

TDMHDD Update

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Commissioner Betts Elected Vice President of National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

Commissioner Betts was recently elected Vice President of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD). Betts has represented the Southern region on the NASMHPD Board of Directors since 2005.

NASMHPD organizes to reflect and advocate for the collective interests of state mental health authorities at the national level. The organization conducts environmental scans in the delivery and financing of mental health services and builds and disseminates knowledge and experience, reflecting the integration of public mental health programming in evolving healthcare environments. Carlos Brandenburg, Mental Health Director of Nevada, was elected President; Maryland's Commissioner Brian Hepburn was elected Secretary; and Virginia's Commissioner James S. Reinhard continues as Treasurer.

Commissioner Betts brings to the NASMHPD VP role extensive state experience with mental health and managed care as well as federal health policy expertise from her work at U.S. Health & Human Services and the American Nurses Association. "Ginna Betts' exceptional abilities in shaping

health policy through visionary advocacy and commitment to vulnerable populations, such as persons with mental illness, addictive disorders, and the uninsured, make her an ideal choice to serve as the NASMHPD vice president for the next two years," stated the report of the NASMHPD nominating committee.

In her post as TDMHDD Commissioner, Betts serves as leader of the state's public mental health, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities authority, charged with planning for and promoting an array of services from prevention to recovery for all Tennesseans. Betts has focused the department's resources and programs on quality clinical care and on recovery through a focused commitment to bring science to service and promotion of evidence-based practices in treatment and prevention. TDMHDD provides direct services to clients at the State's five Regional Mental Health Institutes; contracts with Tennessee community providers for prevention and treatment services; and oversees the mental health and substance abuse service package, delivery, and quality of care services to TennCare enrollees. ■



Imagine you are being discharged from a women's prison. You are helpless, have no place to go, no one you can depend on, and you are struggling with a co-occurring disorder. What do you do?

The Next Door provides short-term assistance for women who are re-entering society from incarceration, rehabilitation or homelessness by



Executive Director Linda Leathers welcomes state and local officials and the media to the grand opening of the Freedom Recovery Community's 20-unit permanent housing complex at 2100 Clifton Avenue in Nashville.

addressing the physical, mental and spiritual needs of women in crisis.

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September is Suicide Prevention Month and National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month. October 7-13, 2007 is National Mental Illness Awareness Week.

The Next Door...cont.

Entering its fourth year, its transitional center, located at 128 Eighth Avenue South in Nashville, has served more than 300 women through a six-month planned curriculum accompanied by recovery support services to address issues of the co-occurring disorders of addiction and mental illness.

In addition to the Eighth Avenue location, Freedom Recovery Community, a 20-unit apartment complex at 2100 Clifton Avenue in Nashville, now provides longer-term safe and affordable living for women and their children. Linda Leathers, executive director of The Next Door, said she hopes the new center, which focuses on family reunification, will help stop "generational poverty."

The project was funded entirely through more than \$700,000 in grants and community donations from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, Tennessee Housing Development Agency, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Corrections Corporation of

America, Memorial Foundation and other private donors.

Attending a ribbon-cutting for the new facility on June 27 were Commissioner Betts and TDMHDD staff; Mayor Bill Purcell; Vice Mayor Howard Gentry and numerous Metro Nashville dignitaries; John P. Walters, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy; and dozens of consumers and supporters.



Ramie Siler is the resident case manager for The Next Door, Inc. Siler stands with her daughter, Dawn, a student at Vanderbilt University. Siler is a graduate of the Freedom Recovery program, and both women spoke of the tremendous impact it had in giving them a new life.

Freedom Recovery Community increases Next Door's comprehensive approach to satisfying residents' needs. A professional team of counselors, case managers, nurse practitioners, masters level social work interns, mentors and job coaches combine to provide an integrated approach to deal with co-occurring disorders and self-improvement. Services include individual and group counseling, life issues training, job skill improvement and assistance with

finding and keeping employment.

For more information, go to The Next Door's Web site: <http://www.thenextdoor.org> or call (615) 251-8805. ■

New Enhanced Crisis Respite Facility Opens in Columbia

People in acute psychiatric distress have a new option for short-term residential treatment in a home-like environment with the opening of Centerstone's Enhanced Crisis Respite facility in Columbia, Tennessee. The eight-bed, short-term residential facility, located at 2122 Circle Drive, will serve eight counties in Middle Tennessee, including Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Marshall, Maury, Perry and Wayne.

"A main goal of this Enhanced Crisis Respite facility is to serve as a community care alternative to hospitalization. The center's close proximity to Centerstone's Maury County Outpatient Clinic and Walk-In Triage Center at Maury Regional Hospital will provide persons in need access to a

seamless continuum of care close to home," says Virginia Trotter Betts, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD). "The services offered at this new facility meet a crucial unmet need. We at TDMHDD are pleased to make this program available through our partnership with Centerstone."

Prepared to serve approximately 1,000 adults annually, the respite facility is for individuals 18 and older experiencing acute psychiatric distress. Services will be available 24 hours a day, and will focus on rapid stabilization and averting future crises.

The respite program's 3,740 square foot facility has numerous amenities designed



David Grimes, Trish Wilson and Bob Vero at the Centerstone Open House.

to make residents feel at ease during their stay, which may extend to three days. In addition to its treatment space and residential accommodations, the facility's features include a limited service kitchen, recreation room, patio area and laundry facilities.

"For individuals needing stabilization during a period of distress, the Enhanced

— HAPPENINGS —

• TDMHDD Welcomes New Forensic and IT Staff



TDMHDD welcomes a new forensic director, **Dr. Jeff Feix**. A native Kentuckian, Dr. Feix most recently was the Chief Forensic Coordinator at Virginia's forensic hospital. In addition, he has held an Assistant Clinical Professor position in the Department of Psychiatry at Virginia Commonwealth University. He has over 15 years in forensic services in a

combination of clinical and administrative services. He was awarded a clinical fellowship in Adult and Forensic Psychology at Harvard Medical School and has maintained an affiliation with the Virginia Institute of Law, Psychiatry, and Public Policy. Dr. Feix can be reached at 532-6747 or jeff.feix@state.tn.us.

Richard Zhu, joins TDMHDD's Office of Information Technology as the new assistant director. Prior to joining the department, Zhu served as the CIO and CTO for IT training software company Transcender that was later merged with Kaplan. Zhu holds a MBA from Vanderbilt and a BS in Computer Science from University of Kentucky. Contact Zhu at (615) 532-8636 or richard.zhu@state.tn.us.

• Arthur Hyde Retires With 31 Years

Arthur Hyde's career with TDMHDD began, following college graduation, on September 13, 1976, as a psychiatric tech at the Central State Psychiatric Hospital (now Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute). Hyde promoted to behavioral therapist II in 1981 and was soon after appointed to the Employee Advisory Council. In 1989, Hyde transferred to Mental



Commissioner Betts presents Arthur Hyde with a Certificate of Merit Award from Governor Phil Bredesen.

Retardation Services as a MR program specialist II in the Office of Licensure, and in 1990 he was promoted to MH specialist III.

Throughout his tenure, Hyde was repeatedly commended for his hard work, commitment and dedication as he rose to the position

of director of the Division of Licensure in 1998. In 2005, he was selected as one of thirty executives to participate in the Tennessee Government Executive Leadership Program. After 31 years of service, Hyde retired from state government on August 6, 2007. His work for Tennesseans continues as a consultant for Reaching Visions Today, Inc., an MR contract agency providing day services to persons with disabilities.

• Suicide Prevention Awareness Day Focuses on New Law and Training for School Staff at September 12 Event

The Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (TSPN) is hosting a Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event September 12, 10:30 a.m. –12:00 p.m. at the headquarters of the Tennessee Educational Association (TEA), located at 801 Second Avenue North in Nashville.

This year's event has special significance in light of the passage of the Jason Flatt Act of 2007 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The new legislation mandates the inclusion of two hours of youth suicide prevention training for every public school staff member in the state, effective as of the 2009-10 school year. Many mental health experts consider it the most progressive youth suicide prevention education law in the country. State Senator Diane Black, original sponsor of the Jason Flatt Act of 2007, will be this year's keynote speaker.

The event will feature the presentation of the Regional Suicide Prevention Awards to eight TSPN members and associates for outstanding efforts in the field of suicide prevention. One of the award winners will receive a statewide honor, the Madge and Ken Tullis Suicide Prevention Award. Additionally, a banner will be provided for signature by members across the state as a physical testament to Tennessee's commitment to the cause of suicide prevention.

Finally, this year's event will be held in a brand new location. Not only does TEA's spacious facilities and free parking lot provide added convenience for the many TSPN members in attendance, but the venue has special symbolic value given the prominence of the Jason Flatt Act of 2007 in this year's proceedings.

For more information about the event and about "Saving Lives in Tennessee," contact the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network at (615) 297-1077 or visit www.tspn.org. The TSPN crisis line is 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

— HAPPENINGS —



• CoverKids Provides Complete Health Care Coverage to Children

Nearly 127,000 children in Tennessee are uninsured. CoverKids, an element of Governor Phil Bredesen's multi-pronged Cover Tennessee health initiative for the uninsured, provides free comprehensive health insurance to qualifying children 18 and under.

CoverKids is offered to uninsured children who do not qualify for TennCare. A family of four with a household income of \$51,625 or less is eligible for CoverKids with no monthly premiums, but each participant will pay reduced co-payments for services. Families above the income limit who wish to purchase coverage for their child can "buy in" to the program by paying monthly premiums.

Bredesen launched the CoverKids program at the end of March. CoverKids offers comprehensive health insurance coverage for children 18 years old and younger. The program emphasizes preventive care and services most needed by children, including vaccinations, well-child visits, healthy babies program, and developmental screenings. In addition, there are no pre-existing condition exclusions. To be eligible, applicants must be a Tennessee resident and a U.S. citizen or qualified legal immigrant.

Pregnant women under 250 percent of the federal poverty level who are otherwise eligible may apply for coverage, including pre-natal, delivery and postpartum care.

In addition to CoverKids, Governor Phil Bredesen's Cover Tennessee initiative offers health insurance options to uninsured individuals in Tennessee through three insurance programs with CoverTN as the centerpiece of the initiative. CoverTN is an affordable and portable health insurance initiative for uninsured small businesses. AccessTN, a high-risk pool, provides comprehensive coverage for adults who are uninsurable due to their health conditions. CoverRx is a statewide pharmacy assistance program designed to assist those who have no pharmacy coverage, but have a critical need for medication.

More information on all Cover Tennessee programs is available at www.CoverTN.gov or by calling 1-866-COVERTN.

• Suicide and the Black Church Conference Held in Memphis

The third national Suicide and the Black Church Conference will be held on the grounds of the Healing Center, 3885 Tchulahoma Road in Memphis on June 20-22, 2007. Sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD), the event's theme *The Storm Continues* represents the need for many groups, including faith-based organizations, to unite and spread awareness throughout all facets of the community on the issue of suicide and suicide prevention. Almost 300 individuals were in attendance at this year's conference.



Left to Right: Lygia Williams, Dr. Pat Adams-Graves, Tiffany Washington, Bishop William M. Young, Sr., Lucy Lavender, Dr. Ken Tullis, Scott Ridgway, Pastor Diane Young, Madge Tullis, Jerry Reed, Doris Smith and Gwen Hamer.

A variety of experts from across the nation presented at the conference, including Michael A. Torres, M.D., Center for the Integration of Spiritual and Mental Health; Sherry Molock, PhD, George Washington University; and TDMHDD's Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts.

"In 90 percent of instances, suicide is the result of unrecognized, untreated, or poorly treated mental illness and can be said to be the terminal outcome of serious mental illness," stated Tennessee Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. "Suicide is the leading cause of violent deaths worldwide, above homicide and death due to natural disasters. Suicide does not discriminate by gender, economic status, race, or ethnicity."

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth and young adults ages 15-24 in Tennessee and throughout the entire nation. The rate of suicide in Tennessee is 13.4 per 100,000 individuals, higher than the national average of 10.8 per 100,000 individuals.



Legislative Update

The Tennessee General Assembly adjourned on Tuesday, June 12, 2007. **Public Chapter 298**, the only legislative proposal filed by TDMHDD this year, revises the state drug schedules for narcotics and aligns state and federal drug schedule standards.

Education:

Public Chapter 45, *The Jason Flatt Act of 2007*, requires two hours of teacher in-service training on suicide prevention annually.

Public Chapter 247 encourages the Commissioner of Education to use two (2) teacher in-service days each year to train school personnel on issues of prevention and intervention strategies for students in the area of behavioral/emotional disorders.

Public Chapter 259 requires all police officers and highway patrol officers to be trained on proper response to persons with mental illness. It also requires the Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) commission's curriculum to include such training.

Disability:

Two pieces of legislation were passed this year to protect use of parking placards for persons with disabilities:

Public Chapter 32 increases the fine for unauthorized use of parking spaces reserved for persons with disabilities from \$100 to \$150.

Public Chapter 240 clarifies that only disabled drivers, disabled passengers, and qualified operators acting under express direction of such disabled persons, who are present as drivers or passengers, are allowed to use parking spaces designated for persons with disabilities.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services:

Senate Joint Resolution 91 urges the Comptroller of the Treasury to review Tennessee's existing statutes addressing prevention, treatment, and recovery services of alcohol and drug use to ensure efficacy of state laws and report back to the legislature by December 2008.

For information on other legislation tracked by TDMHDD, visit the Legislative Summary found on www.tennessee.gov/mental. ■

The Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant (SPF-SIG)

The SPF-SIG grant is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) to help communities across the state build a solid framework for delivering and sustaining effective prevention strategies through community-based coalitions.

The SPF-SIG grant provides funding to implement SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework in order to:

- Prevent the onset and reduce the progression of substance abuse, including childhood and underage drinking,
- Reduce substance abuse-related problems in communities, and
- Build prevention capacity and infrastructure at the state and community levels.

In implementing the Tennessee SPF-SIG grant, TDMHDD's Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (DADAS) has to date partnered with the Community Services Agencies (CSAs), Community Anti-Drug Coalitions Across Tennessee (CADCAT) and the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE).

Under the leadership of an Advisory Council (AC), comprised of stakeholders from various state agencies, and with assistance from a state epidemiological workgroup, 30 counties have been selected for funding derived from a statewide needs assessment administered by PIRE. The assessment was based on six priorities adopted by the AC: alcohol and underage drinking, marijuana, methamphetamine, and cocaine.

This endeavor is leading communities through the CSAP's five-step process, which includes:

- Assessment - profile needs and response capacity;
- Capacity - mobilize and build needed capacity;
- Plan - develop a comprehensive strategic plan;
- Implementation - implement evidence-based prevention practices, policies and strategies; and
- Evaluation - evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence-based prevention practices, policies and strategies that were implemented and sustain what has worked well.

The third year of this five year federal grant began October 2007, and the first cohort of 15 counties includes Bradley, Coffee, Davidson, Hamilton, Haywood, Humphreys, Jackson, Johnson, Putnam, Rutherford, Sumner, Tipton, Trousdale, Washington and Weakley. Cohort 2 counties are scheduled to receive their funding next year and will then progress through the five-step process.

— HAPPENINGS —

Suicide and the Black Church...cont.

Overall, one out of every twelve Tennesseans has been affected by a suicide in the last five years.

Suicide and mental illness tend to be particularly stigmatized among minority populations. This conference provided a great understanding of suicide and its prevention among church leaders, allowing them to facilitate informed outreach and effective care for community members. ■

Strategic Prevention...cont.

Prevention is imperative in reducing substance abuse consumption and substance abuse-related consequences. SPF-SIG will allow Tennessee, through partnerships and collaborations, to create a new effective prevention infrastructure that can be used for all prevention services. Existing prevention infrastructures are strengthened by the SPF-SIG through evidence-based decisions that measurably contribute to a significant reduction in alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse or dependence and associated substance abuse problems across Tennessee. ■

New Crisis Facility Opens...cont.

Crisis Respite facility offers a therapeutic option to the restrictive confines of a hospital setting," says David Grimes, Senior Vice President for Adult Services at Centerstone. This diversionary program is designed to offer clients the comforts of home while receiving crisis treatment to help stabilize the acute and to facilitate a transition back to the community."

The center's staff includes medical professionals, including psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, social workers, and registered nurses. A program coordinator and a facility manager will also be on staff. The program is open to individuals with all types of healthcare coverage, including third-party insurance and private pay. Grant subsidies are also available to those who qualify. To access this service, contact Centerstone's Crisis Triage hotline at 1-800-681-7444. ■

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