

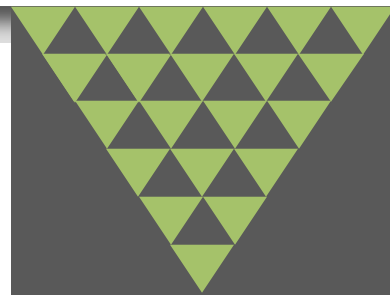


**tamho**

tennessee association of  
mental health organizations

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEWS AND EVENTS

**WWW.TAMHO.ORG**



the source for  
**BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH IN  
TENNESSEE**

October 2021  
Volume 9, Issue 4

**Strengthening The Behavioral  
Health Workforce:**

*Strategies For The Future*

**TAMHO Annual Conference**

**December 9 & 10  
2021**

Franklin Marriott Cool Springs Hotel  
Franklin, Tennessee

In person and virtual  
options available

This year's TAMHO Annual Conference brings together experts to explore the behavioral health workforce shortage in Tennessee and discuss strategies to address it. This will be TAMHO's first-ever hybrid event. As the pandemic continues, we will offer options for in-person, virtual, and dual attendance. Dual attendance allows you the option to attend onsite and connect remotely with your electronic device to join in the chatting and networking online as well as onsite. Pick which option best suits your needs.

<https://hopin.com/events/tamho-annual-conference-hybrid>

## SESSIONS AT A GLANCE

### OPENING GENERAL SESSION | TDMHSAS / TennCare Workforce Work Group Final Report

In June 2021 TennCare and TDMHSAS jointly convened a work group that included representatives from mental health and substance abuse providers, advocacy groups, professional organizations, and university training programs. The goals of the group were to clearly identify gaps and needs in the public behavioral health workforce in TN, to assess strategies to address gaps, including identification of actions to support effective recruitment and retention of behavioral health professionals in TN and to develop a report for key decision makers to offer short- and long-term strategies to address the identified challenges.

Stephen Smith, Director, TennCare  
Marie Williams, Commissioner, TDMHSAS

### Inside this issue

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### TAMHO HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES:

TAMHO will be closed on November 25th-26th in observance of Thanksgiving.  
TAMHO will be closed on December 23rd-24th in observance of the Christmas holidays.  
TAMHO will be closed on December 31st in observance of the New Year Holiday.

## TAMHO

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### President

Florence Hervey | CMI Healthcare Services

#### President Elect

Phyllis Persinger | Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System

#### Immediate Past President

Jimmie Jackson | Professional Care Services of West TN

#### Treasurer

Kristie Hammonds | Frontier Health

#### Secretary

Brad Nunn, PhD | Centerstone

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#### Alliance Health Services

Memphis | Laurie Powell, Executive Director

#### Carey Counseling Center

Paris | Julie Eberwein, PhD, Chief Executive Officer

#### CMI Healthcare Services

Memphis | E. Florence Hervey, Chief Executive Officer

#### Centerstone of Tennessee

Nashville | Ben Middleton, Chief Executive Officer

#### Cherokee Health Systems

Knoxville | Dennis S. Freeman, PhD, Executive Director

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#### Pathways Behavioral Health Services

Jackson | Pam Henson, Executive Director

#### Peninsula—a Division of Parkwest Medical Center

Knoxville | Liz Clary, Vice Pres. — Behavioral Services

#### Professional Care Services of West TN, Inc.

Covington | Jimmie Jackson, Executive Director/CEO

#### Quinco Mental Health Center

Bolivar | Marlin Medlin, Executive Director

#### Ridgeview Behavioral Health Services

Oak Ridge | Brian Buuck, Chief Executive Officer

#### Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System

Murfreesboro | Phyllis Persinger, President/COO

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

#### Vanderbilt Community Mental Health Center

Nashville | George Hunter, Executive Director

### AFFILIATE MEMBERS

#### AIIM Center

Chattanooga | Donna Maddox, President

#### Ballad Health

Gray | Tammy Albright, CEO

#### Community Change

Knoxville | Kathy Gencay, CEO

#### Generations Mental Health Center

McMinnville | Kathy G. Campbell, President/CEO

#### Park Center

Nashville | Will Connelly, CEO

#### Tennessee Mental Health Consumers' Association

Nashville | Anthony Fox, Executive Director

#### Tennessee Voices

Nashville | Rikki Harris, Chief Executive Officer

### TAMHO STAFF

Executive Director | Elynn Wilbur

Director of Policy and Advocacy | Alysia Smith Knight

Director of Member Services | Teresa Fuqua

Director of Administrative Services | Laura B. Jean

Project Manager TNCODC | Mariam Hashimi

Statewide Peer Wellness Coach | Dina Savvenas

Project Assistant | Carrie Ligon

## GENERAL SESSION | Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHCs)

The CCBHC model has successfully been implemented in more than 430 locations in 42 states. This model raises the bar on service delivery, focuses on evidence-based care, requires quality reporting to assure accountability and with a prospective payment system, covers the cost-of-service delivery. The 3 CCBHC providers in TN will discuss how they have implemented this model and how it has impacted the behavioral health workforce in their community. A representative from National Council for Mental Wellbeing will give an overview of data and results from CCBHCs across the country.

### PANELISTS:

Ben Middleton, Chief Executive Officer, Centerstone Tennessee

Laurie Powell, Executive Director, Alliance Healthcare Services

Kristie Hammonds, President & CEO, Frontier Health

Brett Beckerson, National Council for Mental Wellbeing

Samantha Holcombe, National Council for Mental Wellbeing

## GENERAL SESSION WITH WORKING LUNCHEON | Peers in the Workforce

The value of individuals with lived experience in behavioral health has long been understood but only recently has the peer movement expanded to include a variety of models and approaches. This session will discuss how peers are currently supporting recovery in different settings with different populations. Recognizing the importance of peers is a key strategy in addressing behavioral health workforce challenges.

### PANELISTS:

Rikki Harris, Chief Executive Officer, Tennessee Voices

Jordan Young, CPRS, Mid-East Reg. Mgr. / IPS Employment Specialist, Tennessee Mental Health Consumers' Association (TMHCA)

Cyera Anderson, Regional Manager, Tennessee Mental Health Consumers' Association (TMHCA)

Rachel Loveday, Recovery Navigator, McNabb Center

## GENERAL SESSION | Telehealth

On March 13, 2020, as the National State of Emergency was declared, Centerstone also made a declaration: to ensure our clients and staff could continue safely engaging in care by leveraging technology. In just seven days, they did what they had not successfully been able to do at scale over a period of four years. After pivoting 3500 employees to work-from-home environments and over 140,000 clients to virtual care environments, they will share key lessons learned about what such a transition required, what staff needed to be successful, and what changes they found when examining treatment outcomes, including preliminary data on the effectiveness of telehealth, and insights into the provider and client satisfaction with this type of service delivery.

Ashley Newton, MPS, PMP, CPHQ, Chief Operating Officer, Centerstone's Research Institute

Taylor Moore, PhD, Vice President of Program Evaluation, Centerstone Research Institute

Visit <https://hopin.com/events/tamho-annual-conference-hybrid> for details, registration, and sponsorship information.

## The Tennessee Co-Occurring Disorders Collaborative (TNCODC)

Strengthening individuals, families, and communities with hope, access to services, and recovery

This quarter, TNCODC conducted three virtual learning community meetings, one for each region.

Middle Tennessee learning community met on August 26<sup>th</sup>, East Tennessee on September 16<sup>th</sup>, and West Tennessee on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Regional learning community members were able to come together and share updates as well as resources with their fellow learning community members. Resources mentioned on the call as well as contact information of all attendees was shared after each event. Donathan Knowles attended all three meetings to share TDMHSAS updates as well as a COMPASS-EZ reminder.

Our next event will be a trauma-focused training, and will be held December 7<sup>th</sup>. The event will be virtual and registration information is forthcoming.

For information and to provide feedback about future resources and events, please reach out to Mariam Hashimi, TNCODC project manager at [mhashimi@tamho.org](mailto:mhashimi@tamho.org).



Mariam Hashimi



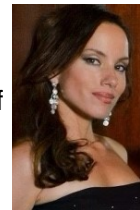
## My Health, My Choice, My Life

Peer Wellness in Tennessee

Hello and Happy Fall! We hope that you are enjoying the somewhat cooler temperatures, pumpkin spice, and all of the other joys that come with the harvest season. The 11<sup>th</sup> annual CPRS (Certified Peer Recovery Specialist)

Virtual Conference “*Rolling with Resiliency Across the State of Tennessee*” happened on October 8<sup>th</sup>, with an Awards Ceremony on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup>. There were

close to 500 registrants total for both days. I had the honor of being a panelist, alongside Lisa Ragan, Jack Wyatt, Jason Abernathy, and Moderator Monty Burks, with the speakers sharing our Recovery Stories. There was a live Q&A afterwards. Commissioner Williams provided an uplifting message, and the general sessions and presentations followed. Many of the participants stated that they enjoyed more sharing of personal stories this year, and appreciated the transparency and genuineness of the speakers. The chat box and live Q&A’s provided a sense of togetherness in real time. We do hope to be together in person next year. On another note, all of the Peer Wellness Coaches have been busy providing wellness services to peers that are interested in making positive lifestyle changes and supporting their ongoing recovery, including tobacco cessation. Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable morbidity and mortality in the United States (King et al, 2011). It causes many health problems, including cancer, heart disease and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). There are 480,000 deaths each year in the US attributed to tobacco use (USDHHS, 2014). Tobacco cessation is a key component of health promotion for everyone, and some groups are particularly at risk for tobacco use



Dina Savvenas



The trusted voice for Tennessee’s behavioral health system for sixty years.

TAMHO member organizations serve adults and children with a range of emotional disorders, mental illnesses, and addiction disorders.

ADOPTION SERVICES	OPIOID USE
CRISIS SERVICES:	DISORDER
CRISIS RESPONSE,	TREATMENT
CRISIS RESPITE,	OUTPATIENT
WALK-IN CENTER	TREATMENT:
SERVICES	PSYCHIATRIC
CRITICAL INCIDENT	EVALUATION,
STRESS	MEDICATION
DEBRIEFING	MANAGEMENT,
DISASTER RESPONSE	INDIVIDUAL
FAMILY SUPPORT	THERAPY, FAMILY
SERVICES	THERAPY,
ILLNESS	SUBSTANCE USE
MANAGEMENT	TREATMENT
AND RECOVERY	PEER RECOVERY
(IMR)	SERVICES
INPATIENT SERVICES	PREVENTION
INTEGRATED	SERVICES
MEDICAL CARE	PSYCHOSOCIAL
INTENSIVE	REHABILITATION
COMMUNITY-	RESIDENTIAL
BASED SERVICES:	TREATMENT
CONTINUOUS	SERVICES
TREATMENT TEAM	SCHOOL-BASED
(CTT),	SERVICES
COMPREHENSIVE	SPECIALTY
CHILD AND FAMILY	TREATMENT
TREATMENT	SERVICES
(CCFT), PROGRAM	SUPPORTED
OF ASSERTIVE	EMPLOYMENT
COMMUNITY	SUPPORTED HOUSING
TREATMENT	TENNESSEE HEALTH
(PACT)	LINK
INTENSIVE	THERAPEUTIC FOSTER
OUTPATIENT	CARE
SERVICES	TRAUMA FOCUSED
	TREATMENT

With the implementation of Tennessee Health Link in 2016, most TAMHO members also coordinate physical care as well as provide interventions for mental illness, addictions and co-occurring disorders.



and related health concerns. We utilize and train others to be able to utilize the DIMENSIONS: Tobacco Free Program from the University of Colorado It provides tailored information designed to meet the needs of priority populations, including behavioral health, justice involved, ethnic minority, and LGBT populations, among others. We completed a DIMENSIONS: Tobacco

Free Program training in September for 10 staff members of Centerstone in Middle TN, and we will be scheduling a training for West TN soon. If you have staff members who are interested in providing tobacco cessation support for groups or individuals, please contact me at [csavvenas@tamho.org](mailto:csavvenas@tamho.org)

## Member Organization Happenings

### New CEO/President Appointed at Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System

Phyllis Persinger announced to replace retiring CEO/President Chris Wyre

On August 13, 2021, the Volunteer Behavioral Health (VBH) board of directors appointed Phyllis Persinger as their new Chief Executive Officer and President. Phyllis previously held the position of President and Chief Operating Officer and succeeds Chris Wyre as CEO, who retired after serving with the company for 44 years.

“During this time of transition, there is no one better to lead Volunteer after Chris’ departure,” said Linda Bennett, Board Chair. “Phyllis has proven her leadership skills through her vision and ability to bring teams together to get the job done. We’re so excited to have her as we enter this next chapter of innovation in behavioral health for Tennesseans.”

Phyllis will oversee all of Volunteer’s operations across 32 counties, including 21 outpatient centers offering telehealth and same day appointments, and ancillary services such as residential treatment, mobile crisis response, crisis stabilization units, pre-arrest diversion, specialty children’s programs, homeless services, group homes, and supportive housing. VBH serves a population base of over 2 million Tennesseans in a 12,555 square mile area.

Since joining Volunteer in 1987, Phyllis has held a variety of responsibilities and spearheaded several initiatives such as shifting the



Phyllis Persinger



organization to remote work and telehealth, creating a culture of “One Team, One Dream” throughout the agency, implementing a Centralized Access and Customer Service (CA/CS) department, creating an electronic health record in 2001 and again in 2011, and administering a performance-based payment system for professional providers. As Chief Administrative Officer, Phyllis was responsible for the oversight and administration of finance, property management and maintenance, CA/CS, and information technology/information system management.

“Phyllis’ work ethic and energy are un-matched by anyone I know. She brings years of experience and knowledge to this position,” said Carrie Robinson, Sr. VP of Operations. “She is and will be the perfect fit for our new CEO for Volunteer Behavioral Health. I am very happy for her and well deserved!”

Phyllis enjoys being an active member of the community and serving with several professional organizations and committees. Some of those include: President Elect for the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO), past president and current committee chair for the Fiscal and Administrative section for TAMHO, member of the Information Technology committee for Mental Health Corporation of America, and member of the Steering Committee for Qualifacts, Inc.

“I’m so humbled, honored, and grateful to be presented with such an opportunity,” said Phyllis. “My passion for our staff and our clients only continues to grow. The entire team truly receives the credit for Volunteer’s success, and I am so grateful every day to work both with them and for them.”

A native of Millboro, VA, Phyllis attended James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA, graduating in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science degree

with an emphasis in education and business. Phyllis began her professional career as a business teacher at Bath County High School in Hot Springs, VA.

## City of Memphis Receives the NAMI Tennessee Sam Cochran Criminal Justice Award

City of Memphis | October 18, 2021 | <https://www.memphistn.gov/news/city-of-memphis-receives-the-nami-tennessee-sam-cochran-criminal-justice-award/>

On September 22, 2021, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)



Tennessee selected the CARE Team (Crisis Assessment and Response to Emergencies) as this year's recipient of the Sam Cochran Criminal Justice Award. The award recognizes outstanding work in the criminal justice system, specifically the fair and humane treatment of people with mental illness.

"The CARE Team has exemplified NAMI's approach to de-escalating and diverting people with mental illness away from the criminal justice system and toward getting help," NAMI Tennessee Deputy Director Roger Stewart said.

Part of the Memphis Fire Department Healthcare Navigator Program, the CARE Team was placed into service in 2018 and is a collaborative partnership between the fire and police departments and Alliance Healthcare Services. CARE provides a multidisciplinary response to complex behavioral health emergencies such as suicide attempts and mental health crises. The team is made up of a specially trained paramedic, a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) police officer, and a master's level mental health assessor. The program's goal is to provide the best outcome for the patient while avoiding an unnecessary emergency department visit or criminal charges which lead to jail time.

"We are honored that NAMI Tennessee has recognized the innovative work that the CARE Team is doing in our city," Fire Chief Gina Y. Sweat said. "This is a great example of the excellent and compassionate service provided daily by the dedicated professionals of the Memphis Fire Department and our partner agencies."

This is the second state-wide award given to the CARE Team, the first being last year's innovation award given by the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations to Alliance Healthcare Services.

"By working as a team, we can assess the individuals' needs quickly, link them to the treatment they need, and divert them from jails and emergency rooms. Mental health and physical health needs are addressed at the same time in this model which makes it unique, and the intervention results in enormous cost savings to local hospitals and the criminal justice system," Laurie Powell, CEO of Alliance Healthcare Services said.

## Promotion at Professional Care Services of West Tennessee

Jimmie Jackson, CEO/Executive Director of Professional Care Services of West Tennessee recently announced the promotion of Sara Hawkins, LPC-MHSP. Sara now serves as PCS' Director of Clinical Services.



Sara has been part of the PCS team since 2008, serving in various leadership positions working to improve the lives of service recipients in their communities. Sara's leadership positions have included care coordinator, clinical therapist, site director, director of crisis services, and most recently serving as a PCS executive management team member.

Sara has been instrumental in seeking out and implementing new grant-funded opportunities to meet the behavioral health and substance abuse needs in our communities. Most recently, Sara wrote and implemented a federally funded SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Training Grant that provides mental health awareness training to first responders, law enforcement, stakeholders, and community member in multiple counties. In addition, Sara has recently implemented and overseen the TDMHSAS funded COVID19 Disaster Response Grants, COVID19 Relief Mobile Crisis Grant, and the TN Disaster Response Initiative Grant. In addition, Sara participates in numerous community and state advocacy groups.

Mr. Jackson relayed his excitement for both Sara and for PCS to have her in this new role. Sara has consistently demonstrated strong leadership skills that will positively impact PCS, staff, our community, and service recipients.



## Centerstone Opens First Virtual Clinic

Centerstone has opened its first virtual clinic where services are delivered 100% via telehealth. All staff working within our virtual clinic are independently licensed in the state of Tennessee and paneled with most insurance companies. Due to the accessibility and versatility of telehealth, services will be available to clients throughout Tennessee and not limited to one independent facility.



If you are looking to schedule an appointment or would like additional information regarding Centerstone's virtual clinic, please email Lisa Eggebeen at [Lisa.Eggebeen@centerstone.org](mailto:Lisa.Eggebeen@centerstone.org).

## McNabb Center to Open CSU in Hamblen County

Fifteen bed unit will offer care 24 hours a day, seven days a week for those who are 18 or older and facing a behavioral health crisis

The McNabb Center cut the ribbon on its Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) in Hamblen County on Friday, October 15, 2021.

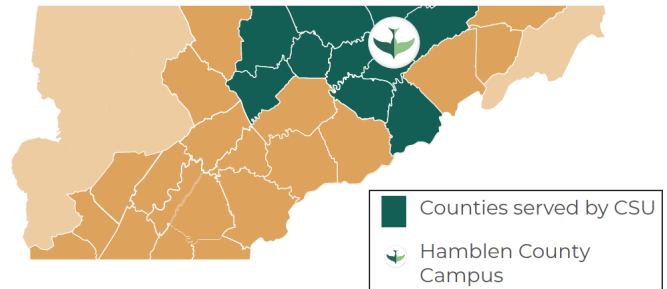


The CSU provides intensive, short-term stabilization for an individual who is experiencing a mental health emergency. The 15-bed unit will offer care 24 hours a day, seven days a week for those who are 18 or older and facing a behavioral health crisis. The CSU will serve the Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services Regions 1 and 2, which include Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson and Union counties.

This project is funded through the Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS).



"We know that mental health care works best when people have multiple options at multiple levels, and this Crisis Stabilization Unit in Hamblen County will do just that. It will provide options for people living through a mental health crisis, their families, staff in emergency departments and law enforcement officers," said Marie Williams, Commissioner of TDMHSAS. "We are excited to see the opening of this Crisis Stabilization Unit, and we are grateful to our partners at McNabb Center for their tireless work to serve the mental health needs of this community."



## VBHCS Murfreesboro Location Hosts Open House for the New Facility

Volunteer BHCS recently held an Open House for our new facility in Murfreesboro. This building offers Therapy, Medication Management, and Care Management. Genoa Pharmacy is also in the building. The 1st floor houses Crisis Services, and they hope to expand Crisis & Alcohol and Drug Services in the future. This location is one of 21 locations in the Volunteer System. Volunteer proudly serves 32 counties in Tennessee. Visit <https://www.wgnsradio.com/article/69190/organization-that-focuses-on-helping-those-with-mental-illness-or-addiction-open-new-larger-facility-in-murfreesboro> to hear WGNS' radio coverage of the Open House. Visit <https://www.vbhcs.org/2021/07/murfreesboro-location-hosts-open-house-for-the-new-facility/> to view this article and additional photographs.



## Tennessee School Counselor & Administrator Leadership Institute Conference

Centerstone, local partner and sponsor, participated in the Tennessee School Counselor & Administrator Leadership Institute, which was held in Murfreesboro on September 26th- 28th. School-based team members facilitated a 75 minute breakout session, titled The Impact of COVID-19 on Students: Community Mental Health Mitigation Opportunities.

As an organization, Centerstone feels proud to have played a larger role in this year's conference and look forward to continuing to serve the community in similar endeavors in the future.



## Introducing the Dr. Robert. N Vero Center

Centerstone recently dedicated the Dr. Robert N. Vero Center, which is formally known as, and referred to, as the Luton Clinic.

Centerstone and the community came together on October 22<sup>nd</sup> to graciously honor and publicly recognize the professional work and personal legacy of Dr. Bob Vero, former Regional CEO of Centerstone.

For more information regarding about the Dr. Robert N. Vero Center or to schedule an intake appointment, please [click here](#).



**Strengthening The Behavioral Health Workforce:**

*Strategies For The Future*

# TAMHO Annual Conference

**December 9 & 10  
2021**

Franklin Marriott Cool Springs Hotel  
Franklin, Tennessee

 **tamho**  
Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations

In person and virtual options available

<https://hopin.com/events/tamho-annual-conference-hybrid>

# Statewide Happenings

## TDMHSAS and TAMHO Members Present at Mental Health Corporation of America's Fall Meeting

Mental Health Corporation of America (MHCA) recently held its fall meeting in Memphis, which brought together behavioral health providers from across the country. Commissioner Marie Williams, Robert Vaughn, Chris Wyre, Laurie Powell, Phyllis Persinger and Ellyn Wilbur presented on Tennessee: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. Recently retired, Mr. Vaughn and Mr. Wyre discussed the history of Tennessee's behavioral health system, while Commissioner Williams and Ms. Wilbur discussed current funding and programs. Ms. Powell and Ms. Persinger highlighted exciting programs underway. Guests were also treated to Tennessee trivia and the Peabody ducks as part of the event.



Amanda Cook and Laura Tedesco, VBHCS, Ellyn Wilbur, TAMHO, Laurie Powell, Alliance Health Services, Phyllis Persinger, VBHCS, Commissioner Williams, TDMHSAS and Sejal West, VBHCS.

## The Sycamore Institute Taps Eric Harkness as Next Leader

Subtitle

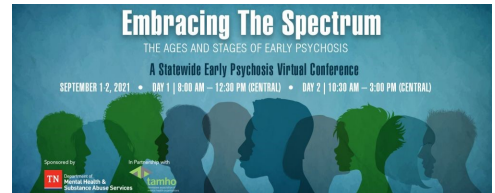
The Sycamore Institute | October 18, 2021 | Brain Straessle | [https://www.sycamoreinstitute.tn.org/eric-harkness-next-executive-director/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=Eric%20Harkness%20will%20be%20our%20next%20executive%20director&utm\\_campaign=general](https://www.sycamoreinstitute.tn.org/eric-harkness-next-executive-director/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Eric%20Harkness%20will%20be%20our%20next%20executive%20director&utm_campaign=general)

Sycamore is delighted to announce that Eric Harkness will be their next executive director. Eric currently leads the Tennessee Department of Health's Office of Strategic Initiatives and brings years of state-level policy experience. Please welcome him as he transitions into this role and visit the link provided above to view the full article.

## Statewide Early Psychosis Virtual Conference is a Huge Success!

Draws the interests of local, statewide, nationwide, and international individuals from twelve countries with interests in early psychosis

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), in partnership with the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO), recently conducted Tennessee's fourth Early Psychosis



Conference. Just like last year, this year's conference was held virtually and included sessions on both first episodes of psychosis and clinical high risk for psychosis.

This year's conference theme was, "Embracing the Spectrum: The Ages and Stages of Early Psychosis." Such a theme is echoed as it is our life's experiences that reflect the light within us. In turn, as mental health professionals and supporters, we shine our light upon those most in need in order to reveal the beautiful hues within each individual. As with a prism, light helps to illuminate the beautiful colors of nature. Mental health helps to illuminate the vastly-colorful experiences across the spectrum of our lives.

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services welcomed nearly 400 behavioral health providers, administrators, families, youth, young adults, and other community members from across the nation and individuals from 12 additional countries who attended to increase their knowledge and implementation of best practices in early psychosis care, to hear stories of recovery and hope from peers, and to network with others who share a passion for this work.

To learn more about first episodes of psychosis and clinical high risk for psychosis, please contact Jessica Mullins ([jessica.mullins@tn.gov](mailto:jessica.mullins@tn.gov)).

## First-Ever Statewide Reentry Conference was a Huge Success!

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), in partnership with the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO), recently conducted a virtual conference: Engaged and Informed to Serve: Re-Entry Focused, Recovery Centered.



This full day of virtual training convened nearly 200 regional housing facilitators, consumer housing specialists, peer lifeliners, and faith-based coordinators.

To learn more about reentry efforts and initiatives in Tennessee, please contact Neru Gobin ([neru.gobin@tn.gov](mailto:neru.gobin@tn.gov)) or Dr. Monty Burks ([monty.burks@tn.gov](mailto:monty.burks@tn.gov)).



# National Happenings

## National Council HILL DAY at Home 2021

Alysia Smith Knight, TAMHO's Director of Policy and Advocacy | National Council State Ambassador Network

## HILL DAY *at Home* 2021

Over 800 advocates across the country attended Hill Day at Home sessions and sent over 1500 action alerts to 249 Members of Congress! Many of us in Tennessee focused on legislation we believe will best strengthen the workforce. We would like to thank Congressman Steve Cohen for signing on to cosponsor the Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Act. This legislation gives states the opportunity to participate in the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) demonstration program. The CCBHC model not only increases access to care, but it



offers sustainable funding for these critical services. Another crucial piece of legislation is the Mental Health Access Improvement Act. This legislation would allow marriage and family therapists as well as mental health counselors to receive reimbursement from Medicare for their treatment services. This legislation would significantly expand the number of behavioral health providers in the country, giving Tennessee another strategy to address its workforce challenges. Please click here for a full list of Hill Day asks: <https://eventscribe.net/2021/HillDay2021/aaStatic.asp?SFP=Vk5RWVIDQktAODg4NOBUYWtllIEFjdGlvbiE#/>

## SAMHSA Awards Record Setting \$825 Million in Grants to Strengthen Community Mental Health Centers, and Support Americans Living with Serious Emotional Disturbances, Mental Illnesses

Three Tennessee agencies to receive portions of this funding



Following up on its commitment to invest \$825 million in Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is announcing the distribution of funds to 231 CMHCs across the country.

Congratulations to Centerstone, Cherokee and McNabb Center, recipients of new SAMHSA grant funding through the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) of 2021 and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplement (CRRS) Act of 2021. This funding requires that recipient organizations develop a behavioral health disparities impact statement; develop a quality-

improvement plan to address under-resourced populations' differences based on access, use and outcomes of service activities; and to identify methods for the development of policies and procedures to ensure adherence to the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care. These awards were part of \$825 million in funding to community mental health centers across the country. [[VIEW FULL ARTICLE](https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/202109281153) at [https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/202109281153] | [VIEW RECIPIENT LIST](https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/2021/community-mental-health-centers-grant-program) at https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/2021/community-mental-health-centers-grant-program]

## Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Model Improving Outcomes and Expanding Access

CCBHCs increased number of individuals receiving care by an average of 10%

Amidst widespread staffing shortages and other workforce challenges across the mental health and substance use treatment system, [new data](#) released by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing found the [Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic \(CCBHC\)](#) model enables clinics to hire more staff to respond to surging demand for services, in addition to expanding access to treatment and reducing emergency department visits. The data reflects outcomes in the eight original demonstration states following the 2017 launch of the innovative health care delivery model.

These data are the first to consider the full scope and lifetime of the eight-state demonstration program from 2017-2021. This is a key metric when evaluating the model's effectiveness, as clinics typically spend much of the first year putting new infrastructure into place to meet program requirements. It also comes on the heels of a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) [report](#) that found CCBHCs are proven to increase the number of individuals receiving care and provide an increased array of services in their communities.

"State officials in the demonstration program credit the CCBHC model and its funding for allowing them to build the system capacity and infrastructure required to meet rising levels of need. These data further reinforce that CCBHCs work – they expand access, reduce emergency department visits, enable clinics to hire more staff and reduce the burden of response for law enforcement," said Chuck Ingoglia, president and CEO of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

"But right now, not every organization that wants to adopt the model has the option to do so. This must change. Every community deserves access to high-quality care and the expanded services CCBHCs uniquely provide, and every clinic that wants to become a CCBHC deserves the chance to adopt the model. We urge Congress to include the bipartisan Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Act of 2021 in the reconciliation package. The legislation would allow any state the option to apply to join the CCBHC demonstration program and establish a payment rate that covers the real cost of expanding access."

Key highlights from the National Council's survey of state CCBHC officials:

- The CCBHC demonstration increased access to mental health and substance use care, largely due to increased availability of same-day appointments, expanded hours of operation facilitated by increased hiring and concerted efforts to conduct outreach to underserved groups.
- States reported reductions in emergency department and hospital visits among CCBHC clients, leading to cost offsets.
- The CCBHC demonstration helped states mitigate the effects of the mental health and substance use service workforce shortage by enabling clinics to hire and retain vital staff.
- The CCBHC demonstration increased access to a comprehensive, evidence-based services to curb the opioid crisis, including medication-assisted treatment (MAT), the gold standard of care.
- The CCBHC demonstration resulted in improved integration of physical care with mental health and substance use treatment, with CCBHC sites in some states exceeding program requirements to offer onsite primary care services.

The findings in this report were primarily based on semi-structured interviews with state officials from the eight states participating in the CCBHC demonstration; review of reports, program data and other documents shared by state officials; and review of other publicly available evaluation reports on the CCBHC program.

## Demand for Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment has Increased Nearly 80% in Three Months

Nearly all mental health and substance use treatment organizations report workforce shortages and problems recruiting and retaining workers

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to accelerate demand for mental health and substance use treatment, while organizations providing care face major staffing hurdles that limit the delivery of service.

Demand for mental health and substance use treatment has increased nearly 80% over the past three months, continuing a steady rise that began more than a year ago, according to a new poll by Morning Consult and released today by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. The poll

coincides with World Mental Health Day on October 10 and highlights the need to improve our nation's response to mental health challenges and overcome workforce shortages.

While demand grows, workforce shortages have made it increasingly difficult for mental health and substance use treatment organizations to keep pace. Recruiting and retaining employees is the primary barrier organizations face, with 97% saying it has been difficult to recruit employees, and 78% of them calling it "very difficult."

"The pandemic has exacerbated our nation's mental health and substance use crisis. It has also made it more difficult for treatment organizations to provide clients the care they need and deserve," National Council for Mental Wellbeing President and CEO Chuck Ingoglia said. "This crisis demands that we find solutions that allow clients to get the treatment they need and provide organizations the resources they require to attract and retain staff in a competitive marketplace."

The new poll shows that demand for mental health services, specifically, has grown 42% in the past three months. Demand for all other services also has grown during this time including:

- Substance use treatment (27%)

- Youth mental health and substance use (36%)

- Crisis services (37%)

- Social services (37%)

Like people in search of treatment, the organizations providing services continue to feel the impact of the pandemic on their operations. In addition to difficulty with recruitment and retention, organizations surveyed said staff burnout represents a major problem.

A shortage of workers has resulted in longer wait lists at 62% of organizations surveyed over the past three months and forced some to reduce services at a critical time.

"At a time when people and communities have demonstrated the need for more mental health and substance use caregivers, more programs and more services, too many organizations remain unable to meet this historic demand. That does not bode well for our collective wellbeing, and it has exposed the profound shortcomings in our nation's funding for mental health and substance use treatment," Ingoglia said.

In the new poll, mental health and substance use treatment organizations said continued funding for telehealth services and increasing Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement rates would provide organizations with significant relief and allow them to add staff and boost services.

"Reimbursement rates for mental health and substance use treatment haven't been revised in decades and don't reflect the cost to provide service," Ingoglia said. "We look forward to working with the administration to raise awareness about this oversight that harms so many small businesses, which includes organizations that provide mental health and substance use treatment."

While many organizations struggle with workforce challenges, data released yesterday by the National Council found that adopting the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model enables clinics to hire more staff. However, in order for clinics everywhere to have the option to apply for CCBHC status, the program must be expanded.





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## COVID-19 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT LINE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Need to talk to someone about feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, or depression related to work? The COVID-19 Emotional Support Line for healthcare workers can help.



# 888-642-7886

Calltakers are available: 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. (CT), 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. (ET)



**STATEWIDE**

## CRISIS LINE

**HELP IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS**

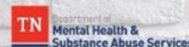
**855-CRISIS-1** [TN.gov/CrisisLine](http://TN.gov/CrisisLine)

**855-274-7471**  Department of  
Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse Services

**TN  
REDLINE** 

**1.800.889.9789**

**CALL OR TEXT**







Department of  
**Mental Health &  
Substance Abuse Services**

## Planning and Policy Council

Schedules for the **Statewide Planning  
and Policy Council** and **Regional  
Council** meetings and information are  
available online at:

[Statewide and Committee meeting  
schedule](#)

[Regional Committee meeting schedule](#)

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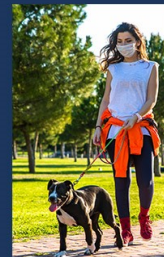
**Amy Holland**

(615) 253-3785

Amy.Holland@tn.gov

### EDUCATOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT VIDEO SERIES

This video series recognizes educators experiencing significant pressure from many directions during a normal school year and this year has only added pressure. These videos focus on...



- Impact of stress on our physical and emotional health
- Mindfulness and state of awareness
- Dealing with grief and loss
- Importance of connection and relationships
- Self-care is a lifestyle, not a checklist



**#TNSupportsTeachers**

Need help with mental health or substance use services?

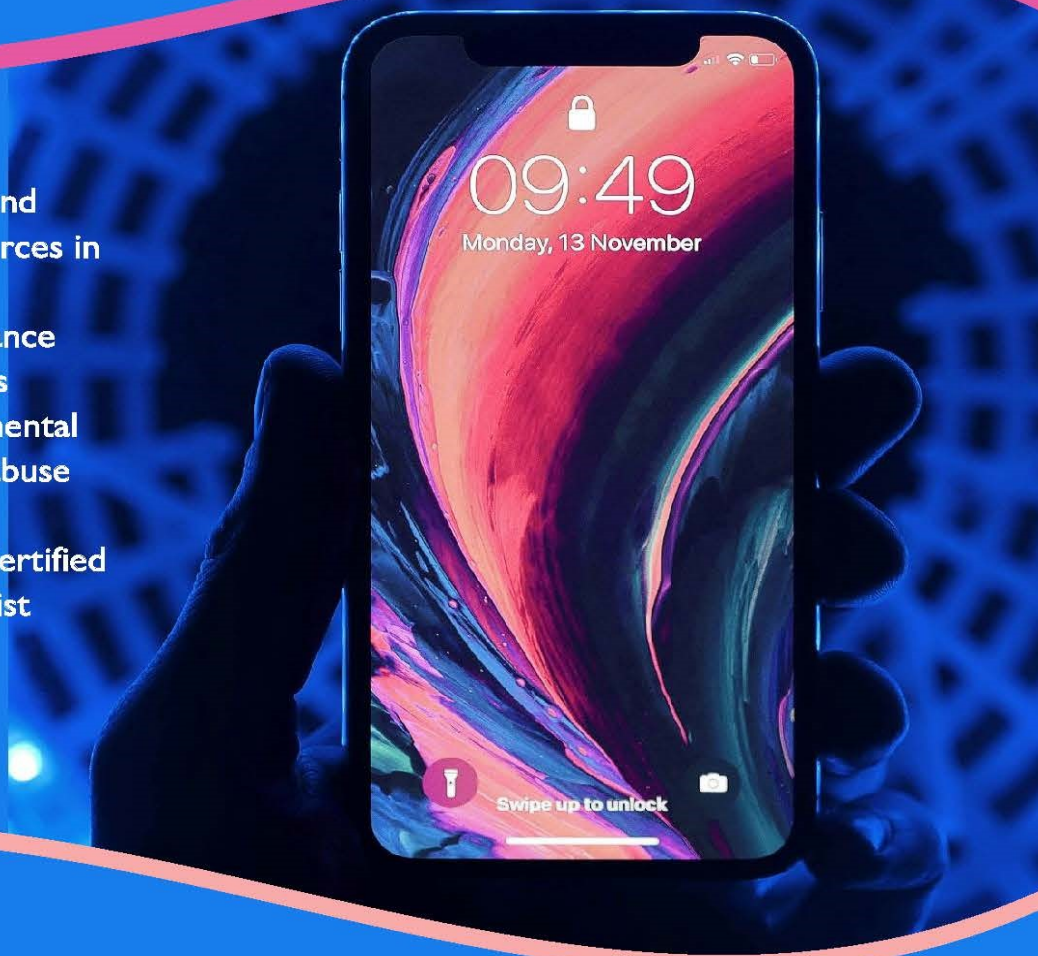
Call the TDMHSAS Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services

# 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

[WWW.TAMHO.ORG](http://WWW.TAMHO.ORG)

[OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov](mailto:OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov) | [TN.gov/behavioral-health](http://TN.gov/behavioral-health)

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Connect with compassionate, trained, and loving listeners for help, hope, & encouragement.

ARE YOU

## LONELY? AGE 60+?

M-F 9-3CT

# 844-600-8262

A partnership of The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, and Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability

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*Affiliate membership is open to any not-for-profit corporation or governmental entity that is ineligible for regular or associate membership and is engaged in the direct provision of one or more treatment, rehabilitation, supportive, or preventive services to the mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, or chemically dependent consumer.*

CONTACT TAMHO TO LEARN MORE . . . .

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# HOPE

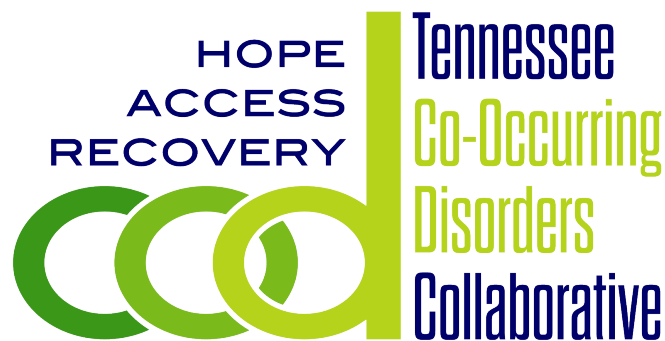
As long as there is life,  
there is hope.

# ACCESS

Staying informed will be  
helpful when services are  
necessary.

# RECOVERY

is real!



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