



### *A Message from Commissioner Williams*

Dear Friends and Partners,

Have been wondering what exactly could be said in this moment as the tragedy in Nashville touches all of us in different ways. Wanted to reach out and let you know I'm thinking about each of you and those we serve. Whether it's your background in the helping field, maybe you have children, grandchildren or you're deeply connected to the community, I know a lot of us are feeling this tragedy personally. Whatever you're feeling right now, know that it's OK. It's OK to take a minute, process your feelings—talk to a friend, and work through it together. If you don't have someone you can talk to, please reach out to 988 or your employee assistance program.

The services you provide professionally are making a difference now more than ever for our neighbors. We're so proud of our amazing community behavioral health partners who were among the first responders to this tragedy, and they continue to provide amazing support in this time to the families, school personnel, emergency response teams, and others in our community.

Thank you for all that you do,

# TDMHSAS Announces Grants for Four New Crisis Stabilization Units and Walk-In Centers

TDMHSAS is excited to announce the creation of four new Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs) and Crisis Walk-In Centers. When the additional locations enter service later this year and early next year, the state's already robust crisis services capacity will be expanded to a total of 12 centers.

Crisis Stabilization Units and Walk-In Centers offer an alternative to inpatient psychiatric hospitalization with 24/7 evaluation and stabilization services available. They are an alternative to calling 911 or going to an emergency department for people trying to find care for a loved one. They are also an opportunity for pre-arrest diversion for law enforcement instead of taking someone to jail. Anyone needing to access mental health care in a crisis should call or text 988 or chat with [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).

The four new locations focus on rapidly expanding suburban areas and rural areas where unmet need was identified:

- Murfreesboro, Rutherford County
- Clarksville, Montgomery County
- Paris, Henry County
- Dyersburg, Dyer County

The four locations are in various states of construction with the first tentatively set to open in mid-2023.

# CRISIS Stabilization Resources

8

Crisis Walk-in Centers  
Crisis Stabilization Centers



Watch a video showing how Tennessee's Crisis Services system works.

## Tennessee's Day of Hope



People paused on Friday, March 10th to recognize the role of hope in recovery and restoration for the third annual Tennessee's Day of Hope. With a proclamation from Governor Bill Lee and a vision from Commissioner Williams, the Day of Hope has grown to inspire a collective sense of statewide hopefulness in the face of our state's significant challenges in the fields of addiction and mental illness. Several Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions and members of the Faith-Based Initiatives and Project Lifeline teams worked

together to host events that inspired, uplifted, and sent people out empowered to spread hope and knowledge in their communities.

*Above: Left, Tosh Newman sings an original song with a suicide prevention message called "Heaven Don't Need You Yet" at the Day of Hope event in Jackson. Right, The team with Obion County Prevention Coalition worked with coffee shops in their area to spread hope (and prevention messaging) through cups of coffee and tea!*



Metro Drug Coalition hosted its TN Day of Hope event at The Gateway. The event included proclamations from both the city and county mayors, free haircuts from Paul Mitchell and Selfless Scissors, videos of community members, speakers, food, and games. The day was a success, bringing the community together to celebrate that recovery is possible.



In Nashville, the Department's Faith-Based Initiatives crew teamed up with Lipscomb University to host an event for African American Ministry Leaders. Pictured Above: Lifeline Peer Project and Faith-Based Coordinators present a copy of Gov. Lee's proclamation to Dr. DeAndrea Witherspoon-Nash, Andrea Mills, and Kathi Johnson of Lipscomb University.



In Johnson County, the folks with ACTION Coalition turned the day into a \*Weekend\* of Hope! Here's a snap from one of their events.

---

## Art for Awareness



*Pictured above: Lisa Ragan with the department (left) and Lyneece Benton-Stewart with HAPI welcome participants to the Art for Awareness.*

Tennessee artists in recovery, supporters, and the community were able to 'Reveal Their Artist Within' at Art for Awareness. Art for Awareness is an annual event where TDMHSAS partners with the Healing Arts Project, Inc. (HAPI), bringing artists from all corners of Tennessee together to celebrate the healing power of all art forms. This year was the first year since 2019 that the event was held in person, and over fifty participants showed up to celebrate.



*Pictured above: Deputy Commissioner Matt Yancey cuts a rug with a participant during the movement portion of the event (left) and Commissioner Marie Williams (right) asks participants what's important to them to get real-time feedback.*



Caroline Beidler gave the keynote address speaking on the importance of peer support and advocacy.

Tennessee artists in recovery sent in their artwork to be showcased throughout the event. Submissions were received from various artists across the state.



Watch the video slideshow showing artwork that was submitted this year and last year!

---

## Celebrating National Social Work Month



Social Workers at Western Mental Health Institute (Seated, L-R): Melissa Fowler, Mia Jumper, Melissa Norvell, and LaBria Hardge (Standing, L-R): Jessica Lake, Mindy Hopper, Myra Rivers, Corsella Buchanan, Jacanto Bills, Essie Mitchell, Shawn Mahaffey, and Mary Bufford. Not pictured: Ande Newman

March is National Social Work Month. This year's national theme is *"Social Work Breaks Barriers."* Of course social workers are ESSENTIAL to so many of our services both in our RMHIs and at community mental health and addiction providers. We're so grateful for the social workers who are constantly changing lives and dedicating their careers to making others better, and we're excited for the new generation of women and men joining this challenging and rewarding profession!





Social workers in MBMHI's Unit 3 pause for a quick photo!



For Social Work Month 2023, we talked to Andrea Hancock about her journey to a career in social work and her passion for helping others. Among many roles, Andrea serves as a Regional Overdose Prevention Specialist in Nashville.

---

## Always Ready! RMHIs prep for Joint Commission surveys



MTMHI Staff (L to R): Eric Doxy, Catina Hunt, Joyce Kovacs, Karen Bessette, Nancy Moore, Diana Spencer

Maintaining the top accreditation in the hospital industry isn't easy. It takes constant training, evaluation, and preparation. The Division of Hospital Services and staff from Western Mental Health Institute (WMHI) and Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute (MBMHI) conducted a mock Joint Commission survey at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute (MTMHI) in early March. While pretending to be surveyors, they collaborated to provide meaningful knowledge and advice to MTMHI's staff so they can adequately prepare their facility for an upcoming Joint Commission survey. The staff at MTMHI did a phenomenal job addressing needs and ensuring patients are treated with the best possible care. All MTMHI staff seemed very appreciative of the guidance and effort taken to prepare them for the actual Joint Commission survey.



## Remembering Ben Dishman



Many avid readers of the TDMHSAS Update Newsletter will have fond memories of Ben Dishman. The former Acting Commissioner, long-time public servant, and decorated U.S. Army veteran died last September at age 85. His family is planning a memorial service 11:00 a.m. Saturday, April 22 at the Pavilion at Harpeth Hills ([Google Maps Link](#)).

Ben Dishman's first career in the U.S. Army spanned 20 years including two tours of duty in Vietnam, two Bronze Stars for Valor, and even time teaching as a professor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, his alma mater. After retirement in 1979, Ben joined TDMHSAS as Assistant Commissioner of Administration Services. After 16 years in that role, he was appointed Deputy Commissioner, and eventually served more than three years as Acting Commissioner in the administration of Governor Don Sundquist. Ben retired from state service in 2003 after 24 years with TDMHSAS.

---

## Moccasin Bend Creates New Initiative Change 4 All



Moccasin Bend has embarked on a new initiative called Change 4 All with a celebratory carnival. The carnival highlighted MBMHI's core values - Hope, Empathy, Advocacy, Respect, Trust, and Safety emphasizing work with patients but in daily interactions between staff members. Change 4 All grew out of other initiatives, including MBMHI Trauma Informed Care Committee and an overall desire to make the hospital safer and more therapeutic for patients and staff. The Change 4 All initiative came about as an administrative decision to merge all the work that was going on in multiple committees into one cohesive committee working toward the same goals.

***Change 4 All has three main areas:***

1. Case conferences with patients and care staff to address behavioral health needs
2. Pilot program in Unit 1 focused on patient violence precautions by giving assessments and talking through de-escalation tactics. It's early days in this pilot program, but initial reports about it are very positive.
3. Increasing training in building healthy, appropriate relationships with patients and increasing skills in de-escalation. Fifteen staff members attended a 3-day training session to become certified trainers in the Aegis verbal de-escalation and relationship-building model.

## Unit 6 Brings Love to Local Nursing Home



MBMHI Unit 6 community hand-crafted gifts for a local nursing home in hopes to bring them a bit of happiness on Valentine's Day. This is the second community service project unit 6 has completed in 2023. Both projects were planned and carried out through patient and staff collaboration. This project was organized by the unit's AT staff Tiffany Jones.

---

## Shout Out!

*MMHI Employee Receives Governor's Excellence in Service Award*



Congratulations to James Thornton, Jr! James serves as a Lead Psychiatric Technician at Memphis Mental Health Institute, and he was the TDMHSAS selection for the Governor's Excellence in Service Award for fall 2022. Thornton and his fellow recipients from other departments were honored recently with a luncheon at the Executive Residence. In Thornton's nomination, his MMHI coworkers wrote: *"James is the true foundation and leader of MMHI's psychiatric technician corps. He excels at customer care, conflict management, and is continually looking for ways to better himself and his colleagues. His mastery of "proactive patient care" enables him to recognize potential conflicts before they occur and skillfully diffuse tension between patients. This proactive practice helps maintain a calmer, more therapeutic environment where, ultimately, patients recover and return to their families and communities sooner. James's patient-centric work makes him one of the most valuable parts of a department charged with protecting some of our State's most vulnerable citizens."*

***WMHI Employee of the Year***



Mr. Jacanto Bills was recognized as Western Mental Health Institute's 2022 Employee of the Year! Mr. Bills first started his career with WMHI in 2004 as a Psychiatric Technician and later was promoted to a Recreation Therapist 2 in the Adjunctive Therapy Department. While in Adjunctive Therapy, Jacanto began pursuing his graduate degree and became a Special Education Teacher. Mr. Bills found his way back to WMHI in 2021 and joined the Social Services Department working in admission units.

Mr. Bills is described as very dedicated to his team and department as well as being very patient and placement focused with his patients. He has a history of encouraging those around him and consistently makes it a priority to model positive relationships across departments while encouraging patients to feel accepted, dignified, and hopeful. Western Mental Health Institute is very fortunate to have Mr. Bills on the team.

***WMHI recognizes service awards***



WMHI recently recognized and thanked employees for their years of service to the State of Tennessee. Shown in the photograph are:

**Front Row (seated I-r):** Antoinette Lloyd-Henley, 25 years, Brenda Chatman, 5 years, Dorothy Prather, 45 years, Randia Pirtle, 5 years, and Shirley McGowan, 45 years.

**Second Row (seated I-r):** Stacey Riffle, 10 years, and Tony Giles, 5 years.

**Back Row (I-r):** Barrett Stevens, 25 years, Jessica Russell, 15 years, Denise Littlejohn, 45 years, Nichole Brown, 5 years, Clifton Lockett, 20 years, Tasha Robinson, 5 years, Amy Borseth, 15 years, Sharon Franklin, 15 years, Aaron Tigner, 5 years, Ryan McDonald, 10 years, Brian Butler, 5 years, and Josh Carter, 20 years.

Also recognized for their State service but not pictured:

**5 Years:** Cynthia McQueen, Ku Yee Fu Lor, Dawn Thigpen, Mason Peeler, Yolanda Winters, Ashley Williams, Dorothy Morgan, Robert Whitmore, Quantissa Hamer, Cawaski Jones, and Edna Polk

**10 Years:** Burt Davis, Lori Kennedy, Martin Mitchell, Randy Moore, Kelley Holloway, Jeremy Bogue, and Smith Mahometano

**15 Years:** Geraldine Beauregard, Bradwick Lax, and Jacanto Bills

**20 Years:** Katina McNeal, Toriko Wooden, Shirley Woods, Michael Davis, Amanda Buchwald, Narada Smith, and Archie Reaves



**25 Years:** Marvin Coby, Terrence Smith, and Louise Lockett

**35 Years:** Carrie McGowan, Jacque Jackson, and James L. McGowan

Congratulations to all and thank you for your service to the people of the State of Tennessee!

If you'd like to "shout out" to a TDMHSAS colleague, please send an email to [Kearston.Winrow@tn.gov](mailto:Kearston.Winrow@tn.gov). Tell us who you'd like to recognize and why.

---

## Workplace Mental Health Support Certification



The Mental Health Association of East Tennessee is first Tennessee employer to receive the prestigious Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health. The honor is a national certification program that recognizes employers committed to employee mental health, health and wellbeing. Ben Harrington, CEO of MHA of East Tennessee said, "Employers wanting to create mentally healthy workplaces must evaluate and work to enhance organizational policies, practices, benefits, and perks to craft a culture to help employees thrive!" You

can learn more about the [Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health by visiting the MHA website at this link.](#)

---

# Save-the-Dates

## *Planning and Policy Council Meetings*

### **Adult Committee**

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. CST

TDMHSAS

Conference Room 339, 6th Floor

Andrew Jackson Building

500 Deaderick Street

Nashville, TN 37243

### **Region VI**

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CST

Pathways

238 Summar Drive

Jackson, TN 38301

### **Region III**

Thursday, April 13, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

AIM Center

472 W. MLK Blvd.

Chattanooga, TN 37402

### **Region VII**

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CST

Church Health

1350 Concourse Ave., Suite 142

Memphis, TN 38104

To verify the schedule and plans for future meetings, please visit the department website at these links:

[Statewide & Committee Meeting Schedule \(tn.gov\)](#)

[Regional Council Meeting Schedule \(tn.gov\)](#)

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](mailto: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.



---

## Resources

*In the event of a mental health emergency ...*

# 988 24/7 Crisis & Support



*For questions about addiction treatment/referrals ...*

**TN  
REDLINE**   
**1.800.889.9789**  
**CALL OR TEXT** 

  

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



**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](mailto:OC.TDMHSAS@tn.gov).*

*And please connect with us on social media!*



Find us on  
**Facebook**

Thanks to our [Facebook family](#) for "liking" us and sharing our posts!

---



Follow us on  
*Instagram*

Join us on  
**Linked** 



Website



Facebook



Instagram



LinkedIn