



A Message from Commissioner Williams

Dear friends and partners,

We usually think "New Year, New You" when we turn the calendar year, but of course state government is embarking on a new fiscal year in just a few days. The new year is a new opportunity to put new funding to work and to make sure existing funding is having the highest and best impact it can. We are so grateful to Governor Lee and the TN General Assembly for their continued investments in community-based services and effective and efficient hospital services.

In this edition of the newsletter, you'll read about additional federal funding coming to

the department (on top of new state funding) and several initiatives to refine and improve the public behavioral health system. Many of you remember a time not too distant when there wasn't nearly as much awareness or attention on behavioral health, and funding was either stagnant or had to be cut. As we come out of the pandemic, please know that we at TDMHSAS are seizing the day and making the most of the moment we are in to make great strides on behalf of the Tennesseans we are blessed to serve.

We are grateful for your work, your passion, your partnership, and your support as we continue down the road to a state of resilience, recovery, and independence for Tennesseans living with mental health and substance use challenges.

Blessings,

Marie

TDMHSAS Receives More Than \$53 Million in Additional Funding

TDMHSAS is receiving more than \$53 million in additional funding from the federal government to address post-COVID mental health and substance use needs.

The supplemental block grant funding will add more than \$27 million to mental health services and nearly \$26 million to substance use services over the next four years. The funding is part of a \$3 billion allocation included in the American Rescue Plan signed into law in March.

The new funding comes on top of significant supplemental funding from the federal government and new investment of state dollars. TDMHSAS has received an additional \$55 million in COVID relief funding from the federal government since the start of the pandemic, and Governor Bill Lee and the

Tennessee General Assembly increased the department's budget for next fiscal year by more than \$44.1 million.

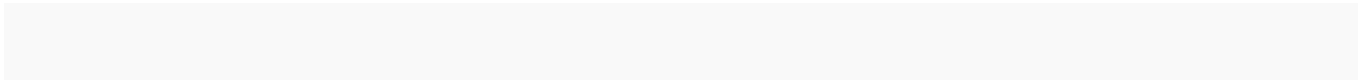
The most recent rounds of federal funding supplement the state's existing Mental Health Block Grant and Substance Abuse Block Grants. New dollars will expand the availability of evidence-based treatment services, strengthen the statewide network of crisis services, support the continued and expanded use of telehealth services, respond to the unique needs of children, and more. TDMHSAS and federal partners are both allowing room for mental health and substance use treatment agencies across the state to design programs that meet their communities' unique needs.

TDMHSAS and TennCare Convene Public Behavioral Health Workforce Workgroup



The issue of finding and retaining talented workers is impacting many industries, and the area of mental health and substance use services is no different. With lives literally on the line, it's essential that we address workforce issues in the public behavioral health space. That's why we've convened a workgroup with our partners at TennCare to address the issue.

We're keeping the goals simple: Clearly identify gaps and needs, assess for strategies, and develop a report for key decision makers to move our system forward. We are so grateful to everyone who came to the table (both in person and on WebEx) at our first meeting on Tuesday, June 15 with their ideas, experience, and open minds for finding solutions. Workgroup members represent mental health and substance use providers, behavioral health advocacy groups, professional organizations, and college/university training programs. We plan to have a few more workgroup meetings before releasing a report for decision makers this fall.



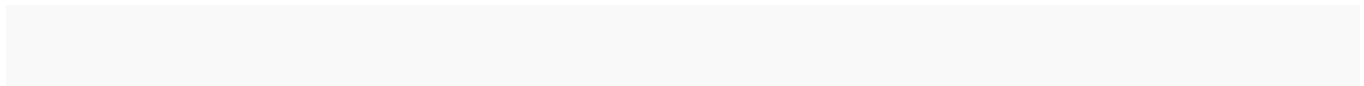
TDMHSAS Expands Peer Recovery Certification Programs With New Offering For Young Adults

TDMHSAS is releasing a new certification for peer support specialists designed specifically for young adults with lived experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges.



The Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) program is tailored to young adults in both design and language with a target age range of 18 to 30 and a requirement of one year in recovery. The program was developed in collaboration with Youth Era and with significant input from and review by the department's Young Adult Leadership Council.

The CYAPSS program includes a one week, 40-hour training session covering topics including responsibilities and expectations of a CYAPSS, strategic sharing, youth empowerment, positive youth development, the ladder of youth voice, and trauma-informed care. Through this training, CYAPSS will gain the knowledge needed to provide youth and young adult-friendly peer support services to people under the age of 30. Peers certified through the program are also required to complete service hours and continuing education to maintain their certification.



Children's Behavioral Health Safety Net Expands Eligibility

TDMHSAS is expanding the eligibility criteria for the Children's Behavioral Health Safety Net (BHSN) to include children who have insurance but don't have full behavioral health coverage. In addition to this new population, the program will continue to serve all uninsured Tennessee children.

Through a statewide network of community mental health providers, the Children's BHSN offers essential mental health services and supports to Tennesseans ages three to 17. Services began September 1, 2020, and since then, the department has expanded eligibility first to all uninsured children and now to children who don't have full behavioral health services as a part of their private insurance or CoverKids coverage.

You can connect to services through the Children's Behavioral Health Safety Net [by visiting TN.gov/BHSN](https://www.tn.gov/BHSN).

**CONNECT
WITH HELP**

TN.gov/bhs



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

This project is funded under a grant contract with TDMHSAS.

Recovery Courts celebrate graduates

Court participants, administrators, and judges persevered through unprecedented challenges during COVID-19 Pandemic



22nd Judicial District Recovery Court Graduation 2021

Meeting the rigorous demands of recovery court is never an easy accomplishment. But in a year like none other with COVID-19 pandemic precautions, physical distancing, and reduced human interaction, the 2021 graduates of recovery court programs have truly accomplished something amazing. The department celebrates the 12 graduates of the 22nd Judicial District Recovery Court and **all recovery courts across the state**. The 22nd Judicial District encompasses Lawrence, Maury, Giles, and Wayne Counties in Tennessee.

Learn more about Recovery Courts in Tennessee at this link:

<http://tn.gov/recoverycourts>

Creating Homes Initiative (CHI) Impact on Community

What is CHI?

The Creating Homes Initiative, or CHI, is a TDMHSAS program with a 20+ year history of success for people living with mental illness.

25,000+ Housing Opportunities Created
\$755M Funding Leveraged



CHI 2.0

Addiction Recovery Housing

With funding from Governor Lee and the TN General Assembly, we expanded the model to addiction recovery housing.



THDA Partnership

Our friends at THDA were so excited about CHI 2.0, they matched the state's initial investment of \$3M. Housing opportunities funded with their grants are now opening up!



CHI- 3.0- Re-entry Housing

With Governor Lee's focus on criminal justice reform and supporting people re-entering communities from jail or prison, we're proud to expand with state funding included in the new budget.



New Recovery Housing funded under CHI 2.0 opens in Jackson



[Aspell Recovery Center](#) celebrated the opening of Kirkland House on Thursday, June 10th. This will be home to 12 women as they work on their recovery from addiction and substance use. This work was funded with a grant through the department's CHI 2.0 program. Also, special thanks to the founder of [Kirkland's](#), Carl and Alice Kirkland, for their generous contribution to help make this dream come true.

Pictured above (L to R): Matthew Parriott, TDMHSAS Communications Director; Christy Spangler, TDMHSAS Office of Housing and Homeless Services Program Manager; Richard Barber, Aspell Recovery Center Executive Director.

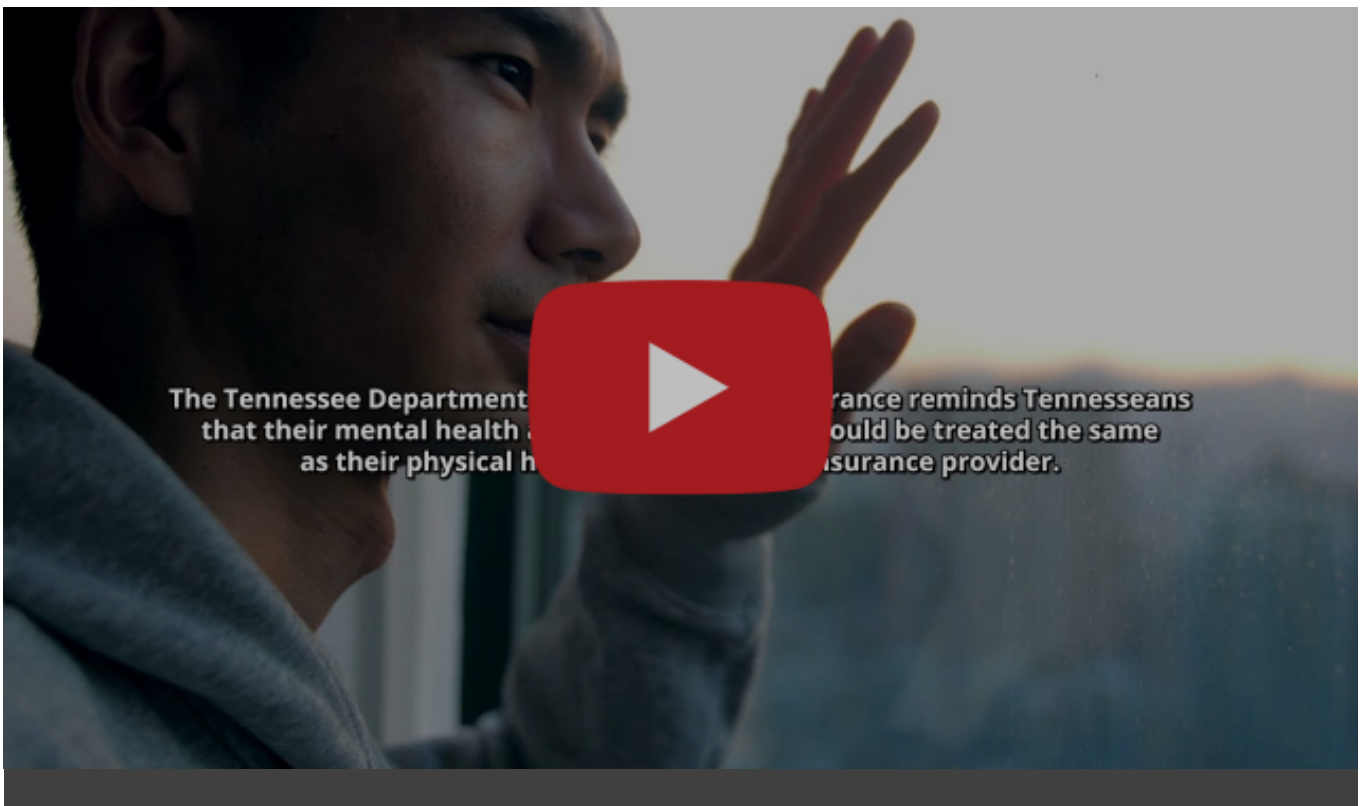




TN Department of
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services

Take a video tour of Kirkland House at Aspell Recovery Center in Jackson.

Mental Health Parity



The Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services reminds Tennesseans that their mental health care should be treated the same as their physical health care by their insurance provider.

During Mental Health Month, the **Tennessee Department of Commerce (TDCI)** partnered with **TDMHSAS** to remind Tennesseans that mental health benefits should be treated **equally** by insurance providers.

Under the [Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008](#), if a consumer's health plan covers mental health and substance use services, the plan must match its coverage with the plan's physical health coverage.

**Welcome to Team TDMHSAS,
Krysten, Kearston, and Morgan!**



Krysten Velloff, originally from Memphis, TN, and now a resident of Nashville, has joined TDMHSAS as the assistant director of the department's Office of Legislation and Rules. Krysten will serve as a legislative and rulemaking liaison to the governor's office, all state departments and entities, the Tennessee General Assembly, lobbyists, advocates, etc. for TDMHSAS. Krysten is a proud graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and holds a Master of Educational Leadership degree from ETSU. She has been employed with the State of Tennessee, in various capacities (executive assistant to the State Election Coordinator ; legislative liaison and communications coordinator for the Tennessee Department of Children Services; assistant vice chancellor for government relations at the Tennessee Board of Regents), since 2012. Krysten is passionate about her pets (and all animals), Tucker (golden retriever) and

Benjamin Franklin (her one-eyed feline). Please join me in welcoming Krysten to TDMHSAS!



Kearston Winrow has joined TDMHSAS as the assistant director of communication. She is a native Nashvillian and proud graduate of MLK Magnet High School. Kearston attended the University of Missouri-Columbia (Mizzou), where she received a degree in journalism with an emphasis in emerging media. For the past couple of years, Kearston worked within marketing communications in the tire manufacturing industry for two global tire manufacturers. Kearston is excited to return to her journalism roots to tell meaningful stories and share resources across social channels that will positively impact all Tennesseans' Kearston is an avid reader, dislikes scary/suspense movies, and Earth, Wind, and Fire are her absolute favorite artists/band.



Morgan Morris has joined the Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families as the new Youth and Young Adult Coordinator. Morgan has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Georgia Southern University and comes to us from Mental Health Cooperative where she worked as the Outreach Specialist on the Healthy Transitions team that serves youth/young adults. Morgan also previously worked as a Care Manager with MHC and as an Outdoor Program Manager & Camp Director for Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee. In her role as Youth and Young Adult Coordinator, Morgan will provide guidance and support to multiple youth/young adult-focused mental health initiatives, including Healthy Transitions and System of Care Across Tennessee, as well as trainings and technical assistance to agencies providing services to youth/young adults across the state. She will also oversee implementation of the recently launched TDMHSAS Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) program and the TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council.

Promotions



The TDMHSAS Division of Substance Abuse Services is excited to announce the promotion of Rebekah Provost-Emmons to Director of Criminal Justice Services. Rebekah has served as the Recovery Court Administrator with the Office of Criminal Justice Services since February 2019. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in Social Work from Union University.

Rebekah's has worked for more than 21 years with the justice-involved population, specifically with problem-solving and recovery/specialty courts. She currently serves as an adjunct faculty member for Williams Baptist University teaching online undergraduate social work courses and has held this role for nine years. Rebekah is a certified Trainer for the SAMHSA/GAINS Center on Trauma-Informed Responses in the Criminal Justice System, a graduate of the NDCI Comprehensive Drug Court Coordinator's Training provided by the National Judicial College, certified by Correctional Counseling, Inc. to facilitate Moral Reconciliation Therapy (Standard and Domestic Violence) group programs for offenders, and licensed by Prime for Life to facilitate DUI Classes for court ordered offenders.



Please join us in congratulating Kristen Connell on her recent promotion to Assistant Director of Hospital Services! Kristen currently holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology degree and is anticipated to graduate with her Master of Science in Criminology within the next couple of years. She started with the department in 2017 as an Administrative Assistant providing support to both the Deputy Commissioner and the Division of Hospital Services. More recently, Kristen was promoted to Executive Administrative Assistant supporting the Chief of Staff & Hospital Operations and the Division of Hospital Services. Since her hire, Kristen has assisted with several hospital services initiatives and has proven to be a valuable resource in the support and administration of the Regional Mental Health Institutes (RMHIs) and East Tennessee private contracted psychiatric inpatient facilities and her promotion is a direct result of her hard work.

As the Assistant Director of Hospital Services, Kristen will assist with the oversight and administrative responsibilities for the RMHIs and contracted

private facilities including but not limited to: assisting with policy and procedure and/or rule development, managing data and contracts for the RMHIs and three private contracted inpatient facilities, collecting, aggregating and analyzing data related to quality improvement, researching national best practices, participation in forensic processes, participation in Joint Commission preparation activities with the four RMHIs, assisting with RMHI support needs and completing other complex assignments as requested.

Kid Power

Family event promotes the health and well-being of children in Northeast Tennessee.



Congratulations to our partners at Frontier Health on another successful Kid Power event! As a celebration of National Children's Mental Health month, Kid Power has evolved over the past sixteen years into a wonderful family event that promotes the health and well-being of children in the Northeast Tennessee region. This year's edition happened at Founder's Park in Downtown Johnson City on May 22. It's the second year for a partnership with the Johnson City Farmers Market that enabled families to get fresh fruit and vegetables while learning positive lessons about mental and physical health.

Pictures submitted by Frontier Health.



HopeFest

The Dekalb Prevention Coalition held Hopefest, a community event to celebrate recovery and life on May 22. More than 20 community partners participated and shared information and resources on recovery, prevention, mental health awareness, summer programs for youth, and more.



Even More Community Events!



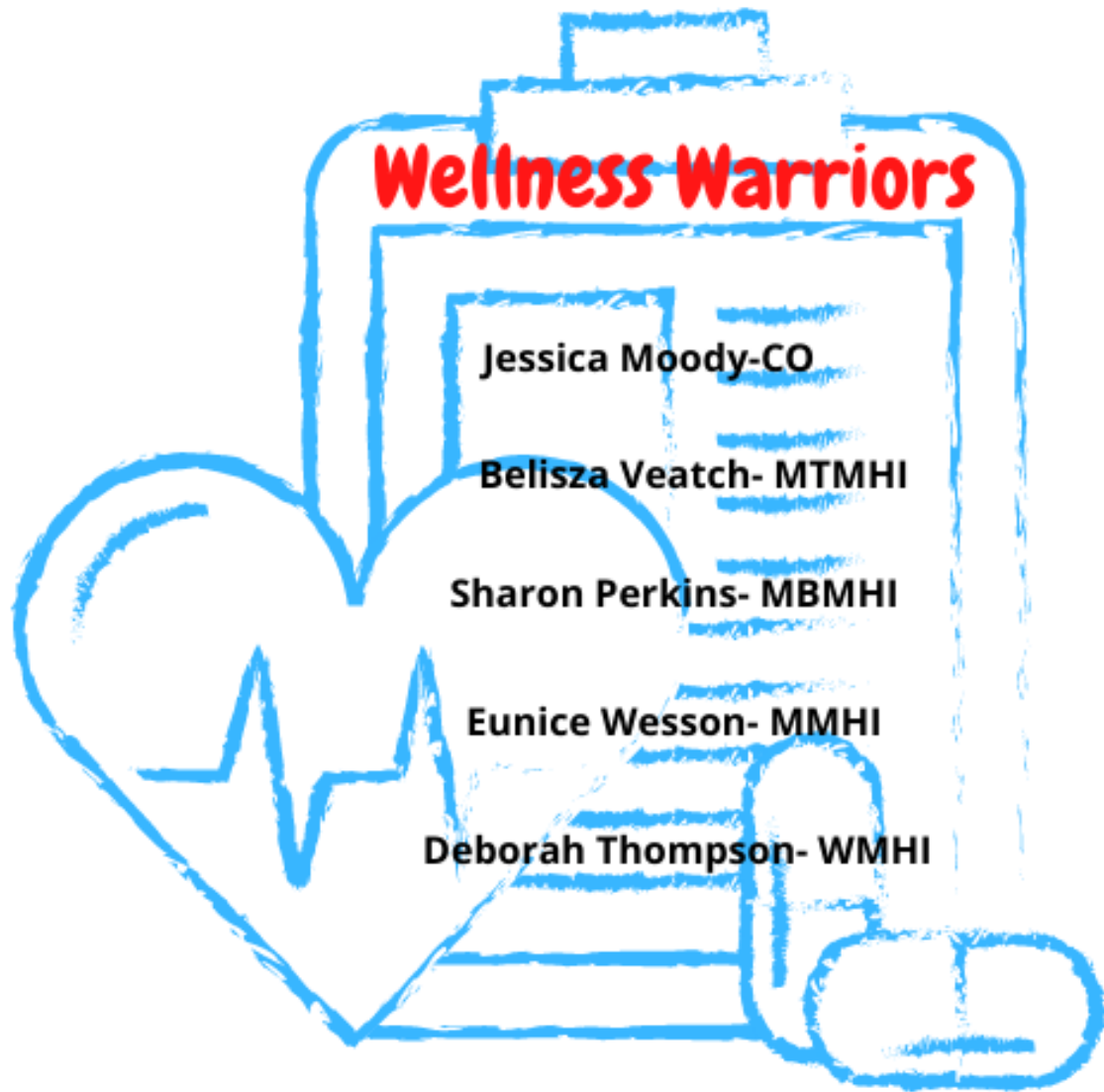
On June 5, the Regional Overdose Prevention Specialists who cover the

upper Cumberland region hosted a booth event to give resources and information on what to do in an opioid drug overdose.



Maury County Coalition participated in Columbia's First Friday and brought awareness to drug overdose.

Shout Out!



Congratulations to everyone who participated in the TDMHSAS Wellness Council's Wellness Warrior Challenge. Each winner received a NutriBullet for participating.

If you'd like to "shout out" to a TDMHSAS colleague, please send an email to OC.TDMHSAS@tn.gov. Tell us who you'd like to recognize and why.

What's growing in the garden at

Moccasin Bend?

MBMHI has a garden theme for the month of June, which they have named Cultivation Garden. Before planting, staff and patients wrote out recovery and desired goals that they hope to cultivate. These goals were placed in a time capsule and planted along with veggies, flowers and a variety of herbs. Tiffany Jones, AT- RTII for Unit 6 states “Creativity, Hope, Motivation, and Happiness are the contributing factors to our growth!”

MBMHI Nursing Leadership would like to give a special thanks to Tiffany for such an inspiring and creative idea. Also a special thanks to SW, Teresa Brown, MWII Randy Dupree, Unit 6 staff, the patients and Unit 6 Nurse Manager, Nicole Copeny for caring and uplifting the Unit 6 community daily and lending a helping hand. GREAT JOB TEAM!





Save-the-Dates

July Regional Council and Adult Committee Meetings

Adult Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 14, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CST

Region VI Council Meeting

Tuesday, July 13, 2021
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CST

Region III Council Meeting

Thursday, July 15, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

Region VII Council Meeting

Tuesday, July 27, 2021
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CST

[Please refer to the website for information on how to attend these meetings.](#)

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
855-274-7471 

For questions about addiction treatment/referrals ...

TN
REDLINE
1.800.889.9789
CALL OR TEXT

TN Department of
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services

TAADAS
Tennessee Association of
Dual Diagnosis Advocates

TN TOGETHER
ENDING THE OPIOID CRISIS

To talk with a TDMHSAS Consumer Advocate ...



Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services

HELPLINE

1-800-560-5767

OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov

We can help with

- finding mental health and substance abuse resources in your area
- questions about insurance
- where to find 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 am to 4:30 pm
- Closed on state holidays

If we cannot answer your question, we will work with you to find the appropriate resource.

www.tn.gov/behavioral-health



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

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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