



A Message from Commissioner Williams

Dear friends and partners,

You've probably seen the graphic on social media ([maybe even on our Facebook page!](#)) to the effect of "Autumn is about to show us how beautiful it feels to let go." What a beautiful sentiment for this time we're living in. We all have habits, hurts, and hangups that we carry around on a daily basis that burden us and weigh us down. How beautiful is it to let it go and make a fresh start or to offer someone around you the grace to do the same!

To our friends and loved ones in recovery, we celebrate you this month. The recovery community is such an amazing group of individuals who are talented, passionate, and driven to change lives. Your spirit and energy have such a huge impact in our work to make Tennessee a state where everyone can thrive.

Many blessings,

Marie

September is National Recovery and Suicide Prevention Month



The theme of National Recovery Month is Recovery is for Everyone and Tennesseans across the state have been working hard to show that recovery is real and is possible. Our agencies and coalitions have hosted recovery festivals/events, naloxone trainings, and partnered with their local community organizations, local law enforcement, and schools to talk about substance use. Many with lived experiences have opened up about their own recovery journey encouraging others along the way. Allen Burnette, Lifeline Peer Project Coordinator, is a person in long-term recovery, and engaged every day in spreading the hope of that recovery to others.



Lifeline Peer Project Coordinator Allen Burnette shares a special message for Recovery Month. Next month (October 2021) marks 15 years in recovery for Allen!

September is also recognized as Suicide Prevention Month and information is one of the greatest assets in the cause of suicide prevention. All month long, [TDMHSAS has been sharing and re-sharing information and resources on social media](#) to help spread awareness and destigmatize the topic of suicide.



Caitlin Ensley with MHA of East TN discusses how her work in suicide prevention creates the spark of hope for tomorrow.

A great suicide prevention resource available on our TN.gov website is a new series of [TARGET2 suicide prevention trainings at this link](#). This series is a compilation of experts in the field from the Safer Suicide Care webinar series hosted by Centerstone of TN. The topics covered range from Suicide Prevention in Technology, Physical Health Determinants, and Dialectical Behavioral Therapies & Lived Experience surrounding suicide. For more information about this or any of our suicide prevention work, please reach out to Joanne Perley at joanne.perley@tn.gov.

Collegiate Recovery Initiative

Partnership with Lipscomb Academy launches first-ever event to spread Collegiate Recovery Initiative principles statewide



The TDMHSAS Collegiate Recovery Initiative was excited to host the first-ever Collegiate Recovery Academy on September 15 on the campus of Lipscomb University. Nearly 50 faculty, students, and staff registered for the event. Attendees learned about use of Naloxone to reverse an overdose, community recovery resources, and how to be a recovery ally. Everyone also heard an energizing lesson about the power of recovery from Dr. Monty Burks. Several key faculty and staff at Lipscomb University led by Dr. Deandrea Witherspoon-Nash are working to create a recovery community on campus. With support from Middle Tennessee Faith Based Community Coordinator Jaime Harper, Lipscomb has begun hosting a weekly recovery meeting for anyone on campus in recovery. [Learn more and connect with the Collegiate Recovery Initiative at this link on TN.gov.](#) Stay tuned for details on future events at Motlow State Community College and UT Knoxville!



National Depression Screening Day

Take a quick screening and share with your family and friends on October 7!

National Depression Screening Day is set for Thursday, October 7. With the effects of the pandemic, [many more Tennesseans than normal are self-reporting symptoms of depression](#). Taking a quick and confidential screening is an easy way you can get an honest look at your current mental health and then connect with resources based on the results. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and its partners at Mental Health America offer online screenings for depression and many other behavioral health concerns at this link: TN.gov/behavioral-health/screenings

Zach Edmiston Receives Governor's Excellence in Service Award



Zach Edmiston has served the State of Tennessee through the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services since 2017. Serving first as the

Assistant Nurse Executive at Memphis Mental Health Institute (MMHI), then as the Hospital Administrator, and finally as the Interim Nurse Executive for the Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute (MTMHI) in addition to his primary position at MMHI to cover critical capacity gaps during the pandemic. This dual appointment requires him to achieve the responsibilities of two positions at two facilities in two different areas of the state. Through all the challenges of the last year, Zach has worked tirelessly on the frontlines of the pandemic to protect his patients and fellow staff at both facilities while simultaneously helping restructure and reinvigorate the Nursing Department at MTMHI to face the challenges of the future. In this pursuit, he has quickly learned new processes and procedures for our largest hospital and earned the trust and respect of the MTMHI team as a result of his outstanding work ethic, proven leadership abilities, and unwavering standard for excellence in service. His ability to step up to extreme challenges with humility and selflessness makes his colleagues describe him as a “shining example” of the department’s core values.

Welcome to Team TDMHSAS!



Please join us in welcoming Austin Nichols to our department! Austin will serve in the newly created position of Director of ADA Services and report directly to the Chief of Staff & Hospital Operations. As Director of ADA Services, she will be responsible for providing community and hospital education, training, and

oversight regarding the provision of services to consumers with disabilities.

Austin earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of Alabama and a Juris Doctorate from Samford University. She has worked for the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office in Alabama and the Shelby County District Attorney's Office in Tennessee, where she served as the District Attorney's representative in the Mental Health Court. Most recently, Ms. Nichols served as an Assistant Attorney General with the Tennessee Attorney General's Office. She is very well-suited to serve as the Director of ADA Services based on her knowledge, demeanor, and persistent nature, all of which will make her a success in this new role.



The department is excited to have Alisha "Sidd" Siddiqui joining us during the fall semester. Sidd is a senior at Merrol Hyde Magnet School in Hendersonville, and she's working with us to help bridge the gap between Tennessee youth and mental health resources. Sidd is an active participant in the TN YMCA's Model United Nations and Youth In Government programs with state-level leadership positions at both conferences. After graduation, Sidd plans to major in political science in college with a future career in either local government or international relations.

Promotions



Please join us in welcoming Kaili Thomas back to Central Office! Kaili will serve as the Assistant Director of Strategic Initiatives and will report directly to the Director of Strategic Initiatives. As the Assistant Director of Strategic Initiatives, she will be responsible for assisting with various projects such as the TN Recovery Navigators, ED Boarding Projects, Project Rural Recovery, and any new initiatives the department seeks to implement.

In her free time, Kaili loves to kayak, watch British television, and spend time with her dogs. We are so grateful that Kaili has joined our Central Office team! Please join me in giving her a warm welcome!



MMHI is pleased to announce the promotion of Shoronda Monix to the role of Psychiatric Hospital Administrator. Shoronda began her career with the State of Tennessee in 1997 at the Department of Children’s Services and came to MMHI in 2004 as our HIPAA Compliance and Safety Officer. From 2010 until 2017, she served as our Facility Investigator. Since 2017, she has served as the Director of our Admissions Department. Throughout her career, Shoronda has dedicated herself to improving processes and patient care in every aspect of her work. Shoronda brings a wealth of experience to her new role and will be a valuable part of the leadership team as MMHI continues its tradition of service to our community.

Coalition Corner

Rutherford County Hosts Recovery Fest



Rutherford County's annual Recovery Fest was Saturday, September 18. It's their contribution to and celebration of National Recovery Month. Their goal was to help break the stigma associated with mental and substance use disorders that creates a barrier for those seeking and needing help. It's an opportunity the community to come together, encourage one another and celebrate the journey.

Pictures provided by Rutherford Recovery Fest



In Remembrance



Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute recently bid farewell in a memorial service to a long time, treasured employee, Clarence "C" McCray. C served our patients for many years, first as a Psychiatric Technician and then as an Adjunctive Therapist. MBMHI CEO Mary Young says, "He had a heart bigger than any I have ever known and always saw the person, not their diagnosis. He believed in our patients, every one of them, and helped all those he worked with to believe in their own possibilities too. The world lost a bright light and a beacon of love and hope with his passing."

Shout Out!



Melvin Smith recently completed a bike-a-thon from Nashville to Memphis to raise money for a local charity. Way to go Melvin!

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

Click the graphics for more information and to register!

A graphic for an event titled "Engaged & Informed to Serve: Re-Entry Focused Recovery Centered". The graphic features a silhouette of a person walking towards a bright light in the distance. The text is arranged in a grid-like fashion. At the top, it says "Engaged & Informed to Serve:". Below that, "Re-Entry Focused" is on the left and "Recovery Centered" is on the right. The date "Wednesday September 29, 2021" is on the right. At the bottom, it describes the event as "A Virtual Partnership and Convening of Regional Housing Facilitators, Consumer Housing Specialists, Peer Lifeliners and Faith-Based Coordinators". Logos for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services and TAMHO are at the bottom left.

Engaged & Informed to Serve:

Re-Entry Focused

Recovery Centered

Wednesday
September 29, 2021

A Virtual Partnership and Convening of
Regional Housing Facilitators, Consumer
Housing Specialists, Peer Lifeliners and
Faith-Based Coordinators

Sponsored by
TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

In Partnership with
tamho

SAVE THE DATE

*Wednesday
through
Friday*

December
8th-10th
2021

TARCPCON 2021



IN PERSON!

Murfreesboro, Tennessee
Embassy Suites &
Conference Center

Come one, come all! Recovery courts, specialty courts, supervision, and justice reformers!

Prepare to network like you've never networked before! Bring your best training gear for an optimal training experience!

Check the membership site [Events Page](#) for registration and conference details!

Planning and Policy Council Meetings

Adult Committee

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

10:00 a.m. CST

Toll-Free: 629-209-4396

Phone Conference ID: 890306123#

Region VI

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

1:30 p.m. CST

Toll-Free: 629-209-4396

Phone Conference ID: 964 889 668#

Region III

Thursday, October 14, 2021

10:00 a.m. EST

Toll-Free: 629-209-4396

Phone Conference ID: 263 982 639#

Region VII

Tuesday, October 26, 2021

11:30 a.m. CST

Toll-Free: 629-209-4396

Phone Conference ID: 178 397 106#

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.

Resources

COVID-19 counseling services for Tennesseans



If you're feeling overwhelmed, disconnected, hopeless, or just sad—you're not alone. Please know that help is available. Hope is real.

COVID-19 Counseling resources are available in every Tennessee County. [Find the contact for your area on our website.](#)

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](https://www.tn.gov/CrisisLine)

855-274-7471  **Department of
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**

For questions about addiction treatment/referrals ...

TN
REDLINE
1.800.889.9789
CALL OR TEXT

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
TAADAS
TN TOGETHER
ENDING THE OPIOID CRISIS

The image is a promotional graphic for the TN Redline. It features a white brick wall background. The text 'TN REDLINE' is prominently displayed, with 'REDLINE' in red and 'TN' in black. Below this is the phone number '1.800.889.9789' in black. A red telephone handset icon is positioned to the right of the phone number. Below the phone number is a red button with the text 'CALL OR TEXT' in white, and a black button with a white telephone handset icon. At the bottom, there are three logos: the TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services logo, the TAADAS logo, and the TN TOGETHER logo with the tagline 'ENDING THE OPIOID CRISIS'.

To talk with a TDMHSAS Consumer Advocate ...

Need help with mental health or substance use services?

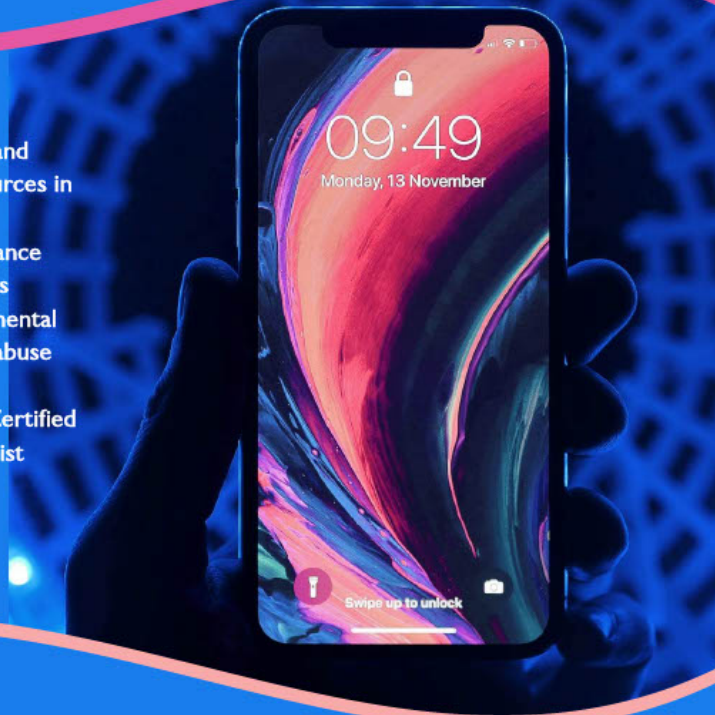
Call the TDMHSAS Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services

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.*

And please connect with us on social media!



Find us on
Facebook

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



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