



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As summer fades to fall, we celebrate the beauty of change and the possibilities of recovery! September is of course Recovery Month, and it's an amazing time to reflect, share, and celebrate that recovery is real, it's possible, and it's beautiful.

As a department, we are excited to report landmark progress in three big areas related to mental health services in our state. First, in our Regional Mental Health Institutes, we have received approval to proceed from the State Building Commission on two important projects:

- Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute: \$260 million – New replacement facility and parking structure consolidating all program functions of the existing facilities
- Western Mental Health Institute: \$63 million – Phase 2 build-out to consolidate operations including elements such a kitchen, a gym, support services, IT space, a courtroom, and additional inpatient rooms

Both of these projects have been years in the making and represent a \$323 million state investment in our department's ability to deliver effective and efficient hospital services.

As a result of the Tennessee General Assembly's special session in August, TDMHSAS is receiving \$69.1 million in additional, non-recurring funding to address great needs in the public behavioral health field around rewarding, retaining, and recruiting new employees, supporting providers, and starting students on paths to service in our field. Here is additional detail on each of the initiatives:

- \$50 million for Mental Health Services and Bonuses to Medical Practitioners – Grants to eligible community mental health agencies allowing them to elect the TDMHSAS-funded programs to which these new funds will be applied.
- \$12.1 million for Recruitment and Retention Bonuses – Sign-on and retention bonuses to current or future employees in direct service positions at contracted substance abuse treatment agencies and current or future employees in direct service positions at contracted mental health treatment agencies who do not qualify as “medical practitioners” for \$50M appropriation.
- \$4 million for Behavioral Health Safety Net – Funding to increase rates paid by BHSN for adults and for children to match rate increases by TennCare
- \$3 million for Scholarships/Tuition Stipends – Funding for master’s level graduate students admitted to a behavioral health graduate degree program at a Tennessee college or university. Students will commit to providing direct treatment or counseling services at a TDMHSAS contracted treatment agency.

As we mark Recovery Month this September, we are so grateful for these investments in the work that we do together and know that they will create opportunities for recovery and wellness for so many of our neighbors who are hurting. We're already working to put this funding into action, and we can't wait to see the life-changing outcomes for the Tennesseans we are blessed to serve.

Blessings,

Marie

Celebrating Recovery Month



[Read Governor Bill Lee's proclamation for Recovery Month 2023.](#)



Celebrate Recovery Month with a trio of new recovery stories [on our department YouTube Channel at this link.](#)

Tennesseans Pause For International Overdose Awareness Day

Annual remembrance marks lives lost, progress to be made



On International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31, Tennessee paused to remember the neighbors we have lost to overdose deaths, lift up the families touched by tragedy, and celebrate the brave men and women who have survived overdose and are living examples of recovery.

International Overdose Awareness Day is a worldwide moment of reflection to share remembrances, reduce stigma, and celebrate victories on the road to recovery. In Tennessee, overdose and associated deaths continue to claim too many lives. In 2021, the most recent year of full data, [3,814 Tennesseans died from drug overdose](#).

As many lives as have been lost to overdose, tens of thousands of Tennesseans have been saved thanks to the hard work of the [Regional Overdose Prevention Specialists](#). Since October 2017, the ROPS have distributed more than one million doses of naloxone and trained hundreds of thousands of Tennesseans on how to reverse an opioid overdose and save a life.

With new legislation passed by the Tennessee General Assembly in the spring 2022 session, TDMHSAS has been distributing fentanyl test strips for the past year to great success. The department distributed 125,000 test strips in the first year, and [data collected from participants shows outcomes that surpass prior studies](#).

For Tennesseans who are ready to enter treatment, services are available even if you have no means to pay. Call or text the Tennessee REDLINE at 800-889-9789 for a free and confidential referral to substance use disorder treatment services.

Coalitions participate in International Overdose Awareness Day across communities.



TDMHSAS Services Added to MyTN App



Tennesseans now have access to mental health and addiction services at their fingertips through the MyTN app. The latest version of the state of Tennessee's app includes a new section for mental health and addiction resources featuring the top services from TDMHSAS.

MyTN app users can easily click to call or text the Statewide Crisis Line and the Tennessee REDLINE. The app also has information on connecting to treatment services for people who are uninsured including the Behavioral Health Safety Net and addiction treatment Continuum of Care. In a special section called “Spread Hope”, the app has information and access to several department programs which work to prevent behavioral health issues or train and educate people about ways they can help a loved one or make a difference in their community.

[Read more and get a link to download the app in this news release.](#)

Application Portal for Opioid Abatement Community Grants

The Tennessee Opioid Abatement Council's Community Grants Application Portal officially opened on September 1. It will remain open until October 9 to accept applications for the first round of funding.



Announcement of Funding

COMMUNITY GRANTS
OPPIOID ABATEMENT COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 - OCTOBER 9, 2020



[In an Announcement of Funding posted in late July](#), the OAC outlined the process for application including criteria for constructing grant applications, designing programs, building partnerships, and reporting outcomes. Proposers must design programs that impact opioid use disorder their communities in methods contained in the [approved remediation list](#) including: Primary Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment, Recovery Support, Education/ Training or Research or Evaluation of Abatement Strategy Efficacy. To measure interest and ensure resources to evaluate proposals, council staff asked potential proposers to submit an Intent to Apply, and they received letters for about 440 applications.



Watch a video from the Opioid Abatement Council talking about the opening of the grant application portal.

Groundbreakings and Ribbon Cuttings!



Governor Lee and Commissioner Williams joined Alliance Healthcare Services CEO Laurie Powell and her team in Memphis on September 15 to celebrate the groundbreaking for their new Crisis Wellness Center. A \$7 million state appropriation

in the current budget year is helping to fund construction at this new facility for crisis services in Shelby County.



Congratulations to the team at Aspell Recovery Center on the groundbreaking at their new recovery housing in Henderson County. The location will provide a home for up to 12 men in recovery from addiction. Programming on site will include relapse prevention, case management, job skills, parenting classes. The department is supporting this development with a \$600,000 grant through Creating Homes Initiative 3.0. Aspell also cut the ribbon on a new women's residential in Hardin County earlier this month. [Read more at this link.](#)

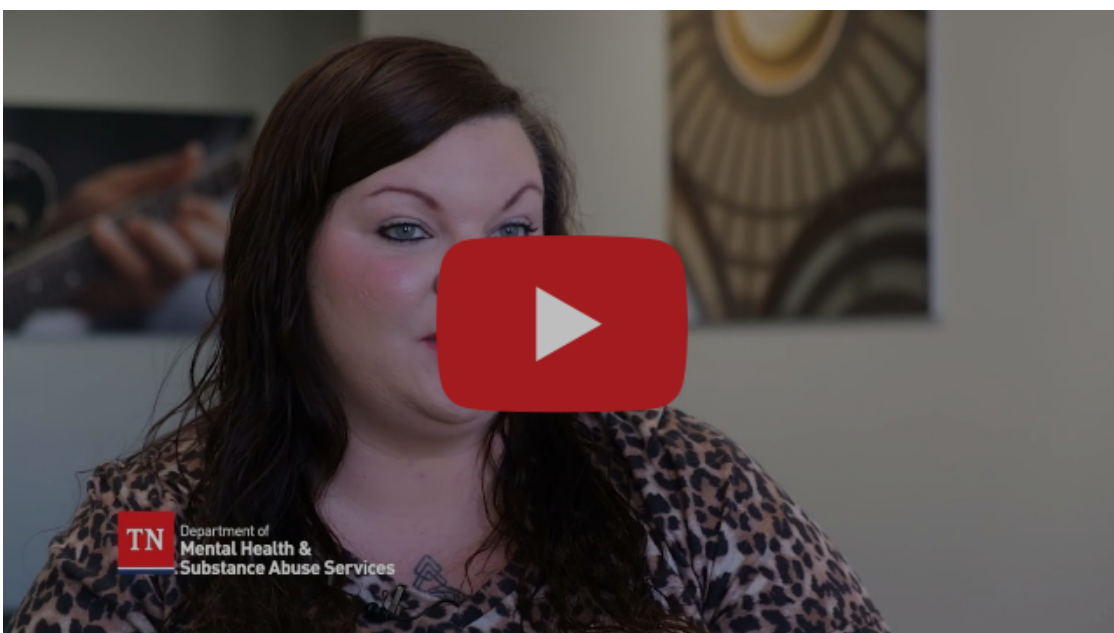


Congratulations to the McNabb Center for cutting the ribbon on their new recovery home in Blount County! This home will have beds for up to 10 women in recovery. \$572,500 from the department's Creating Homes Initiative 2.0 was among the funders to bring this project to fruition.

The Power of Peer Support!



Certified peers from Tennessee's three peer programs gathered all together for their first-ever joint conference on August 14 and 15 in Murfreesboro. The energetic and engaged crowd was entertained and educated by a full slate of amazing presenters. As this year's conference was the first in-person gathering since the CPRS Conference in 2019, it definitely had a family reunion feeling! Thanks to everyone who attended and the planners and presenters who made it a huge success.



One certified peer who's doing amazing work is Jessica Stanley! Jessica is dually certified through both the CPRS program and our Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) program. In this video, Jessica shares why she's so passionate about CYAPSS that she became a trainer!

TDMHSAS and State Agencies Celebrate 10 Years of Employment First



Pictured L to R: DIDD Commissioner Brad Turner, TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams, DHS Commissioner Clarence Carter, TennCare Director Stephen Smith, Self-Advocate Clancey Hopper.

TDMHSAS joined our counterparts at the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Human Services, and Bureau of TennCare to celebrate 10 years of Employment First in Tennessee. Employment First is a designation that programs serving people with disabilities will actively explore employment as a means for independence and wellness. At TDMHSAS, our Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment program contributes to this meaningful and important work. At the celebration on August 15, Commissioner Williams shared that more than 8,400 Tennesseans had been served through IPS providers across Tennessee. You can learn more about IPS in Tennessee at this link: [TN.gov/behavioral-health/ips](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/ips)

Buprenorphine Regulations and Resources



The TDMHSAS Divisions of Clinical Leadership and Planning, Policy and Legislation held a pair of events around buprenorphine in Tennessee. The first was a community listening session on July 19 in Nashville about the use of buprenorphine for opioid use disorders. The listening session was well attended, including stakeholders representing provider associations, individual providers, and state agencies. Stakeholders were given an opportunity to discuss challenges and successes with using buprenorphine. One topic of discussion was the department’s public guidance now that the federal DATA Waiver has been removed. [You can view a PDF document and a video presentation of that guidance on this page under “Buprenorphine.”](#)

The second event was September 19 on the campus of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City. Department leaders held an awareness and education session for buprenorphine prescribers in northeast Tennessee in the morning. [WATCH: Media coverage of the event.](#)

And in the afternoon, the department convened members of the Buprenorphine Prescribing Guidelines Committee to discuss suggestions for potential revisions. Thanks to everyone who attended these events and made them a big success!

TDMHSAS Teams up with TABC for Alcohol Prevention

Messaging

TDMHSAS and Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) kicked off back to school season with important messages about underage drinking for youth and their parents.

The campaign which ran in August featured information about alcohol use disorder, risks of underage alcohol consumption, and data on pre and post-pandemic alcohol consumption increases. Messages also contained information on how to access treatment resources through the Tennessee REDLINE.

“While fentanyl and other illicit drugs get the headlines they rightly deserve, alcohol is still the most misused substance among Tennesseans of all ages because it is so widely available. It’s so important for parents to talk to their children about the real risks of underage drinking,” said TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams, LCSW. “We’re so grateful to our partners at TABC, and we are hopeful these messages reach people and make a difference.”

[Read more in the news release at this link.](#)

[News Coverage: WKRN Nashville \(featuring Williamson County Prevention Coalition\)](#)

[News Coverage: WBIR Knoxville \(Featuring Metro Drug Coalition\)](#)

Project Basic Hosts Statewide Meeting



Project BASIC (Better Attitudes & Skills In Children) team came together for their statewide meeting August 11th.

BASIC is an award-winning school-based mental health prevention and early intervention program for children that promotes mental health by identifying children at risk of serious emotional disorders and referring them to treatment. BASIC offers mental health education through direct classroom interaction with children and through work with teachers, coaching them on strategies to promote social emotional development of children.

Tennessee Represents on the National Stage



TDMHSAS Commissioner Marie Williams and Jennifer Armstrong, TDMHSAS Director of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention, shared Tennessee's successes in using technology to improve crisis services at the 2023 National Association of Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) annual meeting on July 29th.

Statewide Planning and Policy Council Meeting



We had a great gathering at our quarterly Statewide Planning and Policy Council meeting on August 8! The council heard presentations about fentanyl test strip distribution and emerging substances, the Opioid Abatement Council's announcement of funding, Tennessee Disability Pathfinder, and the spring session of the Tennessee General Assembly. Commissioner Marie Williams also shared some updates and words of encouragement and candidly answered audience questions during a Q&A. The meeting was the first as Chair for Rikki Harris of TN Voices and Vice-Chair for Paul Fuchcar of CADAS (Pictured above). Thanks to everyone who made it a great meeting!

Promoting Behavioral Health Careers



The team behind the new Pathways to Behavioral Health Careers project held a 2-day event in Nashville in mid-July. The gathering at Lipscomb University was a workshop to help students explore career opportunities in behavioral health and to help the team refine their presentation as they ramp up their work this fall. The session ended with two students heading to the admissions office to discuss programs and one meeting with a faculty member! Pathways to Behavioral Health Careers is an interagency project between the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and the University of Memphis. Learn more at their website: <https://mapmypathway.com/>

**Kristen Connell completes
Tennessee Accelerated Leadership
Institute**



Kristen Connell, the Assistant Director of Hospital Services in the TDMHSAS Division of Hospital Services, recently completed the Tennessee Accelerated Leadership Institute (ALI) through the Department of Human Resources.

Accelerated Leadership Institute (ALI) is a high-powered development program that prepares high-potential employees who have typically not supervised for the critical role of leadership within state government. Participants engage in a rigorous program of study that is based on recognized advanced leadership competencies.

Ken Horvath Recognized for Outstanding Leadership



Ken Horvath from DSAS, Treatment and Recovery Services, received an award from TAMHO's TNCODC (Tennessee Co-occurring Disorders Collaborative) while at the TNCODC Summit 2023 for "recognition of outstanding leadership."

Ken has been instrumental in the co-occurring certification process for the Division of Substance Abuse Services and the provider community. He has always had a passion for this work and for assisting and encouraging the providers in doing all that they do to provide the best quality care for those with co-occurring disorders. Ken's commitment and hard work to all Tennesseans is appreciated and his award is well-deserved.

Melvin Gatewood Recognized as VHA Peer Specialist of the Year



Out of the almost 1,400 peer support staff members currently working in Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Tennessee's Melvin Gatewood has been selected as the 2023 VHA National Peer Specialist of the Year. Melvin is also a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist at the VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System. The award recognizes his significant leadership skills and the highly valuable contributions that he regularly makes in working on multiple projects within VHA as well as with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.

Welcome to Team TDMHSAS



The Office of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention is excited to announce the addition of April Hanners, MPH! April joined the team in July and will serve as Program Manager of Disaster Management and Suicide Prevention, providing operational and fiscal oversight of all Disaster Crisis Counseling and Suicide

Prevention programs. Prior to her joining the team, April worked for TEMA, where she served as the Grants Manager for Emergency Management Performance Grants. She has a passion for working with agencies that have a direct impact on our communities. Outside of work April enjoys playing Dungeons and Dragons, hiking, playing video games, and martial arts.

Power of Putnum Recognized by SAMHSA in Partner Spotlight



Power of Putnam has been recognized as SAMHSA's Partner Spotlight for the month of July. They received the recognition for their work within their community to develop and implement strategies against substance misuse. One of the ways Power of Putnam does this is to strategically promote “Talk. They Hear You.” during nationally recognized holidays such as Global Day of Parents, National No Smoking Day, and National Prevention Week. Power of Putnam shares campaign materials during these holidays on its social media, including information about the “Talk. They Hear You.” [mobile app](#), [“Clouded”](#) and [“We Do Hear You”](#) PSAs, and campaign fact sheets.

Coalitions in the Community



Drug Free Dickson partnered with the Dickson County Sheriff's Office and the City of Dickson Parks and Recreation Department to host their 2nd Annual Skateboarding workshop for kids ages 8-13 from July 10th-14th. Thanks to the generous Community Foundation grant, each child received a free skateboard and safety equipment. The workshop began each day with a special guest speaker, followed by Sheriff's Deputy Brandon Dyer instructing the youth on basic skateboarding etiquette and maneuvers. Throughout the week, the youth were educated on the dangers of vaping, THC, prescription drugs, and substance misuse. The workshop concluded with Parents Day on Friday and a special visit from the City of Dickson Fire Department. Each parent received a DFD resource bag with information from Operation Parent and Talk They Hear You, along with Count It Lock it Drop It items.

Shout Out!

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

Wednesday, October 11, 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
Conference Line Numbers
615-253-5786 (local/Nashville)
866-249-0567 (long-distance)

Region VI

Tuesday, October 10, 2023
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CST
Pathways
238 Summar Drive
Jackson, TN 38301

Region III

Thursday, October 12, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST
AIM Center
472 W. MLK Blvd.
Chattanooga, TN 37402

Region VII

Tuesday, October 24, 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 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.



PAULA D. FOSTER, MSW, LCSW
Non-Profit/Social Work
Training Consultant

Open to all social workers

Meets 1 hour requirement for
all licensees

Current supervisors must
complete the training by the
December 31, 2023

Three convenient dates from
which to choose attendance

Pending NASW TN Chapter
CE approval for 3 CE's of
ethics

THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED UNDER A GRANT
CONTRACT WITH THE STATE OF TENNESSEE,
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND
SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES.

An Ethical Understanding of Tennessee Social Work Licensure Law

A Virtual Webinar

This workshop will provide information and clarity regarding the path for advanced licensure in the state of Tennessee. A thorough review of the current rules will help participants understand the requirements and the eligibility for advanced licensure as a clinical or advanced generalist social worker. Case scenarios will help participants understand how to conceptualize and document accurately the social work experience. Clarification will also be given regarding the role of the supervisor and how to accurately accumulate supervision hours and contact hours.

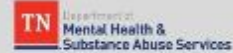
Three convenient dates from which to choose
your attendance:

August 31, 2023, 9am-12pm Central

October 6, 2023, 9am-12pm Central

November 3, 2023, 9am-12pm Central

Sponsored by:



In partnership with:



For more information and to register: [TARCPCON2023-20th Anniversary Celebration | Tennessee Association of Recovery Court Professionals](#)

Resources

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 

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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