



A Message from Commissioner Williams

September is a busy month in the world of behavioral health advocacy!

September is of course National Suicide Prevention Awareness month. With the new 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, it's never been easier to spread awareness of resources to prevent suicide. We're happy to report that our amazing crisis centers across the state are doing wonderfully meeting the community's need. We just got a report for August, and these providers improved on their answer rate which was already above average and exceeding expectations!

September is also the month we celebrate the beauty and opportunity of recovery. We're so grateful for the amazing men and women in recovery who are employed by the department, community providers, and other organizations who use their peer experience, training, and certification to aid others on their journey. We polled some of our peer recovery specialists about their "favorite

- Giving back to others.
- Working with people just like me. We are the same.
- Seeing the spark in someone's eyes light back up.
- The ability to be a mother and a responsible, productive member of society.
- Being a father, a productive member of society, and trusted by my family.
- Freedom and the opportunity to help others break the bondage of addiction.
- The joy is overwhelming. Every morning you feel the huge realization that you're still free, and you choose to be free.

Truly inspiring words and a wonderful reminder of why we do what we do for the Tennesseans we're blessed to reach. Whatever your role in the public behavioral health system in our great state, YOU are having a life-changing and life-saving impact. Thank you!

Have a blessed day,

Marie

TBI and TDMHSAS Mark International Overdose Awareness Day with Joint News Conference



shared the latest trends from their seizures and lab testing. Fentanyl along with its analogs and precursors are very prevalent, but the TBI says methamphetamine remains the top substance they're seeing which repeats the trend from the last few years. They also shared an update from the Dangerous Drugs Task Force. TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams spoke on some common misconceptions around fentanyl and access to treatment and recovery services. TDMHSAS Director of Prevention and Early Intervention Services Anthony Jackson, Jr. gave an update on the department's efforts around Fentanyl Test Strips. The event generated significant media coverage including [this story about Fentanyl Test Strips](#). You can view a recording of the event [at this link on the TBI's Facebook page](#).



In addition to the news conference with TBI, TDMHSAS and the Department of Health issued a news release attempting to address some of the widespread misconceptions about fentanyl exposure.

“It’s so important to separate fact from fiction when it comes to fentanyl because Tennesseans are dying of overdose by the thousands. It is our hope that these facts will help people who are struggling with opioid use reach to treatment if they need it and find a new life in recovery,” said TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams, LCSW.

[You can read the full news release at this link.](#)

International Overdose Awareness

Across the state, many Substance Use Prevention Coalitions and community partners recognized International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31 by honoring those in their communities who have lost their lives, loved ones left behind, and those who have sought a new life in recovery. Candlelight vigils, townhalls, community service events, and going into local high schools to spread awareness were events held throughout the state to mark the special day.



Celebrating Recovery Month

TAADAS Honors Linda McCorkle at Annual Recovery Banquet and Awards



Congratulations to Linda McCorkle! As you can see in the picture above, she was completely surprised to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual TAADAS Recovery Banquet and Awards. Linda is a 45 year employee of the state and has been with the department for 30 years. She's has been involved in bringing many concepts in SUD treatment services to Tennessee including co-occurring disorder treatment, Medication Assisted Treatment, and Oxford Houses. Linda has been a mentor to providers and to her staff alike. Congrats Linda, we are proud of you!

Assistant Commissioner Taryn Sloss Participates in "Dopesick"Event





Assistant Commissioner Taryn Sloss (Pictured Right) participated in a Recovery Month event organized by DrugFree WilCo. The focus was the book and TV series 'Dopesick'. Pictured at left is Dopesick author and journalist Beth Macy. Dr. Stephen Loyd (Pictured Center) whose experience informed the portrayal of the lead character in the tv series also participated in the event.

National Leaders Share Expertise at TSPN Annual Conference



The department was proud to participate in and support the annual conference of the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network. TSPN brought in several leading voices in suicide prevention including John Palmieri (Left) 988 and Behavioral Health Crisis Coordinating Office, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Brian Ahmedani (Right) Director, Center for Health Policy & Health Services Research and Director of Research, Behavioral Health Services, Henry Ford Health System who spoke on the second day. Dr. Richard McKeon, Chief, Suicide Prevention Branch, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) spoke to attendees on the first day of the conference. Deputy Commissioner Matt Yancey and Department of Health Acting Commissioner Morgan McDonald also spoke at the conference.

Tennessee Opioid Abatement Council names Mary Shelton as Executive Director



The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is excited to welcome Mary Shelton as the Executive Director of Tennessee's Opioid Abatement Council.

As Executive Director, Shelton provides day-to-day leadership, management, and oversight for the functions of the Council, directly supports Council members, and will supervise Council staff. She was selected by a unanimous vote of the Council's membership at their first meeting on July 8, 2022.

Tennessee's Opioid Abatement Council was created by the [Tennessee General Assembly in Public Chapter 491](#) to manage the disbursement of proceeds from lawsuits relating to opioids. The Council upholds the responsibility to ensure the disbursements of these funds go toward funding programs, strategies, expenditures, and other actions designed to prevent and address the misuse and abuse of opioid products and treat or mitigate opioid use or related disorders or other effects of the opioid epidemic.

Learn more about Tennessee's Opioid Abatement Council at [TN.gov/behavioral-health/oac](https://tn.gov/behavioral-health/oac)

Law Enforcement Partnership Highlighted in New Video

*Department profile of Centerstone criminal justice programs and
Clarksville Police Department collaboration featured*





With a focus on community collaboration and a growing Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), Clarksville is making a difference for its residents. This video profiles the collaboration and work of the Criminal Justice Behavioral Health Liaison. Thanks to Gov. Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly, we've been able to expand this program to all 95 Tennessee counties!

Project Rural Recovery Partners Present at National Conference





Front to back: Dorah Johnson - Buffalo Valley; Kate Orem – McNabb Center; Debbie Hillin – Buffalo Valley; Ashley Crabtree– McNabb Center; Sunshine Bossie – McNabb Center; Darren Layman - TDMHSAS; Deanna Day - TDMHSAS

Several members of the [Project Rural Recovery](#) team attended the 18th Annual Mobile Health Clinics Pre-Conference Intensive Training Course and Conference in Phoenix, Arizona in late August. The team was one of a few guest presenters during the Pre-Conference to share their lessons-learned since implementing Project Rural Recovery. Highlights from their presentation included tips for selecting a mobile health unit, leveraging community support and engagement, selecting medical equipment, and managing daily operations.

The conference explored building capacity in today's challenging climate and how it can be applied to mobile health programs. Conference sessions focused on many topics including building leadership, opportunities to expand, strategies for diversifying funding, and improving program evaluation.

Tennessee Shares Rural Lessons Learned at CIT International Conference



Pictured L to R: Kim Rush King, Lisa Ragan, Lt. Bill Davis

TDMHSAS Director of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services Lisa Ragan presented with NAMI TN CIT Director Kim Rush King and McMinnville Police Lt. Bill Davis at the annual CIT International Conference. The trio presented on the unique aspects of creating a Crisis Intervention Team in rural communities. To learn more about CIT in Tennessee, visit: [TN.gov/behavioral-health/cit](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/cit)

TDMHSAS Staff Participate in Joint Commission Basecamps



The Division of Hospital Services had the opportunity to send two skilled staff members, Chris Loftis and Kristen Connell, to participate in the Joint Commission Environment of Care and Life Safety basecamps at the Joint Commission headquarters in Oak Brook Terrace, Illinois. The basecamps provide critical information to ensure the Regional Mental Health Institutes (RMHI) are following best practices and managing facilities to a high standard that meets patient's needs who live with mental illness. The material is essential to prepare for accreditation surveys and providing care for patients to the best ability. We are proud and excited to be able to use the information provided from the basecamps to continually improve the RMHIs.

Western Mental Health Institute Holds Annual Meetings

The WMHI Board of Trustees held their annual meeting this month.



Shown are (seated, l-r): Ty Thornton, TDMHSAS, Chief of Staff and Hospital Operations, Josh Carter, WMHI CEO, and Dr. Richard England, Board Chair, Retired Professor, Freed Hardeman University.

Standing, l-r: Willie Spencer, Former Hardeman County Mayor, Julian McTizic, Bolivar City Mayor, Michelle Guia, Crisis Director, Quinco Mental Health Center, Ruby Kirby, CEO of West Tennessee Healthcare, Bolivar & Camden Hospitals, Bobby Sain, Co-Owner of Sain Insurance & Real Estate, Tony Kirk, President & CEO, Bolivar Energy Authority, Doug Teague, Comcare Inc.-WMHI Representative, Sara Hawkins, Crisis Director, PCS, Dylan Hill, Youth Minister, First Baptist Church, Bolivar, and Jamie Burnett, Director of Hardeman County Ambulance Services.

Other Board of Trustee members not pictured are: Maria Howell, Owner & Operator of Local Businesses, Jason Lindsey, Vice President, Bank of Hardeman County, Dana Townsend, Crisis Services Program Manager at Pathways, and Matthew Sean Jones, Crisis Director, Cary Counseling.

Western Wraps Another Triannual Joint Commission Survey

The WMHI Triannual Joint Commission Survey Team works with staff in all departments to ensure that WMHI is in compliance with standards and policies. The work done by all departments and employees, with the assistance and guidance of the Team, led to WMHI's successful survey. Thanks to everyone for a job well done!



Seated (l-r): Mary Beth Young, Nurse Executive, Lisa Roy, Assistant Superintendent for Quality, Josh Carter, CEO, Ty Thornton, TDMHSAS Chief and Staff and Hospital Operations, and Chris Loftis, TDMHSAS Director of Hospital Services.

Standing (l-r): Tiffany Howell, Human Resources Director, Karen Doles, Psychiatric Hospital Administrator, Dr. Chika Iwueke, Clinical Services Director, Stacey Riffle, Standards Coordinator, Tom Greer, Assistant Superintendent of Program Services, Jessica Russell, Information Manager/HIPAA Privacy Officer, Kema Kelso, Institutional Services Manager, Melissa Sparks, TDMHSAS Deputy Chief of Hospital Services, Britney Evans Training Officer, Kristen Connell, TDMHSAS Assistant Director of Hospital Services, and Melissa Norvell, Social Services Director

Welcome to Team TDMHSAS



The Office of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention are very excited to welcome Michelle West to the team! Michelle will serve as 988 Project Director, providing operational and fiscal oversight of the 988 program, allowing for enhanced Tennessee infrastructure development for those Tennesseans calling, texting or chatting “988.”

Michelle is a Cincinnati, OH native who came to Nashville on a job offer for the TN Army National Guard where she served as their Suicide Prevention Coordinator. She also served as Family and Children’s Service Survivors of Suicide Loss Coordinator for the past six years. Her experience in Cincinnati included community mental health services and suicide/crisis care. She managed Cincinnati’s suicide/crisis line for over seven years before she moved to Nashville. This is where her passion for suicide prevention, intervention and postvention began. Michelle is also a Master Trainer in ASIST with 59 classes trained under her belt. She is also a trainer in safeTALK and QPR. While Michelle has many professional years in mental health services, she also has been affected personally, as many of us are... she is a survivor of suicide loss herself, with the loss of her uncle in 2018.



Sabrina Fillers is the new Youth/Young Adult Coordinator in the Office of Children, Young Adults, & Families. In this role, she will oversee the Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist program and the TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council; provide guidance and support in youth engagement and best practices to Healthy Transitions (HT) and System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) providers; and coordinate leadership skills trainings and events for youth/young adults.

Sabrina is working on a bachelor's degree in Psychology and is one of only 11 [Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialists](#) in the state! Most recently, Sabrina worked as a Youth Engagement Specialist with TN Voices on the SOCAT grant and previously worked as a young adult peer on the HT grant in Greene County with Frontier Health.

Coalition Corner

Power of Putnam Recognizes Prevention Partners



Power of Putnam recognized a pair of prevention partners with awards. The Coalition says State Senator Bailey (pictured above) has always had an open door for any and all advocacy and educational presentations they have requested to share with him. Sgt. Robert Patrick Swanson accepted the award for the Tennessee National Guard Counterdrug Task Force. Since its formation, the task force has provided a wide variety of support measures for Tennessee Coalitions. Many developing and mature coalitions in the Upper Cumberland area have benefitted from their tireless work.

Shout Out!

National Psych Tech Week



during National Psych Tech Week. Psych Tech banners were displayed for the week in both the Main Hospital and FSP as well as a giant lawn sign to welcome techs as they arrived for their shift. They were treated with baked goods Monday morning and goodie bags during the week from Nursing Leadership. There was also a Psych Tech "Wall of Fame" on display which showcased the dedicated staff. All psych techs and employees also enjoyed a Pizza Party as well as unit-specific lunches all week.

Thank you for your dedicated service Charlene



Congratulations to Moccasin Bend's Charlene Taylor on her retirement. Her career at MBMHI spanned 39 years. During that time, she was integral to the adjunctive therapy department. Her hard work, commitment, and dedication to the patients that she served will be greatly admired and remembered.

Thank you Blue 1 at Western Mental Health Institute



Betsy Kuper at Western Mental Health Institute would like to recognize everyone who has responded to calls for "Dr. Strong on Blue 1." Betsy says: "It takes team work to keep our units running smoothly and I am so proud and

Congrats Ashley

Congratulations to Ashley Hall, Unit 5 RN at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute, for earning her Master's degree in Healthcare Administration. Way to go!

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

Adult Committee Meeting

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

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

Region VI

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. CST

Region III

Thursday, October 13, 2022

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. EST

Region VII

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. CST

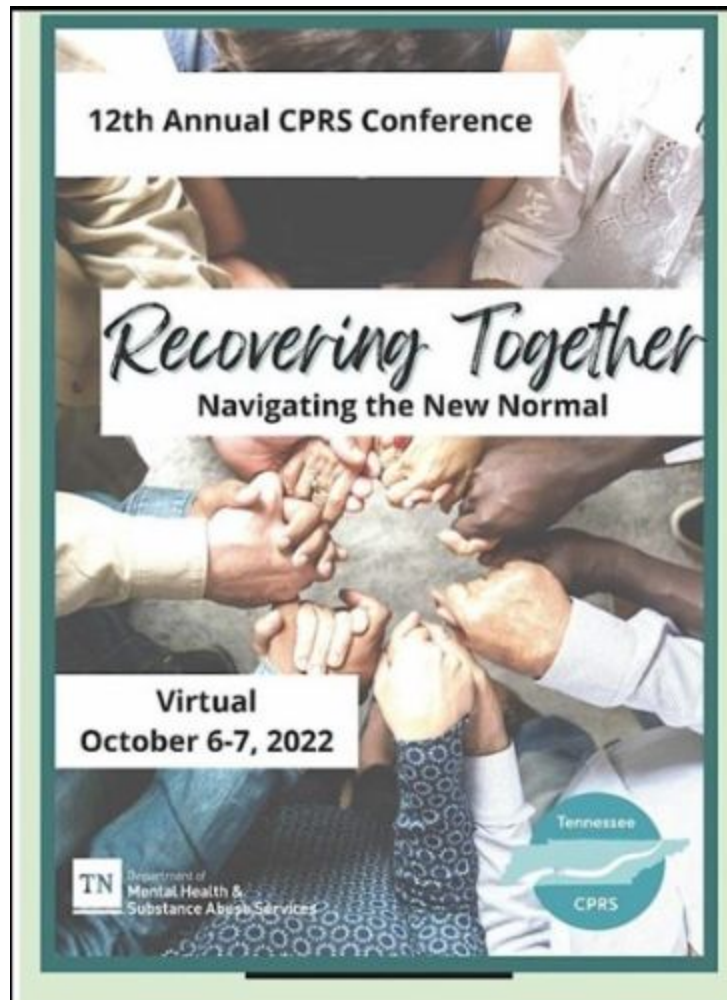
To verify the schedule and plans for future meetings, please visit the department website at these links:

[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 at least 10 business days prior to

possible to fulfill them.



12th Annual CPRS Conference

Recovering Together
Navigating the New Normal

Virtual
October 6-7, 2022

Tennessee
CPRS

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

The poster features a central image of diverse hands clasped together in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The text is overlaid on this image in white and black boxes. Logos for Tennessee and CPRS are in the bottom right, and the Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services logo is in the bottom left.



*18th Annual TARCP
Recovery Court Conference*

Recovery Courts

PART OF THE SOLUTION

December 7-9, 2022

EMBASSY SUITES • MURFREESBORO

<https://tarcp.org/conference2022>

TARCP
Tennessee Association of
Recovery Court Professionals

The poster has a background of interlocking puzzle pieces, with some pieces missing, set against a dark wood-grain texture. The text is in various colors (blue, yellow, white) and fonts. A TARCP logo is placed on a puzzle piece on the right side.

In the event of a mental health emergency ...



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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