



Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

In this season of thanksgiving and gratitude, just want to express how thankful I am that you are where you are and you're doing what you're doing. Your work is part of an exemplary system that we could only have dreamed of as recently as a decade ago. Tennessee is truly leading the nation in addressing the behavioral health needs of our neighbors with the least means to obtain services, and you are an essential part of that. Of course we still have much work to do before we work ourselves out of a job, but please just know how thankful I am for each and every one of you reading this.

It was with a spirit of thanksgiving and gratitude that we presented our department's proposed FY26 budget increases to Governor Bill Lee and his team earlier this month. When putting this budget together, we took a very

assessments as well as from our provider, consumer, faith-based, and family communities and sister state agencies. We determined that this year's requests would be targeted to continue to take to scale and shore up those evidence-based, outcomes-supported programs that we fund through public/private partnerships across our state. To that end, we proposed six cost increases for the Lee Administration to consider which total **\$28,971,700**.

1. School-Based Behavioral Health Liaison Expansion \$5,950,000
2. Tennessee Pathways Behavioral Health Scholarship Expansion \$4,437,800 (non-recurring)
3. Substance Use Treatment Residential Rehabilitation Rate Increase \$11,547,900
4. IPS Supported Employment Statewide Expansion \$1,600,000
5. Crisis Services Continuum Enhancement \$1,436,000
6. Behavioral Health Safety Net Rate Increase Sustainability \$4,000,000

[You can view archived video of our presentation to Governor Lee at this link](#) and you can [download the slides we used in our presentation at this link](#).

During the presentation and as always, we expressed our gratitude for each of you: our partners, providers, consumers, faith-based, and department and hospital staff. Your support, your dedication, and your passion for this work are truly changing lives for the people we are called to serve. Your service breaks generational cycles of mental illness, addiction, trauma, and poverty and makes our state the best place to live, work, and recover.

May your day be blessed,

Marie

Gov. Lee Meets With School-Based Behavioral Health Liaisons



The department had the pleasure of hosting Governor Bill Lee in an intimate discussion with a handful of School-Based Behavioral Health Liaisons as well as leaders from TAMHO, Alliance, Pathways, Mental Health Cooperative, Volunteer Behavioral Health, McNabb Center, and Frontier Health on November 26. The Governor got to hear firsthand how the program is making a life-changing difference for children and families all across Tennessee. During the Lee Administration, thanks to support from the Governor and the General Assembly, the School-Based Behavioral Health Liaison program has expanded to 387 funded positions resulting in a 255% increase in students receiving direct services. Since state fiscal year 2019-2020, nearly 91,000 students have received direct services, and more than 39,000 teachers and staff receiving supports and training through the program. You can learn more about Tennessee's School-Based Behavioral Health Liaisons at this link: tn.gov/behavioral-health/sbbhl



Conference



A total of **566** people attended the second annual All Peer Conference earlier this month! The two-day conference offered virtual and in-person options online and in Franklin. For the second year in a row, leaders with the department's three certified peer programs untied their efforts for a combined celebration of the power of peer support. This year's theme was *Stitching Stories: A Patchwork of Peer Support*. The conference featured lots of great presentations and motivating keynote speakers including one from Beth English where participants colored their own quilt square to create a collective display (see pictures below). Thank you to everyone who made this year's All-Peer Conference a huge success especially the planning committee, TAMHO staff, and attendees.



Prescription Drug Take Back Day Nets Big Haul

Thank you to everyone who supported or participated in an event for National Prescription Drug Take Back day on October 26. The Drug Enforcement Administration says the 93 collection sites across Tennessee took in nearly

Thank you to all of the Substance Use Prevention Coalitions, law enforcement agencies, and host sites who made this Take Back Day a huge success. If you missed the big day but still have medications you need to dispose of, please use one of Tennessee's 385 permanent drug drop boxes ([find the closest one to you using the map at this link](#)).

Photos below – 1st row: Knox County; 2nd row: (L) Smith County, (R) Williamson County; 3rd row: (L) DeKalb County, (R) Weakley County.





Rob Cotterman Treatment Mall Dedication



On Friday, November 15th, Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute officially dedicated the Cotterman Treatment Mall. The honor is a lasting tribute to Rob Cotterman who retired earlier this year after 41 years of service to the state of Tennessee. Rob started as a Psychiatric Technician in 1981 and held many roles at the hospital before moving to Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute in 2016 and eventually Central Office in 2018. Thank you for your service, Rob!

Hope for Tomorrow Healing for Life

TDMHSAS teams up with TDVS for Suicide Prevention Event



TDMHSAS teamed up with the TN Department of Veterans Services for a joint event to raise awareness of veteran suicide and reduce the stigma of accessing mental health supports. About 60 people attended the event in Clarksville on November 19 which featured a screening of the film [*Moving America's Soul on Suicide*](#), a panel discussion on the issue of veteran suicide, and connection to several community-based groups which offer an array of support services to veterans and active-duty service members.

Collegiate Recovery Initiative Welcomes New Director



Give a warm welcome to the department's new Collegiate Recovery Initiative Director, Samantha McIntyre! Previously, she worked closely with the collegiate recovery program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Samantha is a person in long-term recovery and is very passionate about connecting the young adult population to recovery resources. She has conducted 25 trainings since starting this position, including: Recovery Ally, Mental Health Ally, The Addicted Mind, Self Care Strategies, Resiliency, and Initiative Overview. She has engaged and connected with new campuses to be a part of the initiative, including: South College, Southern Adventist University, and Bryan College. To learn more about the Collegiate Recovery Initiative and connect with Samantha, visit this link: [TN.gov/behavioral-health/collegiaterecovery](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/collegiaterecovery).



Commissioner Williams was proud to participate in a panel discussion on solutions to the mental health crisis facing our country. The event was put on by the Heartland Forward Health Caucus. Pictured above (L to R): Alice Rolli, Executive Director, Children's Hospital Alliance of Tennessee; Rikki Harris, CEO of TN Voices and Chair of the TDMHSAS Statewide Planning and Policy Council; Commissioner Williams; Michael Hendrix, Policy Director for Governor Bill Lee; State Rep. Brock Martin, Statewide Planning and Policy Council Member; Ralph Alvarado, Commissioner, TN Department of Health; not pictured but in attendance - Alysia Smith Knight, Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations.

Vote for Moccasin Bend!

Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute's Bleyzer Program is one of three finalists from across the country for an award from the Rutgers Institute for Inpatient Psychiatric Rehabilitation (IIPR). The Bleyzer Program works with patients who have been in an inpatient environment for an extended time to learn skills that will aid them in discharge. The program is designed to simulate an independent living environment to help develop coping skills to manage their mental illness while maintaining the needs for individual living. Twenty patients have graduated from the program all have been successfully discharged without readmission.

[Use this link to vote until December 31!](#)

Moccasin Bend Hosts Olympics



The Activities Therapy Department hosted the first-ever MBMHI Olympics. Patients from each unit completed daily in basic athletic competitions and were awarded prizes/medals on Friday at the final round of the competition and award ceremony. Staff also completed in a mini-triathlon here on the MBMHI campus. The winners of the triathlon were: 1st Place: Raleigh Stephens, 2nd Place: Nielly Bevis, 3rd Place: Ryan Beckett, 4th Place: Devin Whitehead, 5th Place: Neil Freitas

Shout Out!

Western Mental Health Institute Employee Appreciation Event



On October 15, WMHI leadership showered their employees with appreciation including an event with a taco bar that included all the fixings. For dessert, employees were treated to an ice cream sundae bar with several toppings of their choice. Tables and outdoor games were set up outside for employees to enjoy their meal and fellowship with other coworkers. Thanks for all you do, WMHI Team!

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

Statewide Planning and Policy Council

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

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

Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

Conference Center

221 Stewarts Ferry Pike

Regional Council meetings are scheduled to resume in January 2025

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.

Resources

In the event of a mental health emergency ...

Call or text 988 and press 0 to speak to a crisis counselor.

You can also chat with 988lifeline.org.

There is hope.

There is hope.

There is hope.

There is hope.



988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

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)



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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