



Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

The Tennessee General Assembly adjourned its spring 2025 session on Tuesday, April 22, and of course one of their essential pieces of business before adjournment is passing the budget for the next state fiscal year which begins July 1. We are so grateful to our partners in the legislature and to Governor Lee for the items they included in our budget for FY26. In total, we're looking at about **\$75 million in cost increases** to support the needs of our neighbors. Selected items include: more School-Based Behavioral Health Liaisons, increased capacity at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute, more money for scholarships to grow the number of professionals working in the public behavioral health sector, additional funding for substance use disorder treatment services, and recurring funding to support the essential mental health services offered through the Behavioral Health Safety Net. [You can read more about these and other increases either at this link or in the image below.](#)

May your work continue to be blessed,

Marie

FY26 Approved Budget Increases

Program Name	Program Description	Amount
School-Based Behavioral Health Liaison Expansion	To provide recurring funding to add contracted school-based behavioral health liaisons across the state. Funding is from the K-12 Mental Health Trust Fund.	\$1,000,000
Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute Capacity	To provide funding and contract staffing to increase capacity at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute to address a waiting list. Funding is from certified public expenditure revenues from TennCare. Of this total, \$5,012,800 is recurring and \$148,300 is non-recurring.	\$5,161,100
Tennessee Pathways Behavioral Health Scholarship Program	To provide non-recurring funding for the Tennessee Pathways Behavioral Health Scholarship program, which will fund Tennessee students pursuing a master's degree in a behavioral health related field.	\$4,437,800 NR
Substance Use Treatment Residential Rehabilitation Rate Increase	To provide a pool of recurring funding for provider rate increases in the substance use treatment residential rehabilitation program. The agency will determine the specific increase based on this pool of funding.	\$1,924,500
Behavioral Health Safety Net Rate Increase Sustainability	To provide recurring funding to behavioral health safety net providers to continue rate increases put in place during the First Extraordinary Session of the 113th General Assembly on public safety with nonrecurring funding.	\$4,000,000
Crisis Services Continuum Enhancement	To provide non-recurring funding to crisis services providers in the community mental health program to serve more uninsured clients.	\$1,436,000 NR
State Opioid Response IV Grant	To provide non-recurring funding and to continue eight positions for the federal State Opioid Response IV grant, which provides treatment and prevention of opioid use disorder. Federal funding is from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.	\$30,668,400
Addiction Recovery Program (Year 2 of 4)	To provide non-recurring funding to expand the Addiction Recovery Program, which includes services such as transitional housing, relapse prevention skills, transportation, and case management.	\$2,107,600
Community Mental Health Center Workforce Development	To provide non-recurring funding for the support of licensed behavioral health professionals supervising individuals seeking clinical licensure in a behavioral health profession.	\$1,000,000
Substance Use Disorder Treatment	To provide non-recurring funding for payments to substance use disorder providers to increase capacity and access to a continuum of treatment and recovery services.	\$2,000,000
Tennessee Sports Gaming Fund	To provide non-recurring funding from the fund for grants to develop and establish treatment programs and resources for gambling addiction and compulsive gambling pursuant to TCA 4-51-319.	\$4,378,400
K-12 MH Trust Fund Infrastructure	To provide non-recurring funding for community grants to enhance behavioral treatment in schools.	\$4,000,000 NR
CHAT Mental Health Infrastructure Grants	To provide mental health infrastructure grants to children's hospitals.	\$10,000,000 NR
MH Forensic Evaluations	To provide mandatory court-ordered mental health evaluations for persons convicted of certain crimes.	\$519,400
Directed Appropriations	Families Free, Northeast Recovery Center, Jason Foundation, Centerstone Veterans Services, Centerstone Military Services	\$3,050,000
Total Community Funding		\$75,683,200

BHSN Referral Campaign Features Personal Success Story



TDMHSAS is proud to showcase a Behavioral Health Safety Net success story in a new commercial promoting the service statewide! Mickie was battling severe depression and other symptoms a few years ago. She connected with the BHSN and other programs through Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services, and since then she is gainfully employed, has regained custody of her son, and has new hope for her future. Thanks to the team at Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services for their generous help.

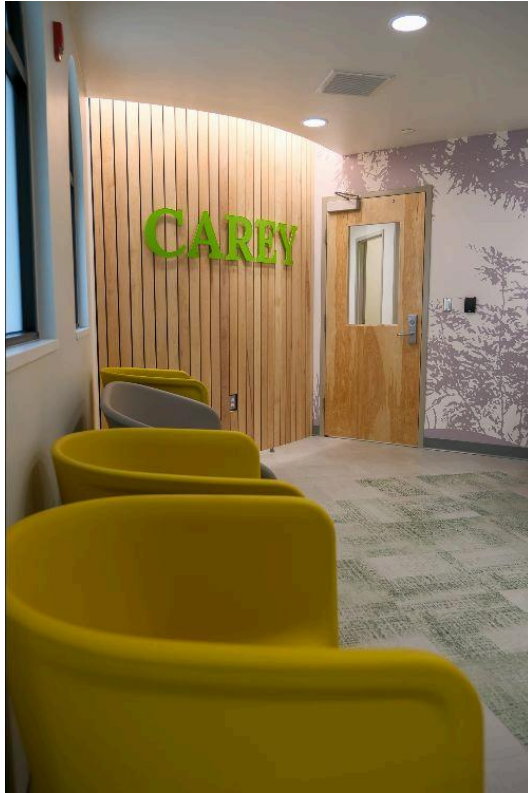
Carey Counseling Cuts the Ribbon on State's 10th CSU



Congratulations to the team at Carey Counseling Center on cutting the ribbon at their new Crisis Walk-In Center and Crisis Stabilization Unit located in Paris, Tennessee. The community turned out to support, celebrate, and tour the new

facility on April 11th. The ceremony featured many words of gratitude from Carey CEO Brent Bullock and heartfelt sentiments from Commissioner Williams. Thanks to Brent and the entire incredible team at Carey who will be serving the needs of those in their community in behavioral health crisis.

This new WIC/CSU is the TENTH for adults in Tennessee with Centerstone set to cut the ribbon on their new one in Clarksville in May and another one in process in Dyer County for what will eventually be a total of 12.



CPRS Program Announces New Justice-Involved Endorsement



The Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services is proud to announce a new endorsement for the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program. CPRS-J, prepares CPRS who have an extra element of lived experience with the criminal justice system to work with people who are struggling across many settings including jails, recovery courts, probation offices, treatment programs, psychiatric facilities, and more. Currently certified CPRS can earn the special endorsement after an additional Integrated Forensic Peer Recovery Specialist training which is delivered virtually over four days. The first cohort of 19 peers (pictured above) completed the training in late March.

“For those peers who have justice involvement in their story, there’s such a strong connection to the men and women who are currently incarcerated or are working to regain their freedom while also working on their recovery and mental wellness. This endorsement has been a long time coming, and we’re hopeful for how this specialized training can continue to improve the lives of Tennesseans, help them to heal, and show them a life after justice involvement,” said Lisa Ragan, MSSW, TDMHSAS Director of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services.

For more information about CPRS-J, reach out to Lisa at lisa.ragan@tn.gov.

TDMHSAS Awards \$5,200,000 to Create Affordable Housing

TDMHSAS is releasing \$5.2 million in grant funding to create safe, quality, affordable housing for people living with mental illness, recovering from substance use disorder, and re-entering communities from incarceration. TDMHSAS awarded grants from the Creating Homes Initiative (CHI) to 12 non-profit agencies across the state. In total, the agencies committed to create 101 new beds with the funding. Grantees will be creating new housing in Davidson, Knox, Madison, Obion, Overton, Shelby, Sullivan, Sumner, and Washington Counties.

Since 2000, the Creating Homes Initiative has leveraged more than \$1.3 billion in federal, state, local, foundational, and other funding sources to create more than 36,000 housing opportunities. To find the Regional Housing Facilitator for your area or to learn more about the Creating Homes Initiative, visit this link on TN.gov: [TN.gov: TN.gov/behavioral-health/chi](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/chi)

Aspell Recovery Center Opens New CHI 3.0 Development

Congratulations to the team at Aspell Recovery Center on a successful opening for their new Talbot House! This 16-bed home for men was funded with a grant from Creating Homes Initiative 3.0 which creates housing for people re-entering communities from incarceration. The department was honored to participate in a ribbon cutting and open house on April 25th.



National Prescription Drug Take Back Day



A huge thank you to everyone who made the April 2025 edition of National Prescription Drug Take Back Day a huge success-- especially the amazing Substance Use Prevention Coalitions across the state! Coalitions organized more than 100 events with local law enforcement for people to safely and securely dispose of their expired or unneeded medications. If you missed Take Back Day and you still have medications you need to get out of your home, Tennessee has about 400 permanent drug drop boxes. [Find one near you using the map at this link.](#)



Tennessee Turns out for Annual RX Summit



Tennessee's addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery community showed up big for the annual RX Summit. This year's event was held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort, April 21 through 24. Attendees heard from numerous national leaders in the field, attended enlightening presentations on emerging topics, and shared time networking with like-minded attendees from across the nation. The success and experience of Tennessee was also on full display during a presentation by the TN Save a Life/ROPS program. Pictured above (L to R): Tony Jackson, Jessica Stanley, Erica Herndon, and Cate Faulkner.





New Campaign for First Responder Mental Health



TDMHSAS is excited to announce the release of a new campaign to reduce stigma and increase awareness of mental health resources for first responders. Research shows first responders suffer from mental health and substance use disorders at a rate higher than civilians, but they can be resistant to seek support for several reasons. The toll of the job also takes a toll on their health, relationships, and careers.

The campaign features two public service announcements featuring real-life first responders. The Tennessee Public Safety Network, Putnam County Sheriff's Office, Lebanon Fire Department, and the Tennessee Tech University Department of Counseling & Psychology all contributed to the development of the campaign with personnel, experience, expertise, and facilities.

Connect to the First Responder Mental Health campaign's webpage at this link on TN.gov: [TN.gov: TN.gov/firmh](https://www.tn.gov/firmh)

Spotlight on Underage Drinking During Prom and Graduation Season

The season of prom and graduation is always a busy time for our Substance Use Prevention Coalitions across the state. To support their messaging efforts this spring, TDMHSAS teamed up with the Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission to amplify the prevention messaging to teens, parents, and retailers ([full news release at this link](#)). Priority messaging for high schoolers includes alternatives to alcohol consumption, awareness of the risks of alcohol use on developing brains, and potential for misuse to turn into a diagnosable substance use disorder. During prom and graduation season, coalitions organize pledge card events, create specific marketing and awareness materials, and step up their outreach to parents and alcohol retailers. As you can see from the photos below, coalitions get really creative, and the students have a lot of fun.

Pictured below (L to R, Top to Bottom) Roane County students were proud to pose while wearing the impairment goggles, Johnson County students do their best pose for the camera, Obion County high schoolers pose with a poster board frame, and DeKalb County students proudly show their prom promise cards and cups.





Team TDMHSAS Updates



The TDMHSAS Office of Communications is overjoyed to welcome its new Assistant Director, Lauren McHugh! In her interviews, Lauren showed a very strong entrepreneurial self-motivation and proactive mindset. She knows how to see an issue/opportunity, devise a solution, and then execute/produce results. Lauren is from Michigan, and she moved to Franklin with her husband

in 2016. Her background is primarily in the nonprofit and small business spaces. She's a sports fan, loves to travel, and reads a lot of books every year. Welcome, Lauren!

RMHI Promotions



Congratulations to MTMHI's William Steele on his promotion to Assistant Nurse Executive! Starting as a Psychiatric Technician in 2013 at FSP, Mr. Steele has worked diligently and passionately, continuously growing, and developing both professionally and personally. He brings a wealth of experience from his roles as a Psychiatric Technician, Lead Psychiatric Technician, RN2, RN3, House Supervisor, and most recently Unit Nurse Manager!

Congratulations to Charlene McFarland, BSN, RN for her promotion to Psychiatric Hospital Inpatient Performance Improvement Coordinator (PHIPIC) RN-2 at Memphis Mental Health Institute, the first of it's kind at MMHI. Ms. McFarland brings more than 12 years of combined LPN & RN nursing experience in correctional health, community care, and psychiatric settings. She has consistently gone above and beyond—providing data-driven reports, contributing to new employee orientation training, and actively participating in patient care and quality review committees.





In honor of Lab Week (April 20-26), the team at Western Mental Health Institute showed recognition and appreciation to their lab staff for the hard work they do daily. Pictured above (L to R): Cynthia Shipley, Nakia Robinson, Imogene Sharpe, Quantissia (Gigi) Hamer-Griggs, Candy Stanfill, and Cheryl Trainum.



Memphis Mental Health Institute patients, recreational therapists, and graduate occupational therapy students from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center partnered to plant a variety of fresh herbs in raised beds on the facility patio. The activity took place in a Sensory Group designed to stimulate the senses of acute and forensic patients admitted to the hospital. Students learn to apply occupational therapy concepts to mental health treatment, and hospital recreational therapists

learn about OT from faculty member Dr. Lauren Woods and the students she brings in the group. Now in its second year of partnership, MMHI and UTHSC are committed to finding innovative approaches to active treatment with patients. UTHSC Masters in Occupational Therapy Students Pictured above (L to R): Elizabeth DiMatteo, Samaria Sims, Randi Latham, Mikayla Johnson, Tierany Powell

Save-the-Dates

Registration is open for the TDMHSAS Office of Housing and Homeless Services conference. [Mark your calendar for May 28 and click this link to register.](#)



Transforming Obstacles to Opportunities
Tennessee Statewide Housing and Homeless Services Conference

May 28, 2025

Embassy Suites by Hilton Nashville South Cool Springs Hotel
Franklin, Tennessee

Sponsored by  In Partnership with 

A hybrid – both in-person and virtual attendance options – conference focusing on housing and homeless services in Tennessee.
This project is funded under a Grant Contract with the State of Tennessee, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Still time to register for the annual Older Adults Behavioral Health Conference which is May 6. [To register for this virtual event, click this link or the image below.](#)

THE HEART OF CARE

Mental Health America of the MidSouth's
Annual Older Adult Behavioral
Health Conference

TUESDAY
MAY 6th
9:00 AM CT

FREE WEBINAR

6 FREE CEs for Professionals

This event was made possible by



The second annual Regional Intervention Program Spring Festival is a little more than a month away! The team at RIP Nashville have an even bigger and better lineup of fun, food, resources, and activities planned for May 3! [Click this link or the flyer below to get more details.](#)

Help us Celebrate
**Children's Mental Health
 Acceptance Week** by
JOINING US FOR OUR
**SPRING
 FESTIVAL**

**SATURDAY,
 MAY 3RD**

**THE REGIONAL INTERVENTION
 PROGRAM (RIP)**
5020 DARLINGTON DR. NASHVILLE, TN

10:00AM - 2:00PM

FREE FAMILY EVENT

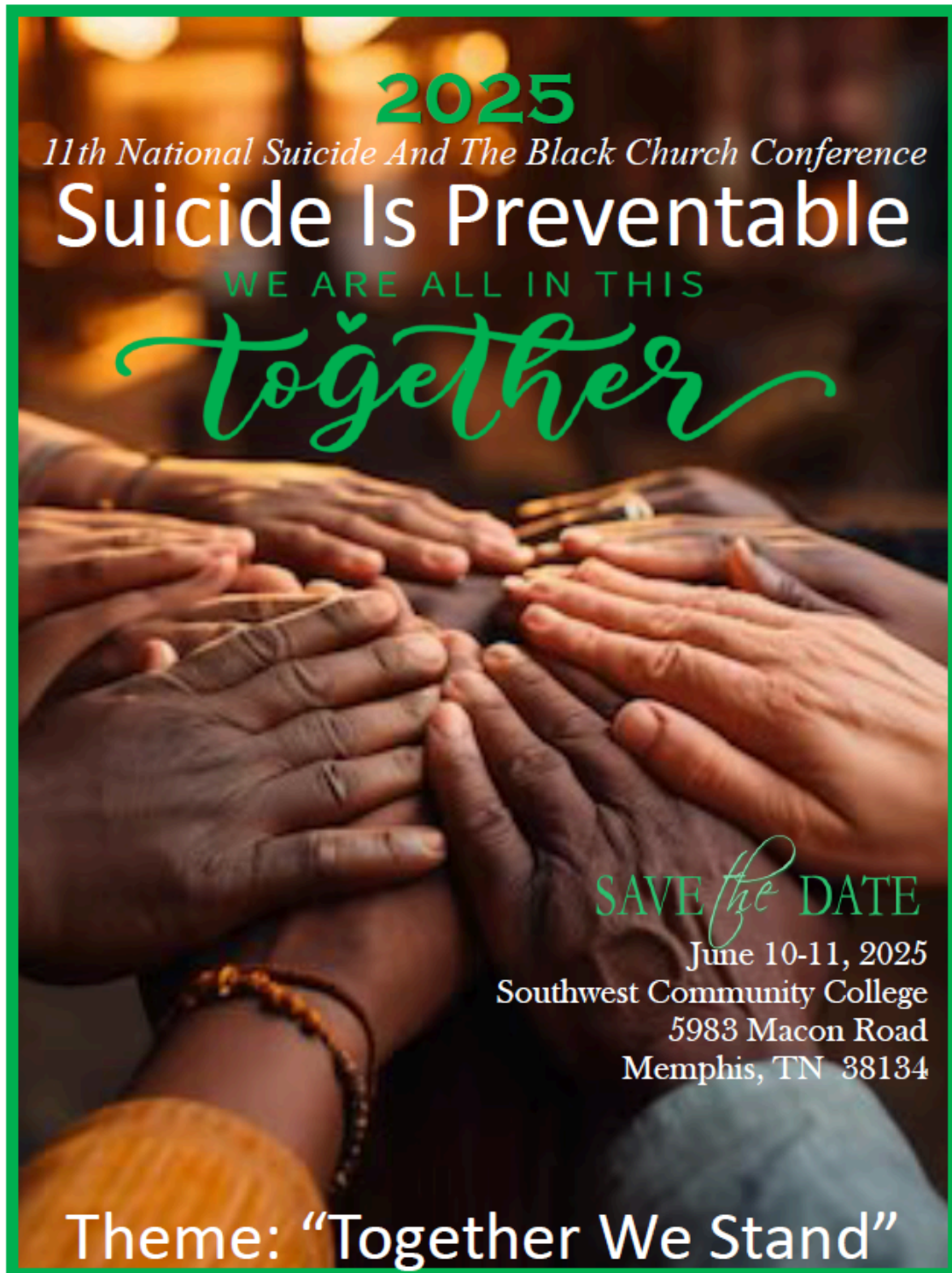
- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 10am | Fab Friz Education | Resources • Tours • Games |
| 11am | NPL Puppet Truck | Food Truck • Face Painting |
| 12pm | Bollywood Dancers | Live Music • Car Seat Checks |
| 1pm | Nashville Zoo | Touch a Truck • Balloon Artist |

Strong Roots | Strong Minds Cultivating Children's Mental Health



TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services | **rip** | **615-963-1177** | **tn.gov/parenting-that-works**

[Click this link or the image below to register for the 11th National Suicide and the Black Church Conference.](#)



Planning and Policy Council Meetings

These TDMHSAS Planning and Policy Council Committee meetings are scheduled for May.

Children's Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. CST

Regional Intervention Program (RIP) Office

5020 Darlington Drive

Nashville, TN 37211

Region V

Thursday, May 1, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. CST

Volunteer Behavioral Health

1504 Williams Drive

Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Region I

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

Frontier Health Corporate Offices

1167 Spratlin Park Drive

Gray, TN 37615

Region IV

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. CST

TAADAS

1321 Murfreesboro Pike, Suite 130

Nashville, TN 37217

Region II

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. EST

Helen Ross McNabb Center, Training Room

201 West Springdale Avenue

Knoxville, TN 37917

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

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
TAADAS
TN TOGETHER ENDING THE OPIOID CRISIS

*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!

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