS AND OUTCOMES-ORIENTED:

The commitment to positive outcomes and meaningful changes in response to the critical needs of the Tennesseans we serve.

PARTNERSHIP:

Beyond teamwork, collaboration based on mutual success to the benefit of the Tennesseans we are blessed to serve.

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: the Office of Communications at OC.TDMHSAS@tn.gov.

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