

TDMHDD Update

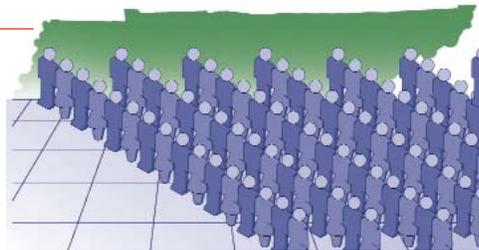
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MENTAL HEALTH SAFETY NET Aids Disenrolled SPMI Tennesseans

The Mental Health Safety Net was developed to provide essential mental health services to those persons who were disenrolled from the TennCare Program due to TennCare Reform and were identified as Severely and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI). The department was appropriated \$11.4 million to cover core, vital mental health services that people with serious mental illness must attain to continue leading functional, productive lives.

Persons who are registered into the Mental Health Safety Net are eligible to receive services such as assessment, evaluation, diagnostic, and therapeutic activities; case management; psychiatric medication management; lab work related to medication management; and pharmacy assistance and coordination. Some individuals who had previously received housing services through AdvoCare were also eligible for limited transitional housing support. In addition to these services, \$33.4 million was appropriated for pharmacy services that include discounts on generic and brand name drugs plus one atypical antipsychotic drug per month with a \$5 co-pay. In addition, \$2.6 million was designated to make



Lithium and Depakote available for the SPMI population with a \$5 co-pay.

The number of persons originally identified as eligible for the Mental Health Safety Net was approximately 21,000 out of the 191,000 persons who were disenrolled. When the department determined there would

The most recent expansion of the Mental Health Safety Net population allowed for the registration of any of the 191,000 disenrolled persons assessed as SPMI.

be sufficient dollars available for the inclusion of additional eligible individuals, the Mental Health Safety Net population was expanded. The most recent expansion occurred on December 5, 2005, allowing for

the registration of any of the 191,000 disenrolled persons assessed as SPMI.

The success of the Mental Health Safety Net would not have been possible without the commitment and hard work of the 20 mental health agencies that agreed to be providers. Through their diligence and outreach to the target population,

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Project Tenn-K Going the Extra Mile for Katrina Evacuees

While the nation watched Hurricane Katrina make landfall across the Gulf coast, no one imagined the degree of devastation to come or the impact that the hurricane would have on every state in the country. We didn't know that thousands of people had already made their way to Tennessee for shelter from the storm and that many more were to come.

TDMHDD received its first Katrina related call on August 31, 2005. A group of 60 adults with disabilities, along with supervisory staff and family members, devised an evacuation plan to a Tennessee state park, only to later find out they had no group homes to return to in Louisiana, and they could not stay at the park indefinitely. The question of where they were going remained eminent. Within hours, all individuals were assessed by staff from the regional office of the Division of Mental Retardation and a local mental health crisis response team and housed on the grounds of a state mental retardation facility.

The overall situation quickly escalated as the number of evacuees across the state grew, and evacuee flights began arriving from New Orleans and Houston. Leadership staff joined the Tennessee interdepartmental collaborative effort to evaluate the availability of housing, treatment resources and state capabilities. TDMHDD Emergency Services Coordinator staff reported to the State Emergency Operations Center to coordinate mental health staffing of

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POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

PTSD—Dealing with the Aftermath of Katrina

Many affected by Hurricane Katrina will go on to suffer from a condition known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). At the Ochsner Clinic Foundation in New Orleans, Dr. Barry Goldman stated, "There has been a virtual explosion in the number of patients I am seeing with post-Katrina depression, stress, anxiety and insomnia. I have written more antidepressant, sleep and anti-anxiety prescriptions in the last seven weeks than I have in the last months."

This does not solely reflect those directly involved or at "Ground Zero" of one of the most devastating hurricanes in the history of U.S. weather recording. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reported, in November 2005, that volunteers were also experiencing PTSD.

Individuals suffering from PTSD may experience one or more of the following symptoms: hopelessness, helplessness, depression, sleeplessness, anxiousness, physical pain, confusion, fear, anger, grief, shock, guilt, mistrust of others and loss of confidence in self. PTSD

typically develops only in a small percentage of persons after exposure to an event in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Repeatedly experiencing the event through flashbacks and nightmares is often a common occurrence for PTSD sufferers. There are treatment options available, and medications, as well as cognitive and behavioral psychosocial treatments, such as talk therapies, are proven to be effective.

In Tennessee, the state provides information and links to crisis counseling and other forms of assistance at <http://www.tnanytime.org/hurricane.html>.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has a listing of Web links giving information on PTSD and other information including:

KatrinaHealth.org at <http://www.katrinahealth.org>;

Professional Resources for Service Providers During Disasters at http://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/dirupdate_hurricanekatrina-coping.cfm; and

Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Disaster Relief Information at http://www.samhsa.gov/Disaster/professional_disaster.aspx

TAMHO AWARD HONORS DEPARTMENT

TDMHDD was honored by the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) in December with a Certificate of Merit for department efforts for the Mental Health Safety Net designed to aid Severely and Persistently Mentally Ill (SPMI) people disenrolled from TennCare in Tennessee. TAMHO is a statewide trade association representing community mental health centers and other non-profit organizations that provide behavioral health services. The awards ceremony on December 1, 2005 was held at the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum in Nashville.



Deputy Commissioner Joe Carobene (far right) accepts the department's Certificate of Merit from TAMHO. Others standing with Carobene, from left to right are: Dr. Alan Lynch, M.D., Co-Chair, TAMHO Medical Advisory Committee and Chief Medical Officer, Mental Health Cooperative, Nashville; Charles R. Blackburn, CAE, Executive Director, TAMHO; Karen H. Rhea, M.D., Co-Chair TAMHO Medical Advisory Committee and VP Medical Services, Centerstone; and Bob N. Vero, EdD, TAMHO President and COO, Centerstone

SAFETY NET...cont.

they have registered more than 10,481 persons. The department had regular networking meetings with the agencies to elicit their input on the progress of the project and to respond to their informational and educational needs regarding the operation of the Mental Health Safety Net.

The department was recently honored for its organizational efforts regarding the Mental Health Safety Net by receiving a Certificate of Merit award from the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations on December 1, 2005 at their Annual Award and Recognition Ceremony (See article at left).

If you have questions regarding the Mental Health Safety Net, please contact Dennis Wenner at 615/532-6732.

