

## ***Vision for Success***

**Inside the  
Governor's Visit**



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*A Story of Recovery*

It is my pleasure to bring you our new and improved *Update*! Our new Communications Team has embarked on an *Update* makeover that I'm thrilled to share with you.



Surrounded by colleagues who work tirelessly to transform the lives of people across Tennessee, Mike and Leslie saw an opportunity to celebrate you in a bigger and bolder way. The energy and enthusiasm they bring is evident on every page.

The NEW *Update* is filled with news, photos, and stories of healing and accomplishment. It honors our history and also utilizes today's technology, moving us forward into a brighter, more informed, technologically-savvy, and inspired future. We hope you enjoy the new magazine style format.

This is your publication. I encourage you to submit articles, share accomplishments, and provide feedback.

I urge you to share this newsletter with friends, family, colleagues – all who care about the future of mental health and substance abuse services in our state and beyond.

Sincerely,

E. Douglas Varney, Commissioner

The **MISSION** of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is to plan for and promote the availability of a comprehensive array of quality prevention, early intervention, treatment, habilitation, and rehabilitation services and supports based on the needs and choices of individuals and families served.

The **VISION** of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services is to be one of the nation's most innovative and proactive service providers for Tennesseans dealing with mental health and substance abuse problems.



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Contact the department's EEO/AA Coordinator at 615-532-5680, the Title VI Coordinator or the ADA Coordinator at 615-532-6700 or 1-800-560-5767 for inquiries, complaints or further information.

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# Prescription for Success Travels the State | By Mike Machak



Commissioner Varney addresses local and state elected leaders, agency providers, law enforcement, judges, citizens and the news media at the Prescription for Success event held in the auditorium of the Moses Teen Center in Knoxville.

This summer's rollout of Prescription for Success succeeded in getting the public's attention – generating discussion about the prescription drug abuse epidemic facing citizens and public servants across the state.

In collaboration with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Department of Health, Department of Safety and Homeland Security, Department of Correction, Department of Children's Services, TennCare, and the United States Department of Justice, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services published the [87-page report](#), *Prescription for Success: Statewide Strategies to Prevent and Treat the Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic in Tennessee*. The report and its accompanying [Executive Summary](#) were distributed in communities across the state.

Following the June 3rd kick-off in Nashville at the Capitol building with Governor Haslam, meetings were held in Clarksville, Jackson, Memphis, Cookeville, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Johnson City, and Dickson with another stop planned for Rutherford County September 30.



Sheriff John Garrett, Mark Peek, Bill Gibson, Angie McKinney-Jones, Jamie Colson, and Patrick Martin at the Cookeville event.

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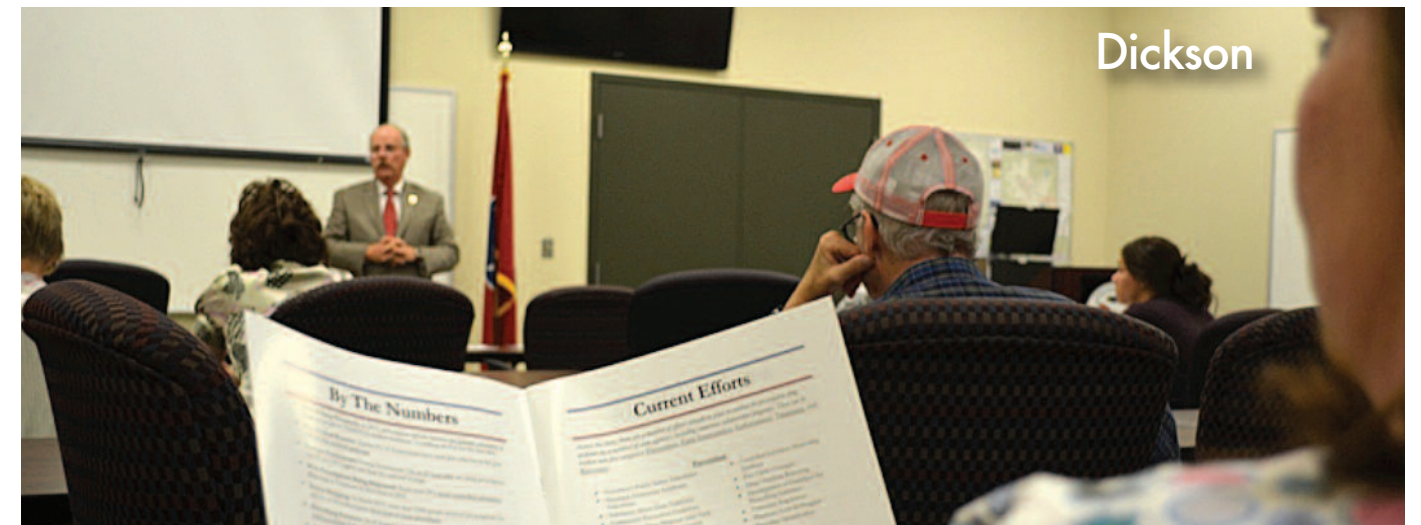
The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services brought together legislators, recovery court judges, drug coalitions, behavioral health providers, law enforcement personnel, local elected officials, and people in recovery to participate, share feedback, ideas, and offer suggestions to help in the statewide effort to reduce prescription drug abuse. More than 30 legislators and 15 Recovery Court judges joined in the roundtable meetings. The seven regional events generated a total attendance of more than 500. The public and press were invited to press conferences.



Chattanooga

After the Prescription for Success press conference, Deputy Commissioner Marie Williams and Commissioner Varney stop for a photo op with a representative from NAMI – Chattanooga.

News outlets that reported on the prescription drug abuse problem in our state and covered the Prescription for Success events and strategic plan include: The Tennessean, [News Channel 5 Nashville](#), [WSMV-TV Nashville](#), [Fox-17 Nashville](#), Clarksville Leaf Chronicle, Jackson Sun, Memphis Flyer, Lenoir City News Herald, Chattanooga Times Free Press, TNREPORT.com Chattanooga, WDEF-TV News 12 Chattanooga, Knoxville News-Sentinel, WBIR-TV Knoxville, WATE-TV Knoxville, WVLT-TV Knoxville, [Johnson City Press](#), Bristol Herald Courier, Kingsport Times News, WJHL-TV News Channel 11 and WCYB-TV News 5 of Johnson City.



Dickson



Knoxville



Johnson City



Johnson City

Commissioner Varney leads the town hall discussion at the Prescription for Success event in Johnson City, engaging with law enforcement officials, judges, community providers, individuals in recovery, and local and state elected leaders, including Rep. David Hawk, District 5, Green County (pictured). Dr. John Dreyzehner, Commissioner of the Department of Health, participated in this roundtable.

Representatives from the Lifeline program were highlights at every Prescription for Success event. Jason Abernathy, Johnson City, and Stan Grubb, Knoxville, captivated the audience as each spoke about their lives in recovery.

# Central Office Hosts Governor Haslam

Governor Haslam and COO Greg Adams paid a visit to the TDMHSAS Central Office in April, speaking with members of the Executive Staff about the Customer-Focused Government (CFG) initiative.

Governor Haslam and COO Adams also had a chance to tour the Department's offices on the fifth and sixth floors of the Andrew Jackson Building, and met with members of the staff to talk about some of the key issues they are facing.



Lisa Ragan, Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services in the TDMHSAS Division of Mental Health Services, speaks with Governor Haslam during his visit to Central Office.



Governor Haslam chats with Dr. Edwina Chappell, Dr. Jason Carter, Danette Wilson, Ira Lacy, and Pharmacy intern Cory Villanueva while Deputy Commissioner Williams looks on.



Governor Haslam shakes the hand of James Moore, Human Resources. Closeby are colleagues Deb Cunningham, Lalena Caputo, Sharita Askew, and Melissa Peters.

## Getting Down to Business



Commissioner Varney, Deputy Commissioner Williams, and the TDMHSAS Executive Staff gathered with the Governor in the Commissioner's Board Room.



Commissioner Varney explains some of the key issues facing the Department to Governor Haslam.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see more photos from Governor Haslam's visit to the TDMHSAS Central Office.



## Vandy Students and TDMHSAS Team Up | *By Sherry Oziminski, Business Analyst*

Front row, left to right: Engineering students Eliza Stedman, Sami Kopinsky, and Sara Bowman.

Back row, left to right: Pharmacy Resident Rachel Bauer, Laura Young, and Sherry Oziminski.

The Division of Hospital Services is hosting a team of engineering students from Vanderbilt University's Department of Engineering during the 2014 fall semester. The team will be evaluating the potential for Automated Medication Dispensing (AMD) machines and processes in our hospitals. This project is part of the upper-level engineering curriculum at Vanderbilt and will function under the umbrella of the Electronic Clinical Record Project ECR, led by Nurse Consultant Laura Young, Ph.D. and Business Analyst Sherry Oziminski under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner John R. Arredondo. As the ECR project continues the work of Business Process Improvement in the hospitals overall, the student team, comprised of three biomedical engineering students, will be

focused specifically on the evaluation of the medication dispensing operations.

Why is TDMHSAS hosting student engineers? There is a win-win-win scenario at play here. The engineering students will gain industry knowledge from an experienced workforce, learning from the best, while still in school. Secondly, the agency gains a fresh perspective to an important issue along with a delivered work product from the students at the end of the semester. And, finally, together we are building a bridge to a future potential workforce in the process.

Please help us to welcome Sami Kopinsky, Eliza Stedman, and Sara Bowman as they visit each Friday during this semester.

## The Next Big Idea | Community Providers Face Challenges, Discuss Solutions

Often times, when a challenging situation appears to be insurmountable, the best solution is right in front of you – among the people who face those issues every single day and work through them. That’s the philosophy behind the Department’s Community Provider Meetings. These meetings were held at all three state hospitals in March, June, and July 2014. They began as a way for Central Office to communicate with behavioral health providers across the state. They became a means to collaborate with colleagues, discuss possible strategies and solutions for specific areas of concern, and share ideas with staff from TDMHSAS Hospital Services Division.

These photos are from the July Provider Meeting at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. Working in small groups, teams tackled four key areas of opportunity.



Talk of a community resource catalog generated much discussion. This team discussed why such a resource is needed and brainstormed ways to create and maintain a provider services database.



CEO Bob Micinski, Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute, was a member of the work group which discussed how to improve communication between patients and providers.



This group discussed the availability of quality housing and ways to overcome barriers for those in need.



Assistant Commissioner Rod Bragg listens in as a group of providers share challenges associated with medication supply at discharge. Robin Nobling, NAMI Davidson County, takes notes and helps lead the discussion.

Share your Department News!  
E-mail [Leslie.Judson@tn.gov](mailto:Leslie.Judson@tn.gov)

## TDMHSAS Featured on Trinity Broadcasting

Hope Loftis, host of the Nashville-based show “Joy in Our Town” (far left) recently interviewed TDMHSAS’ Melissa Sparks, Director of Crisis Services & Suicide Prevention, and Rod Bragg, Assistant Commissioner of Substance Abuse Services for an upcoming episode. Sparks and Bragg spoke about prescription drug abuse and suicide prevention, two of the Department’s most important initiatives. “Joy in Our Town” was taped at the studios at Trinity Broadcasting Network in Hendersonville.



## Systems of Care Goes to Washington



Tennessee was well represented with more than 50 attendees from across the state at the Georgetown Training Institutes known as the premier conference on children’s mental health. The July conference includes in-depth, practical training and offers innovative approaches. Participants from across Tennessee included policy makers, administrators, providers, clinicians, peer support providers, behavioral health managed care representatives, and evaluators, as well as families, youth, and young adults. Representatives from System of Care communities across the state who are pictured are Kisha Ledlow, Dr. Lymari Benitez, Melissa McGee, Keri Virgo, and Sukey Steckel. Also pictured is Tawny Spinelli from the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet.

## Remembering Lakeshore | By Mike Machak

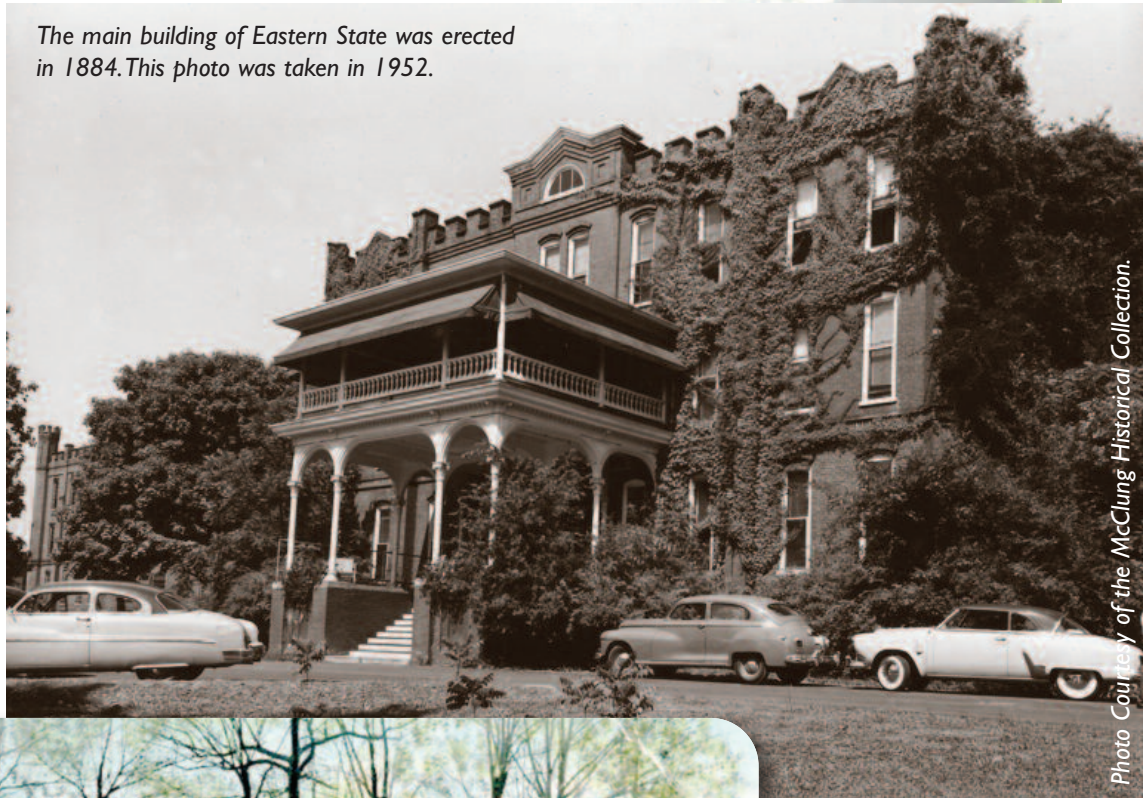
### Looking Back, Moving Forward

In June of this year, the City of Knoxville formally presented to the public an updated master plan to transform the former Lakeshore Mental Health Institute property into what many envision as the perfect park. It's appropriately named Lakeshore Park.

Already online is the vision of what's to come. This [promotional video](#) imagines a beautiful space, 180-acres of lakefront, fields, hills, woods, ballparks, and the memories yet to be made. "A Park for Everyone. A Park for You," the video promises, describing a welcoming, multi-use space that planners, community leaders, and citizens hope to be "one of the finest parks in the country."

Those images are in stark contrast to the history and legacy of Lakeshore Mental Health Institute. The Lakeshore many remember is both stately and somewhat mysterious, a time not that long ago. Knoxville's WBIR-TV has taken an in depth look at the past in a series of [online stories and videos](#) detailing the Lakeshore that was. The experiences, stories, and images will most certainly live on.

In the two years since Lakeshore's closing, community-based behavioral health and mobile crisis providers as well as the state's remaining four regional hospitals are meeting the short and long term mental healthcare needs of Tennesseans who seek help. This "closer to home" approach is producing better outcomes benefitting Tennesseans now and in the future.



The main building of Eastern State was erected in 1884. This photo was taken in 1952.

Photo Courtesy of the McClung Historical Collection.



Entrance to Lyons View Insane Asylum, Knoxville, Tenn.

The hospital was built on donated farmland making for a bucolic setting which remains today at Lakeshore Park at this entrance to Eastern State Hospital, the main building is visible in the background.

## Lakeshore Park: Reflecting on History | By John Shearer

As someone who enjoys jogging for health and relaxation, particularly on large open spaces full of grass, I was naturally drawn to Knoxville's Lakeshore Park after my wife and I moved to the East Tennessee city in 2005. While I did find plenty of land on which to jog on the expansive and hilly acreage, I also soon began to notice some of the buildings of the Lakeshore Mental Health Institute that sat in the middle of the park. As a result, I became more curious about them.

The setting seemed an unusual juxtaposition, but back in the 1990s, as I understand, the City of Knoxville had begun using some of the land on the outer rim of the Lakeshore Mental Health Institute in West Knoxville for a walking trail and ball fields. So the fun scene of adults walking and running or youngsters playing baseball or soccer was quite a contrast to the serious business of people receiving and administering mental health care a few feet away.

And as someone who grew up in Chattanooga with the understanding – or maybe misconception – that the general public never really went to the Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute, I never knew how close to get to some of the buildings. But as I learned through the news over the last couple of years that Lakeshore was closing and that virtually the entire acreage was being turned into city parkland, I began examining the structures more closely. It was then that maybe I realized how many of the mostly mid-century buildings at Lakeshore were empty and had been for a number of years as mental health services began changing.

Ironically, I am also aware that changes in mental health had also resulted in the buildings being constructed to begin with after World War II after the creation of the state mental health department under Gov. Frank Clement. My interest in the parkland – as

well as old buildings – led to a couple of detailed articles I wrote for the Knoxville News Sentinel as a freelance journalist on the history of the grounds and buildings. I came across the fact that the Victorian-style administration building – opened in the mid-1880s, which is being preserved and restored.

I was also interested in all the newer buildings from the Waterside and Village Mall buildings that looked like schools, to the cottages and chapel constructed under the progressive-thinking superintendent Dr. B.F. Patterson. Of these, only the



Women's Hall attendants in 1903 (from left) Susie Tuton, Mary Mize, Othella Crippen, and Jennie Roberts.

chapel is being saved.

As somewhat of an idealist who loves 1960s architecture, in part because I remember when such buildings seemed new and modern when I was a Baby Boomer child, I hated to see any of them torn down. But I figured I would at least try to capture them for posterity on a [slide show](#) for historians and people who had connections to Lakeshore Institute in some way.

And for me, examining the buildings more closely for pictures helped me appreciate more deeply the mental health services offered at the site for well over a century.



**Frontier Health Names New President** | Submitted by Frontier Health

**D**r. Teresa Kidd is well known statewide for her leadership and collaboration with others in evolving practical solutions to complex clinical issues. She has been instrumental in identifying emerging community needs and health care gaps so they can be resolved.

Dr. Kidd has diversified clinical expertise, and promotes new clinical developments and technological advances that ensure the application of Frontier Health’s mission of providing quality services that encourage people to achieve their full potential.

“Dr. Kidd has worked for Frontier Health and our precursor organizations for 32 years,” said CEO Charles E. Good. “She is well known not only for her years of clinical service, but also for expertise in the areas of compliance and talent in working collaboratively within our organization and across all our community partnerships.”

In her new position as president, Dr. Kidd will continue to oversee Frontier Health’s ongoing operations providing services to more than 50,000 individuals at 64 facilities in 12 counties and two states.

**Helen Ross McNabb Recognized for Excellence** | Submitted by Helen Ross McNabb Center



Jerry Vagnier

**T**he Helen Ross McNabb Center in Knoxville has been accredited for another three years by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International.

“We are extremely proud of our Center’s staff whose professionalism and compassion made this accomplishment possible,” says Jerry Vagnier, CEO and President of the Helen Ross McNabb Center.



**“We are extremely proud of our Center’s staff whose professionalism and compassion made this accomplishment possible.”**

– Jerry Vagnier, CEO/President, Helen Ross McNabb

“CARF’s accreditation shows our community that we greatly value the quality of our services while striving to be a premier mental health agency in East Tennessee.”

The award letter states that the center’s services, personnel and documentation demonstrate an established pattern of excellence. Its programs and the organization as a whole, shows a continuous commitment to improvement. Since 1948, the center has provided quality services for children, adults and families experiencing mental illness, addiction and social challenges.

**Scott, Morgan Counties Get Federal Help for Behavioral Health** | Submitted by Ridgeview Behavioral Health Services

**R**idgeview Behavioral Health Services, in partnership with Morgan County Medical Center (MCMC) and Mountain People’s Health Council, Inc. (MPHC)

looks forward to providing fully integrated primary care and behavioral health care, based on an award totaling \$490,167 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“These awards will further reduce the barriers that too often prevent people from getting the help they need for mental health problems,” said Sylvia Mathews Burwell, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. “Health centers with these awards are on the front lines of better integrating mental health into primary care and improving access to care through the Affordable Care Act.”



The funds will be used to integrate mental health and substance abuse treatment services as a component of the medical services already offered.

This funding is key to employing a collaborative integrated care model that is sustainable both clinically and financially.

Ridgeview is honored to serve as a partner to both of these providers of primary care in Scott and Morgan County, said Brian Buck, Ridgeview CEO. “Our shared mission and values to advance integrated care and build a healthier community make this a strong partnership.”

MCMC was awarded \$250,000 and MPHC was awarded \$240,167 each year for the two-year funding period.



## National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day

September 27, 2014, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

# Got DRUGS?

To help reduce the abuse of prescription drugs, the 2nd of two National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days in 2014 will be held on Saturday, September 27. It's an opportunity for citizens to join the effort to safely remove thousands of pounds of potentially dangerous, expired, unused, and unwanted medications and other substances from homes across the country.

"It's extremely important to remove unused medications if they're no longer being used as intended," said E. Douglas Varney, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS). "More than 1,000 Tennesseans die each year from drug overdoses, deaths that could be prevented if all unused prescription medication were disposed of properly."

[CLICK HERE](#) to find the nearest permanent prescription drop box.



## September is Suicide Prevention Month

... but every day is an opportunity to save a life!

By Lygia Williams, TDMHSAS Crisis and Suicide Prevention Services

**Approximately 956 lives are lost to suicide each year in TN.**

**60% of us have known someone or will know someone who dies by suicide.**

**20% of us have had a family member or will have a family member who dies by suicide.**

According to former Surgeon General for the United States, David Satcher, M.D., "suicide is a major public health problem and the most preventable form of death." It is the ninth leading cause of death for all Tennesseans and the third leading cause of death for our young people.

In almost all cases, suicide is linked to mental illness, usually depression, accounting for 93% of all suicide deaths. Add alcohol or drugs to these illnesses and the risk is significantly increased. There are more Tennesseans dying by suicide than by homicides, AIDS, and drunk drivers combined. There are more people losing their life to suicide than from acts of war.

Why are we losing so many people to a cause of death that is preventable? No one is immune – young, old, rich, poor, educated, uneducated, all religions, and all races. Anyone can find the pain of living so unbearable that they



can't think of how to cope and choose death. If you suspect that someone is thinking about suicide, you must be willing to talk to them about it; it will not put the idea in their head. It would actually let them know you care.

**It is important to learn to recognize the signs of suicide and know what to do to intervene.**

There are many ways to increase your knowledge. [The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network \(TSPN\)](#) has a wealth of information as well as community training events that are free of charge. [The Jason Foundation](#) has free educational information and a speaker's bureau specifically to address the needs of understanding youth suicide.

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It is also important to understand that depression can be a terminal illness and the chances of suicide increase when people maintain various myths such as depression being a sign of weakness.

**We must eliminate the stigma and shame of having a mental illness.**

Suicide will continue to take lives when stigma of depression and suicide remain.

We all need to be comfortable talking about suicide; it is a public health problem but it is one that can be prevented if we are willing to talk about it. Tennessee has adopted a zero suicide approach to preventing suicide. You can help make zero suicide a reality. It begins by talking about it and learning how you can help. Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility. Remember, most people don't want to die; they just want their pain to end.

*Information for this article is from Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, The American Association of Suicidology, and TSPN.*



**September is National Recovery Month**  
It's not too late to find an event near you!

■ **Wednesday, Sept. 24**  
**Movie Screening: The Anonymous People**  
 The University of Tennessee, Chattanooga  
 UTC Counseling and Personal Development Center  
 6 p.m.

You are invited to a free screening of *The Anonymous People*, a documentary by filmmaker Greg Williams, about the more than 23 million Americans living in long-term recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs. The goal of the movie is to change the conversation from addiction to recovery and build a grassroots social justice movement that supports people stepping out of the shadows and talking about their lives in recovery – without stigma or shame. Featuring actress Kristen Johnston, former NBA star Chris Herren, Miss USA 2006, former Congressman Patrick Kennedy and others. Reserve a free ticket for the screening [here](#).

■ **Thursday, Sept. 25**  
**National Recovery Month Celebration**  
 New Life Lodge | 999 Girl Scout Road | Burns, TN  
 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Join alumni and staff of New Life Lodge Alcohol & Drug Treatment as we celebrate! Guest speaker will be Clark Converse. Special musical performance by recording artist John McAndrew. Balloon release at noon. Lunch will be provided. RSVP to Michelle Burks or call 615-906-9118.

■ **Friday/Saturday, Sept. 26-27**  
**NAMI Tennessee 28th Annual State Convention**  
 Trevecca Nazarene University | Nashville

This year's theme is "Enhancing Life After Diagnosis." The weekend will feature workshops, panels, and a keynote speaker. For more information, visit [www.namitn.org](http://www.namitn.org), or contact Sarah Tomlinson Hausen at 615-361-6608 (Ext. 301) or email [shausen@namitn.org](mailto:shausen@namitn.org). NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness.



*Commissioner Varney is joined by Winchester Police Chief Dennis Young and Tabatha Curtis, Director of the Franklin County Prevention Coalition, at the Art of Prevention Conference held in June in Murfreesboro.*

■ **Saturday, Sept. 27**  
**RecoveryFest Nashville**  
 East Park Greenspace | 700 Woodland Street | Nashville, TN  
 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

RecoveryFest Nashville is a grassroots movement about celebrating the positive impact of recovery from chemical dependency and other addictions and giving it the visibility and attention it deserves. We are on a journey and want to share our love and support with the people in our lives who walk with us. September is National Recovery Month, and we are having a celebration of recovery right here in Nashville featuring music, food, and fellowship. This event is open to the public.

**If you or someone you know is in emotional distress, contact the Tennessee Toll-Free Statewide Crisis Telephone Line.**  
**Trained crisis workers are available to assist you**  
**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**  
**for crisis counseling and mental health referrals.**

**TN Toll-Free Crisis Line**  
**1 855 CRISIS-1 (1-855-274-7471)**



For questions about children's mental health, visit [www.kidcentraltn.com](http://www.kidcentraltn.com).

**Help Us Stay Up-to-Date!**

Training, conferences, events, support groups...Tell us what you are doing in the fields of mental health, substance abuse services, and recovery, and we will share with the state in Update!

**Deadline for next issue: Monday, December 8.**

Send January, February, March 2015 info to [Leslie.Judson@tn.gov](mailto:Leslie.Judson@tn.gov) or call 615-770-0466.

■ **Saturday, Sept. 27**  
 46th Annual Samaritan Recovery's Burnt Bridges and Awards Celebration  
 Maxwell House | Nashville, TN  
 6:30 p.m.

■ **Sunday/Monday, Sept. 28, 29**  
 Tennessee Certified Peer Recovery Specialist 2014 State Conference  
 Montgomery Bell State Park | Burns, TN

This year's conference theme is "Stand Up For Recovery." Attendees who choose to arrive Sunday night can enjoy the special entertainment of David Granirer from Stand Up for Mental Health. David teaches stand-up comedy to people with mental health issues as a way of building confidence and fighting public stigma. He will be performing with peers from Tennessee. Monday's keynote address, "Building Hope, Strength, and Community in Recovery," will be presented by Dona Dmitrovic, Director for Substance Use Disorders, Optum Health Behavioral Solutions. This conference is open to Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, supervisors, providers, and others interested in CPRS training and certification in the state of Tennessee. Space is limited. For more information, visit [tn-cprs.org](http://tn-cprs.org).



Leaders in the field of recovery are making a BIG statement in Region 5 including (pictured) Dennis Young, Winchester Police Chief, and Allen Burnette, Lifeline representative. This banner is set to be hung across Dinah Shore Boulevard in Winchester.

■ **Tuesday-Thursday, Oct. 7-9**  
 16th Annual National Lifespan Respite Conference  
 Nashville Marriott at Vanderbilt University

Nashville is happy to host the National Lifespan Respite Conference. This year's theme is "Get in Tune With Respite." Read the conference schedule and [register here](#).

■ **Sunday, Oct. 12** **Service of Hope**  
 Second Presbyterian Church  
 3511 Belmont Boulevard | Nashville, TN  
 2 p.m.

Healing Arts Project, Inc. or HAPI sponsors this service to recognize the role of faith and hope in mental health and addiction recovery. The service includes original poetry, music in praise of our God, and art that expresses joy in living. Personal stories of courage and success in overcoming difficult life circumstances will be shared. This service is open to all people of all beliefs and is a celebration of finding hope for living and recovery. A reception for all who attend follows the service. "Faith, Hope, and Recovery in Letters 2014" will be distributed. Artworks from HAPI artists will be on exhibit.

*Music, Food, Fun and Fellowship*

*Bring your friends and family!*

**RecoveryFest Nashville**

**WE ... are recovery**

[www.RecoveryFestNashville.com](http://www.RecoveryFestNashville.com)

Please join us at East Park Greenspace  
 700 Woodland Street - Nashville, TN 37206  
 to celebrate RECOVERY in the Nashville Community!

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2014**  
**FROM 11AM - 5PM**

*RecoveryFest Nashville is a grassroots movement about celebrating the positive impact of recovery in our community. It's a place to come together, encourage one another and celebrate our journey!*

Visit us at [www.RecoveryFestNashville.com](http://www.RecoveryFestNashville.com)



## Welcome Aboard

**Michael Walden,  
Controller for Fiscal Services**

**M**ichael Walden has been appointed as the new Controller of Fiscal Services. Michael is a CPA with more than 25 years of experience in healthcare finance. He has served in the roles of Controller, CFO, and Vice President of Finance for several hospitals and healthcare organizations, including St. Francis Hospital in Memphis and an outpatient clinic corporation based in Pennsylvania with over 650 locations. Michael joined TDMHSAS in May.



**Monty Burks,  
Director of Special Projects**

**M**onty Burks joins the Substance Abuse Services team as Director of Special Projects. Monty brings more than 10 years' experience working with the Criminal Justice system in various roles including placement specialist, program coordinator, public relations specialist, and cognitive skills instructor. He also served as a Lifeline project coordinator in Region 5. Monty earned his Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Middle Tennessee State University and plans to start working toward his Ph.D. in Public Administration this fall.

**Micheal A. Jones, Executive Assistant**

**M**icheal A. Jones began his professional career with the State of Tennessee as a Revenue Enforcement Officer with the Department of Revenue. He is a Middle Tennessee State University Alumni with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice Administration. He is currently pursuing his Juris Doctorate degree from Nashville School of Law where he is currently in his 3rd year. Outside of work, he enjoys outdoor recreational activities and spending time with his wife and children.



**Mike Machak and Leslie Judson,  
New Communications Team**

**C**ommunications Director Mike Machak is a former TV news reporter from the Chicago area who has made Nashville his home since 1996. Before arriving in Middle Tennessee, Mike was on the news in El Paso, Jacksonville, Orlando and Tampa. Most recently he served in communications roles with Corrections Corporation of America, Dollar General, and Crye-Leike Real Estate Services. In his free time Mike enjoys running and working out and recently upped his interest in fitness by becoming an ACE certified personal trainer.

Assistant Director Leslie Judson is an Upper East Tennessee native with more than 15 years of communications experience working for companies such as Home & Garden Television and Eastman Chemical Company in Knoxville, Tri-Cities, and New York. Just prior to joining the State, Leslie was a program counselor at Peninsula Behavioral Health and served as the first Editor-in-Chief of The Amplifier, a Knoxville "street newspaper" created to support and empower the homeless.

Mike and Leslie are members of the TDMHSAS Wellness Council. Both joined the Department in July.



## Clean, Sober, and Grateful | by Brad Schmitt



### Journey from journalist... ...to Peer Recovery Specialist

I'm incredibly grateful to Nashville.com and The Tennessean for running the "Nashville Recovers" blogs. I'm hoping to give a glimpse of what life is like in recovery to the non-addict – what issues and feelings we struggle with, what it's like to have a sponsor, the pain of watching a friend relapse, the joy of seeing a friend reach 20 years clean and sober, the new highs in recovery. And I'm hoping to share experiences and news that recovering addicts and alcoholics can relate to, identify with, so that we don't feel so alone.

I remember when I wrote "Brad About You" in the Tennessean, I would mention a Jewish holiday or throw in some Yiddish every now and then. And I would get dozens of emails saying, "Wow, I've never seen a mainstream media person in Nashville talk about being Jewish. I thought I was the only Jewish person here. Your references make me feel more normal."

I hope the Nashville Recovers blog does the same for the tens of thousands of us in recovery from substance abuse in Middle Tennessee.

Maybe we can start to bring addiction – and more importantly, recovery – out of the shadows of church basements into the light. Maybe we can show recovery as a solution for the tens of thousands or more folks still in active addiction. And we can make those in recovery feel more "normal."

## A few weeks ago, Brad wrote about suicide in a blog post entitled, "Are We Really That Different Than Robin Williams?"

What follows are some excerpts:

Robin Williams' suicide hit the recovery community hard.

My friend Ed Mitchell, a businessman and fellow recovering addict, had this thought first: "How does someone who comes out of rehab go home and kill themselves? Here's a guy surrounded by trained professionals who are there to help him identify issues and heal – and they missed the bleeding wound. We medicate with drugs and alcohol because we typically have some underlying issue. We show up at treatment centers and we're taught how to change the prescription from drugs and alcohol to God.

But we still have a bleeding wound – depression, bi-polar disorder, a childhood of neglect or abuse. Why are we afraid of talking about mental illness as it relates to addiction? Why don't we treat co-occurring disorders equally? Let's treat the

addiction and the depression."

But Ed – and many others – are more concerned with those who never make it to treatment.

"If we don't eradicate the stigma surrounding mental health and addiction, we'll never have the resources or the pathways to give people the freedom, to make

people realize help is available to end their suffering. . . . The depression that came along with my addiction was very real and I couldn't understand why I was sober and yet felt so hopeless."

The sad fact is that there are only one or two 12-step groups each week in the Nashville area for people with co-occurring disorders. "I was fortunate enough to have the

resources to seek help privately. I also had a network of supportive individuals – not family, by the way," said Ed, 42, who has four years clean.

Yes indeed, stigma around addiction and mental illness

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– Ed Mitchell, Franklin

affect Ed in very personal ways. "My own family and closest friends are not even capable of engaging in a discussion about it. The most powerful healing in my life came from strangers.

"I hope Robin Williams' death ignites the conversation, and from that discussion, someone is able to seek help and realize that they are not toxic, contagious, or a worthless human soul. They shouldn't be ashamed. It's an illness, not a moral deficiency."

The discussion needs to follow the science and what we know about brain chemistry. Let's ask someone to stop eating for a week or to turn off their reflexes and see what kind of choices they're capable of making. . . . What's easy is to blame the individual for poor choices, whether they're a rock star or a ditch digger."

"I don't have contempt for people, my own family included, who still think addiction and mental illness are moral weaknesses. I hope to live my life in a way that gets them to see differently and I want to love them through the process."

Lots of folks say they can't relate at all to Robin Williams' death, to addiction or to suicide. And to them, I say, God bless. I know for me, when I got that second DUI, I was in a wicked funk that next morning. Yes, there were 15 minutes there where I was wondering if the world wouldn't be a better place without me. I really considered, briefly, well, maybe it would be so much easier if I killed myself. That's tough to admit. I've been sitting here for 10 minutes wondering if I should leave that in this blog.

But let me ask you, even if you're not an addict, if you've never had a mental illness. Have you ever had a moment, even if it was fleeting, where you considered suicide? Maybe after a death in the family, after you got dumped by your boyfriend or girlfriend, after a cancer diagnosis, after getting rejected from a school, a college, law school or a club, after a divorce? Have you had a moment, even just a few seconds, where the pain was so overwhelming, you literally didn't know what you were going to do to get some relief?

Maybe we're not so different from Robin Williams after all.



Brad Schmitt has been an entertainment reporter in Nashville for 24 years, known best during that time for his "Brad About You" celebrity news column in The Tennessean. While working for WKRN-News 2, Brad was convicted of two DUIs and fired from his job. That experience began his four-year journey in recovery. A former YMCA Restore Ministries coordinator, Brad now serves as the Peer Recovery Coordinator at Nashville Prevention Partnership and is a Lifeline representative for the State of Tennessee working to reduce stigma and encourage prevention, treatment, and recovery in the field of substance abuse.

Read more of the Nashville Recovers blogs at <http://www.nashville.com/blogs/category/nashville-recovers/>

**If you struggle with drugs and alcohol,**

visit [www.NashvilleRecovers.org](http://www.NashvilleRecovers.org) or call the Tennessee REDLINE 24/7 at 800-889-9789 to get help

Do you have a story you'd like to share with Update readers?  
Please e-mail [Leslie.Judson@tn.gov](mailto:Leslie.Judson@tn.gov) or call 615-770-0466.

# OCTOBER IS ...

**Mental Illness Awareness Month**

**Substance Abuse Prevention Month**

**ADHD Awareness Month**

**5 - 11 Mental Illness Awareness Week**

**9-15 OCD Awareness Week**

**9 National Depression Screening Day**

**10 World Mental Health Day**

**14 National Bipolar Awareness Day**

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**How will you be involved?**

[Go here](#) to share what your group is doing for Mental Illness Awareness Month.  
Look for your info on tn.gov and maybe see your event in a future issue of *Update*.

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services