

TDMHDD Update

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SPRING 2010

New Western Mental Health Institute Opens

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD) Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts hosted the grand opening of the new Western Mental Health Institute on Friday, March 12, 2010.

The new facility includes a state-of-the-art “treatment mall” where patients will spend the majority of the day in a classroom atmosphere receiving services including counseling, medication management, case management, and other psychiatric inpatient services.

The facility will also house a telemedicine pilot program in collaboration with Carey Counseling Center in Union City, Tenn., in an effort to reduce unnecessary transportation to the institute for mental health assessments.

“We are extremely excited about this new facility that will improve acute mental health services, as well as overall health care in Bolivar and throughout West Tennessee,” stated TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. “This facility embodies our



From Left to Right: Rep. Johnny Shaw, TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts, WMHI CEO Roger Pursley, and Speaker Emeritus Jimmy Naifeh at the ribbon cutting ceremony Friday, March 12, 2010.

department’s mission to provide quality care in the least restrictive environment. Access to telemedicine services for mental health assessments will drastically cut down on transportation costs for communities in northwest Tennessee.”

Patients and staff moved into the new 162-bed facility at the end of March. The construction team broke ground in June of 2008 and completed construction under budget and ahead of schedule. The facility has received certification for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) through the Green Building

Rating System developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED certification is designed to promote design and construction practices that increase efficiency while reducing the negative environmental impacts of buildings and improving occupant health and well-being.

WMHI first opened in 1889 to serve mentally ill persons in rural West Tennessee. ■

Art for Awareness 5th ANNUAL

**May 3 Event at Legislative Plaza
Reset for Later Date Due to Flooding
of Nashville**

Consumer artists from across Tennessee were invited to bring a sample of their artwork to Nashville on Monday, May 3, 2010 at 1 p.m. CST to display in the Legislative Plaza and the State Capitol for the month of May, which is Mental Health Awareness Month. The event was

cancelled due to the severe weather and flooding that affected the Nashville area over the May 1st weekend. The event will be reset, and the new date announced in this issue and on the department’s web site under “Recent Updates.” Notices of the new date will also be sent to all registered artists and their representatives.

Art for awareness provides a great opportunity to share artwork and stories of recovery and resiliency by persons healing from mental illnesses and substance abuse. Professional artists,

first time artists and hobby artists have been showcased and “discovered” through this event, sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Mental Health Cooperative and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities.

Registration is closed for this event, and registered artists are encouraged to bring at least one family member or friend. The public is reminded to come to the Legislative Plaza in the month following the event and view the artwork on display in the hallway between the plaza cafeteria and escalators to the capitol building. For more information call (615) 253-4812 or email Lorene.Lambert@tn.gov



Conference Provided Tools to Reduce African American Suicides

NASHVILLE – The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD) and the Davidson County Metro Public Health Department hosted “Silencing the Silent Epidemic: Suicide Prevention and African American Faith Communities” to raise awareness of suicide. The conference was held Monday, March 15, 2010 at the Lentz Metro Public Health Department in Nashville. More than 185 professional and community leaders attended.

The conference was an important, first-time event in Nashville between TDMHDD, the Behavioral Health Services of the Metro Public Health Department, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, (TSPN), the Tennessee Department of Health, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, G45-Davidson County Juvenile Detention Center, and several leaders in Middle Tennessee African American churches. Organizers hoped to provide faith communities with tools to address suicide prevention and help participants develop suicide prevention strategies to be implemented within their communities. The conference featured national experts in the areas of suicide prevention, mental health and alcohol and drug issues including Howard University researcher and founder of the National Association of People of Color Against Suicide, Donna Barnes, Ph.D., and Chairman of the Meharry Medical College Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Rahn Bailey, M.D., among others.

“The conference produced valuable dialogue and a commitment from all who attended to address suicide prevention as a public health issue, with an emphasis on the role of faith leaders in raising awareness of suicide and suicide prevention in their communities,” said TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. “Suicide is an especially devastating death and in many cases can be prevented through the appropriate utilization of mental health services.”

As a result of continued interest by conference participants, a meeting on April 24, 2010 of Middle Tennessee community faith leaders resulted in the development of a sample suicide statement to be used as they develop their own statement and plan of action for their faith communities to prevent suicide.



Dr. Rahn K. Bailey, Chairman of the Meharry Medical College Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences spoke at the conference.



Left to Right: Curtis W. Goodwin, Sr., Pastor of Nashville's Watson Grove Missionary Baptist Church and Conference Faith Leader; Angie Thompson, Director of Behavioral Health Services, Metro Public Health Department and Conference Co-Chair; Dr. Howard L. Burley, Chief Medical Director and Assistant Commissioner of Clinical Leadership, TDMHDD; Gwen Hamer, Director of Education and Development, TDMHDD and Conference Co-Chair; Dr. Donna Barnes, President and Co-founder of the National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide (NOPCAS), Washington, DC; and Pastor Dianne Young and Bishop William Young, founders of the Healing Center Full Gospel Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee and Conference Speakers.

According to conference co-chair, Gwen Hamer, many more church leaders have called requesting information on suicide prevention programs and materials for the communities they serve. For more information, contact Gwen.Hamer@tn.gov or Angie.Thompson@nashville.gov.

Facts About Suicide in the African American Community

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among black youth (15-24), just after homicides and accidents.
- Between 1980 and 1995, the suicide rate among African Americans ages 10-14 increased 233 percent. The rate of suicide among black teens aged 15-19 more than doubled during the same period.
- The latest statistics for the U.S. show that certified deaths of African Americans are from suicide at a rate of five each day. Suicides are frequently under reported and these numbers likely may not represent the full picture, which is that suicides are increasingly prevalent in the African American community. ■

Operation Immersion Set for June

TDMHDD's Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services Division, the Tennessee National Guard and the Tennessee Veteran's Task Force will host a third Operation Immersion training at the Smyrna Air Force Base on June 17-18, 2010. The one-and-a-half-day comprehensive training experience immerses behavioral health professionals in military culture and issues unique to service members and their families who have served in combat or experienced multiple deployments. The training is the only known military immersion experience for mental health professionals in the country and is provided free of charge to participants. Last November, over 100 professional counselors, psychiatrists and behavioral health specialists attended the second training and learned what it is like to sleep in the barracks, pass PT chores and inspections, and enjoy ready-to-eat meals. They also toured

aircraft and evacuation helicopters and heard from Tennessee National Guard Officers and experts on suicide prevention, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and other serious issues, such as substance abuse disorders, unique to the military experience in wartime.

An additional training and meeting for mental health representatives from other states with Access to Recovery programs will be held in August to share and promote this innovative program model.

More information on activities and registration for the June training will be announced online through the TDMHDD Website under "Upcoming Events." ■

Department Provides Co-Occurring Disorder Enhancement Training for Mental Health Professionals



Dr. A. J. Ernst (fourth from the left) leads mental health professionals in an exercise in Native American culture as they role-play during the Co-Occurring Disorder Enhancement Training.

At the Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute, the TDMHDD Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services provided training in October, 2009, to professionals who work in the sometimes traumatic and difficult field of co-occurring disorders (COD) for the purpose of enhancing their agencies' capacity to treat clients with COD. Speaker Anthony J. Ernst, Ph.D, reminded the more than 80 participants that they are "not islands in this business" as they encounter COD clients and deal with one of the most difficult mental illnesses known today. Dr. Ernst reminded them that they often have to set aside their own biases, understand the particulars of the culture of the client, and remember that everyone has the capacity for recovery. By focusing on overcoming problems within their own service environment, professionals can also improve the quality of health care experience for their patients and themselves through integrated care.

Continued COD training will occur at the COD Symposium on May 7, 2010 at the Mental Health Co-op in Nashville. For more information, contact Steve Sheehan at (615) 743-1547 or Ssheehan@mhc-tn.org. ■

Remembering Commissioner Marjorie Nelle Cardwell

In December 2009, Marjorie Nelle Hyder Cardwell, Commissioner of TDMHDD under Governor Don Sundquist from 1995 to 1996, passed away at age 82 in Elizabethton, Tennessee. Cardwell devoted much of her life, as did her husband, Robert, to the care and treatment of persons with developmental disabilities. They began their work with their own mentally challenged son, Robert Cardwell III, who today lives independently and holds a job.

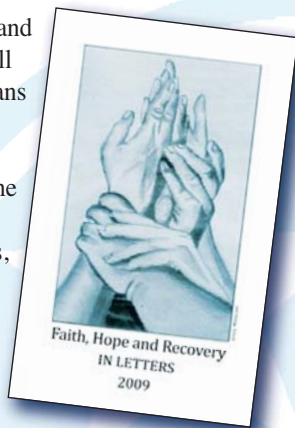


It was Cardwell who navigated the difficult times of a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court that sought to improve medical care and conditions at the state's developmental centers. The judge even ordered Cardwell to serve every fourth weekend of the month at the Arlington Developmental Center, which she did and worked hard to meet all of the court's requirements so that, ultimately, conditions were improved and problems corrected.

– HAPPENINGS –

MTMHSAC Publishes Work of Consumer Writers

The Middle Tennessee Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition issued a call for consumer writers and 80 Tennesseans responded. Selections, published in *Faith, Hope and Recovery in Letters 2009*, reflect the joys and sorrows in the struggle against mental illness and addictions. Poems, biographical essays, and musings offer consumer’s reflections about their lives and their hopes for a better tomorrow. The creative spirit is a source of enrichment in all people and that enhances treatment and bolsters recovery and resiliency. As one writer said, “Art makes me feel good about myself, [and] gives meaning and purpose to my life.”



**“From darkness to light
From weakness to strength
The time is long
There will be healing
A process sometimes weary
But beauty revealing”**
-- Excerpt from
Devin Meintzer’s “Untitled”

The book was made possible by a grant from AmeriChoice and Amerigroup and printed by Allegra Printing & Imaging. Copies of the softbound, 48-page book are available by calling (615) 665-2914 or by email at mtmhsac@yahoo.com.

County Judges Win TAMHO Award for Volunteer Work

Two Washington County Judges, Robert Lincoln and James Nidiffer, received the Frank G. Clement Community Service award for their creation of a Mental Health Court. The Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations made the award for exemplary lay leadership, outstanding volunteer service and effective community-wide leadership for accomplishments that positively impact the community. During the award ceremony in Nashville, Lincoln and Nidiffer were quick to give credit to Frontier Health’s Deborah Cloyd as the catalyst for the program and “the driving force’ behind the mental health court.

The court deals with offenders with misdemeanors who have mental illness and who were not intentionally committing a crime. A treatment plan is developed and put into place that allows diversion of certain charges where no violent or sexual crime is committed. Those who enter the program must agree to stay on medication, go through counseling and continue to abide with the law. It includes a year of intense treatment, which would not be possible if the offenders were in jail. Those who complete the program successfully are given a graduation ceremony. Mental Health Court is closed to the public, and the records are guarded by HIPAA guidelines. The TAMHO award is named for Frank G. Clement, governor of Tennessee from 1953 – 1967, who created the original Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Retardation*. For more information about the award program and TAMHO, visit www.tamho.org.

*Retardation is now referred to as intellectual disability, and DIDS services programs are under the guidance of the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration.

Remembering The Rev. Acuff, Chaplain of Lakeshore MHI

Knoxville News Sentinel — The Rev. Lea Earl Acuff, retired chaplain of Lakeshore Mental Health Institute and a local pioneer in ministering to the mentally ill, passed away on April 8, 2010 at the age 86.

The Rev. Acuff’s career at Lakeshore spanned more than 40 years, beginning in the 1950s as one of the facility’s first clinically trained chaplains.

“He was just a quiet, gentle soul,” said the Rev. George Doebler, a former chief of chaplains for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities. “Back in those days, clergy never went near those places.”



Without fanfare, said Doebler, the Rev. Acuff fostered relationships with a number of local ministers, recruiting them to provide ongoing aftercare to discharged patients - before social workers were available.

The Rev. Acuff, a Disciples of Christ ordained minister, also was ahead of his time in recognizing the distinction between mental illness and alcoholism, when it was still common for alcoholics to be admitted to Lakeshore, Doebler said. Likewise, the chaplain was instrumental in starting several Alcoholics Anonymous groups in East Tennessee.

Rev. Acuff is survived by two daughters, a son, and his wife, Mildred B. Acuff.

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Department's 2010-2011 Fiscal Budget Analysis Available Online

Commissioner Betts appeared before the 105th General Assembly's House Finance Ways and Means Committee on March 2, 2010 and the Senate General Welfare, Health and Human Resources Committee on March 10, 2010 to report on the department's proposed budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2010.

For a chart of the House Finance Ways and Means Committee's analysis of the department's budget, [Click Here](#).



Whitlock Honored By TAMHO

On December 17, 2009, Marthagem Whitlock, Assistant Commissioner of Policy, Legislation and Regulation at the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD) was awarded the 2009 Dorothea Dix Professional Service

Award from the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations.

In her 33 years with TDMHDD, Whitlock has served successfully in many leadership roles including forensic and juvenile court services, regulation and legislation and other specialized services. Whitlock was also a founding member of the Forensics Division of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and occupied several leadership positions in that organization.

The Dorothea Dix Professional Service Award honors outstanding professionalism in the field of behavioral health. It recognizes significant contributions made over an extended period of time to the behavioral health system or a single monumental contribution that will have far-reaching and long-lasting positive impact on the quality and/or scope of services delivered in the state.

Mallory Powell Named Special Assistant to Commissioner

Mallory Powell serves as Commissioner Betts' Special Assistant for Policy Projects. Prior to her employment by TDMHDD, Powell graduated summa cum laude



from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. She studied International Affairs and Spanish and, most recently, spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar working at Nha Trang University in Viet Nam. Contact Powell at Mallory.Powell@tn.gov or at (615) 532-6515.

Hippel Is Legislative Liaison for TDMHDD

Kurt Hippel, a native of Memphis, Tennessee, is a 2005 graduate of the University of Memphis (BA in Communications, magna cum laude) and a 2008 graduate of the University of Tennessee College of Law. Hippel came to the department in November of 2009 after practicing criminal and family law for the firm of Henry, McCord, Bean, Miller, Gabriel, and LaBar, P.L.L.C. in Tullahoma, Tennessee. Contact him at Kurt.Hippel@tn.gov or at (615) 532-9439.



Crystal Champion is TDMHDD 2009 Employee of the Year

Crystal Champion is presented her Employee of the Year Award by William Vantrees, CEO of Moccasin Bend MHI.

At the regional mental health institutes, there are many employees who make a difference in the quality of life for patients and in the day-to-day operation of the hospitals. At Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute, Crystal Champion, administrative assistant for the director of Clinical Services, keeps her finger on difficult scheduling and daily activities in a way that earned her TDMHDD's Employee of the Year for 2009.

According to Crystal Champion's supervisor, Dr. Terry Holmes, Champion is "super human" when it comes to meeting challenges. "She runs clinical services, and everyone knows it," Holmes recently remarked. "And she does it with grace, aplomb, and outstanding efficiency while doing the work of two people. When she first started here, I told her physician scheduling was a thankless task and simply could not be done. She said she could do it, and indeed, she schedules everyone smoothly and keeps our

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER.....cont.

clinician privileging in compliance with all our JCAHO standards, which is no small task. Her influence extends beyond our work unit, and she is absolutely masterful at all forms of communications, affecting the whole institute," Holmes explained.

Congratulations to Crystal and thanks to all who were selected as Employee of the Year for their respective RMHIs. The other regional award-winners were:

- **Michael Cardwell**, recreation therapist and manager of the STARS treatment program for Lakeshore MHI.
- **Jason Gordon**, technician, CCM instructor and member of the federal "I Have a Future Program" for Middle Tennessee MHI.
- **Johnny Beard**, custodial worker and supervisor (who passed away May 2009) is remembered for his smile, outstanding work ethic, and kindness to patients, visitors and fellow employees of Western MHI. He is greatly missed.
- **Bessie M. Baker**, Registered Nurse, admired and respected for her daily preparation and confidence, insights into patient treatment, teamwork and patient advocacy above and beyond her expected job duties for Memphis MHI.

The Employee of the Year Award is a program of the TDMHDD regional mental health institutes, under the guidance of the department's Office of Human Resources.

Cathy Benhamed Wins Records Management Award

Cathy Benhamed, Administrative Services Assistant 3 for the department's Office of General Services, won Honorable Mention for the 2009 Records Officer of the Year given by the Records Management Division of the Tennessee Department of General Services. Cathy's job consists of managing and coordinating records for all of TDMHDD, including the mental health institutes; keeping property inventory and surplus disposal records; and managing the department's purchase orders. Benhamed has served 31 years as a state employee, previously working for Motor Vehicle Management and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. She has worked for TDMHDD since 2007. You can contact Benhamed at Cathy.Benhamed@tn.gov or at (615) 532-6623.



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Newsletter Staff

Sarah Lingo, Director
 Lorene Lambert, Publications Editor
 Lorene Lambert, Photographers
 State Photographic Services

Tennessee Department of Mental Health
 & Developmental Disabilities
 Office of Communications
 5th Floor, Cordell Hull Bldg.
 425 Fifth Avenue North
 Nashville, TN 37243
 615.253.4812

Please send newsletter queries to:
lorene.lambert@tn.gov

Send Website queries to:
sarah.lingo@tn.gov

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