

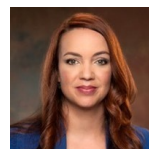


TAMHO Advocacy Day 2022

TAMHO had a successful Advocacy Day on March 8th, with members making over 80 visits with legislators! We are grateful to all those who lent their voices to impact important behavioral health legislation! TAMHO worked on several pieces of legislation, of special note are:

Telehealth: [Senate Bill 2453 \(Yager\) / House Bill 2655 \(Hawk\)](#) passed unanimously and was signed by the governor on April 1st. This bill nullifies the sunset provision of the telehealth bill enacted in 2020. It requires health insurance companies to continue paying for telehealth services the same as in-person services. It keeps the HIPAA-compliant audio-only provision for behavioral health when other means are not available. This legislation is a huge step forward in creating greater access for behavioral health services.

Tort Liability: [Senate Bill 2016 \(Bell\) / House Bill 1847 \(Littleton\)](#) passed and was signed by the Governor on April 8th. This bill limits the liability of agencies contracted to provide foster care services by extending the state's limited tort exposure. No limits will be provided in the event of gross negligence. This legislation was paramount to foster care providers who were finding it difficult to impossible to secure liability insurance. This legislation will allow these providers to continue providing these essential services.



Alysia Smith Knight
TAMHO Director of
Policy and
Advocacy

The General Assembly passed the state's budget at the end of April. Highlights include:

Division of TennCare

- \$7M Community Mental Health Center Outpatient Rate Increase
- \$1.1M Mental Health Crisis Providers Rate Increase
- \$2M Comprehensive Child and Family Treatment (CCFT) Rate Increase
- \$2M Children and Youth and Substance Use Disorder Residential Treatment Rate Increase

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QUARTER TWO

the source for
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April 2022
Volume 10, Issue 2

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TAMHO HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES:

May 30	TAMHO Office Closed — Memorial Day Observance
July 4	TAMHO Office Closed — Fourth of July Observance

TAMHO

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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President Elect

Kristie Hammonds | Frontier Health

Immediate Past President

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Oak Ridge | Brian Buuck, Chief Executive Officer

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Ballad Health

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Project Assistant | Carrie Ligon

Statewide Peer Wellness Coach | Dina Savenas

Project Manager TNCODC | Mariam Hashimi

TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)

- \$17.9M Provider Rate increase
- \$6M Substance Abuse Clinical Treatment Expansion
- \$5.6M Statewide Mental Health Courts
- \$2M Naltrexone for Drug Court Programs
- \$1M Addiction Recovery Program Expansion
- \$1.25M Tennessee Sports Gambling Fund
- \$900K Creating Jobs Initiative
- \$550K Morgan County Residential Recovery Court

- The Department will also receive \$276.5M to replace Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute and \$41.2M from the American Rescue Plan Appropriations. \$34.9M will go toward the Crisis Continuum and \$6.3M will go toward Rural Behavioral and Physical Health Mobile Units.

TN Department of Children's Services (DCS)

- \$9.36M Provider Rate Increase
- \$1.72M Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

We are grateful to Governor Lee and the General Assembly for such generous allocations to behavioral health!

Speaker Sexton's Mental Health Policy Dinner

TAMHO Executive Director, Ellyn Wilbur, and CEO of Frontier Health, Kristie Hammonds, attended a Mental Health Policy Dinner hosted by Speaker Sexton on March 15th at the Capitol.



Ellyn Wilbur and Speaker Cameron Sexton



BACK ROW, *left to right*
Dr. Timothy Fournet, Dr. Jeffrey Woods, Commissioner Marie Williams, Speaker Cameron Sexton, and Kristie Hammonds

FRONT ROW, *left to right*
Judge Dan Eisenstein, Mary Linden Salter, Joy Golden, and Ellyn Wilbur.



Volunteer BHCS—Robert Edmonds, Speaker Sexton, Ella Britt, Shane Farris, Nathan Miller



Ridgeview—Brian Buuck, Lieutenant Governor & Mrs. Randy McNally, Michael Yates



Quinco MHC—Senator Ed Jackson, Autumn Smith, Lisa Pearson, Melissa Cherry, Kelly Odum, Mark Barber



Quinco MHC—Mark Barber, Autumn Smith, Representative Johnny Shaw, Kelly Odum, Melissa Cherry, Lisa Pearson



Frontier Health—Diane Bowen Representative Tim Hicks, Kristie Hammonds



McNabb Center—Houston Smelcer, Lindsay Hughes, Senator Massey, Jerry Vagnier



Volunteer BHCS—Alysia Smith Knight (TAMHO), Susan Phillips, Speaker Pro Tempore Haile, Aly Patrykus, Haylee McPherson



Volunteer BHCS—Alysia Smith Knight (TAMHO), Aly Patrykus, Senator William Lamberth, Susan Key Phillips, Haylee McPherson, Sejal West

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

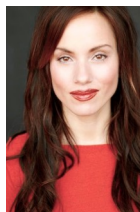
With the implementation of Tennessee Health Link in 2016, most TAMHO members also coordinate physical care as well as provide interventions for mental illness, addictions and co-occurring disorders.



My Health, My Choice, My Life

Peer Wellness in Tennessee

The 16th Annual Art for Awareness was held virtually on March 8th, 2022. After warm welcoming statements from Governor Bill Lee, Commissioner Marie Williams, Lisa Ragan and Lynece Benton-Stewart of HAPI, inc., Keynote Marta Hernandez-Fontenot led us through a session of “First Aid Arts.” We learned some ways to use art and Mindfulness to manage MI and SUD symptoms, and had the opportunity to complete our own art activity. Then, I led us through a 20-minute “Trauma-Informed Yoga” session, utilizing the power of Yoga to create a sense of ease in the body, connecting the mind to the breath and the mind to the body to help restore and reconnect. Several participants posted in the chat that they were ready for a nap immediately after the session and I took this as a compliment. Next, our Keynote Marta led us



Dina Savvenas
Statewide Peer
Wellness Coach



through another art activity, titled “Self-Portrait.” She invited us to use a pencil, pen, paint or whatever we had handy to create our own self-portrait, looking in the mirror or using our smartphone as a guide. During the activity, we were asked to reflect on the parts of us that we like and dislike, and to, perhaps, explore the reasons for why we may feel this way. She inspired us to look at and embrace all of ourselves with love and respect, and honor. It was a very meaningful and revelatory experience for many of us, and I look forward to sharing this activity with peers in the future. A beautiful slideshow was presented of art pieces that were submitted this year by many of our talented artists across the state, and the floor was opened for anyone who wished to share about what their art means to them. A coloring page with this year’s theme was provided to participants, “Create the Change You Want to See in the World.”

The replay will be available to view on the TN.gov website: [Art for Awareness \(tn.gov\)](https://www.tn.gov/art-for-awareness)

You may find out more about First Aid Arts here: [First Aid Arts](https://www.tn.gov/first-aid-arts)

The Tennessee Co-Occurring Disorders Collaborative (TNCODC)

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

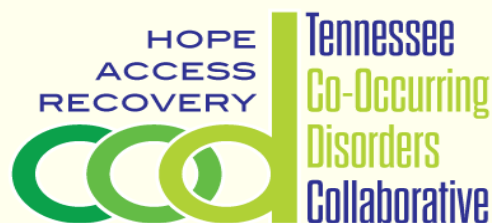
The Tennessee Co-Occurring Disorders Collaborative (TNCODC) is in the process of planning the 2022 Co-Occurring Disorders Summit. The event will be held in-person with a virtual option. More information to follow!

TNCODC is also in the midst of strategic planning for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. We will have a final draft of a plan to submit to TDMHSAS before the end of this fiscal year.

If you have any feedback or recommendations for training and resources for the TNCODC, please reach out to the TNCODC Project Manager at mhashimi@tamho.org.



Mariam Hashimi
Project Manager—
TNCODC



TNCODC Annual Summit

June 10, 2022

Embassy Suites Hotel Murfreesboro

Mark your calendar and save the date.

Details are forthcoming.



National Council Hill Day at Home

June 8, 2022 | 1pm-5pm EST

Stay tuned for educational session information or visit <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/event/hill-day-at-home-2022/?msclkid=4455f99cac5b11ecb2a2d4339ebb6db3>

Registration: <https://www.eventscribe.net/2022/HillDayatHome/>



Leadership Changes in TAMHO Member Organizations



Several highly respected, long-term CEOs have recently retired , and new leadership has been appointed. These new leaders are well prepared to guide their agencies in the rapidly evolving field of behavioral health service delivery.

We would like for you to get to know them.

View the full Board of Directors listing on page 2 of this publication.



tamho

tennessee association of
mental health organizations

Parinda Khatri, PhD

Chief Executive Officer, Cherokee Health System

Dr. Parinda Khatri received her PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at Duke University Medical Center. Prior to her role as CEO, Dr. Khatri served as Chief Clinical Officer at CHS, where she provided oversight and guidance on clinical quality, program development and management, workforce development, clinical research, and clinical operations for blended primary care and behavioral health services within the organization. She has been Principal Investigator of several research and education programs at CHS, including the NIH funded All of Us Research Program and Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities. Dr. Khatri also actively participates in health policy, advocacy, and consultation at the national level. She is past President and Board Member of the Collaborative Family Healthcare Association (CFHA) and was appointed to the HRSA Advisory Committee on Interdisciplinary and Community-



Khatri



Based Linkages by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services from 2017-2021. She is involved as an advisor and consultant in a number of state and national initiatives and programs, including the Advancing Behavioral Health Equity initiative through the Center for Care Innovations, Advisory Council for the National Integration Academy for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the Board of Directors for Advocates for Community Health (ACH), and Clinical Advisory Boards for Amerigroup and BlueCare of Tennessee, and the National FQHC Advisory Board for United Healthcare.

How long have you been employed at Cherokee Health System and what roles have you held?

I have been at CHS for twenty years – my first clinical day was September 11, 2001, if you can believe it. I spent the day seeing walk-in patients who were terrified and confused by what was happening. I barely even saw the news until that evening. It was a powerful reminder of how much people look to us to be a port in a storm. I started out as a behavioral health clinician in primary care two days a week, and within two years moved to full time in the Director of Integrated Care role. I also became the Training Director for our Psychology Internship program and Post-Doctoral Fellowship program. In 2014 I became Chief Clinical Officer and was in that role until I assumed the CEO role Feb. 1 of this year. It's been an amazing journey.

What excites you most about your organization?

We have an amazing team. Our people are our strength and they are focused on fulfilling our mission. We don't know what challenges will come our way, but together we will find a path to keep going. The "can do" attitude is exciting and inspiring.

If you could give your past self advice, what might that be?

Breathe. Take a step back and sit still for a moment. Not everything can be fixed immediately.

What book or movie have you recently read/seen that you would recommend?

We are starting our third year in the COVID-19 pandemic, and I think we are all struggling to understand the full scope of what is happening and what we could have done better. We are all seeing the devastating impact the pandemic has had on community mental health and well being – and we will be dealing with it for years to come. When I struggle to understand something, I often turn to history for perspective (and at times, validation). A Distant Mirror by Barbara Luchman is a historical account of the 14th century and the response to the bubonic plague. Politics, intense emotions, diverging belief systems, and power structures were factors at play then, as they are now. Reading this book helped me find some grace for all of us in this very complex and difficult time – responding to a pandemic is not straightforward or easy.

What is/are your favorite thing(s) to do when you're not working?

Spending time with family and friends, reading, and going for walks. I am a pretty boring person. No high risk adventures or interesting hobbies, unfortunately. I work *a lot*.

What vacation spot do you favor?

I love water and mountains – anywhere I can sit with a good book and look at something serene and beautiful.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I love to bake. There is something comforting and predictable about mixing ingredients and creating something to enjoy. I bake as a coping mechanism – people know when my stress level is high because I am always showing up with cupcakes, cakes, brownies, and cookies.

Other things colleagues might find interesting to know about me is/are . . .

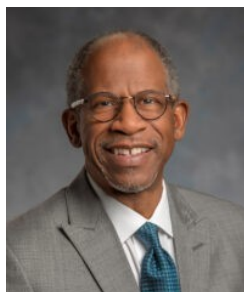
I was a classically trained Indian dancer – I became a professional Bharat Natyam (the oldest form of classical dance in India) dancer at age 16. I stopped midway through college because I just couldn't keep up with the intensity of training and performance. My knees are paying for it now – but I learned to get comfortable in front of people at an early age.

Ben Middleton, MS

Regional Chief Executive Officer, Centerstone Tennessee

Ben Middleton is the Regional Chief Executive Officer for Centerstone, a not-for-profit health system specializing in mental health and substance use disorder treatments. As Regional Chief Executive Officer, Middleton is responsible for the leadership and operational oversight of Centerstone's clinical service lines in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia, as well as strategic business development, fiscal performance and accountability, and the organization's philanthropic fund development efforts.

Middleton has worked in behavioral health care since 1979, specializing in substance use treatment and the continuum of services for those with mental illnesses. He began his career as an



Middleton



alcohol and drug treatment therapist in Alabama. As a consultant for the Tennessee Department of Mental Health, he led an advisory committee to develop a statewide culturally competent system of care for children and youth. He first joined Centerstone in 1985 and was named Director of Program Development for Alcohol & Drug Services at Centerstone in 1990. Middleton later advanced to Vice President for Core Services and Regional Chief Operating Officer before becoming Regional Chief Executive Officer.

Middleton is an active volunteer board member with the King's Daughters Home and the Madison Kiwanis. His professional memberships include the Nashville Substance Abuse Forum, Licensed Alcohol and Other Drugs of Abuse Counselor, and National Certified Addiction Counselor II.

Middleton graduated from Oakwood University with a bachelor of arts degree in psychology and from Alabama A&M University with a master of science degree in clinical psychology.

How long have you been employed at Centerstone and what roles have you held?

I have been employed for 36 years. During my time at Centerstone I have served as a frontline Therapist for Substance Use Disorder,

Senior VP for Clinical Services, COO and most recently CEO.

What excites you most about your organization?

Our Research Institute and analytic tools which supports our clinical operations in providing proven evidence based treatments and services that changes peoples lives.

If you could give your past self advice, what might that be?

Everything you will experience whether positive or negative can be an opportunity for growth.

What book or movie have you recently read/seen that you would recommend?

“No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention” By Reed Hastings and Erin Meyer.

What is/are your favorite thing(s) to do when you’re not working?

Watch historical documentaries/movies and play guitar.

What vacation spot do you favor?

Hawaii

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I am a novice carpenter.

Kelly Odum

Chief Executive Officer, Quinco Mental Health Center

The Quinco Mental Health Center Board of Directors recently announced the retirement of Marlin Medlin as Executive Director effective December 31, 2021. Medlin has served in many leadership roles during his 42-year career with the agency.

Kelly Odum, LCSW, of Lexington, Tennessee has been selected to fill the Executive Director role effective January 1, 2022.

Odum joined the agency in 2010 and has served in several leadership positions, most currently, she served as the agency’s Clinical Director.



Odum

QUINCO
MENTAL HEALTH

Gail Brooks, Chair of the Quinco Board of Directors, stated that “we have seen much growth under Mr. Medlin’s leadership and his years of experience will be greatly missed. The Board of Directors are extremely grateful for the dedication, passion, compassion, and visionary leadership that Mr. Medlin has provided.” She went on to add that “the Quinco Board is extremely positive in the selection of Ms. Odum and confident that Quinco will continue to thrive under her guidance for years to come.”

Quinco Mental Health Center is a leading provider of mental health services in Southwest Tennessee. Based in Bolivar, Tennessee, Quinco has 13 facilities in seven counties, including Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Henderson, Madison, and McNairy counties. Quinco has over 140 employees who serve over 5,000 clients on an annual basis.

How long have you been employed at Quinco Mental Health Center and what roles have you held?

I started working at Quinco May 2010. I was hired as the Clinic Director/LCSW for our Jackson office. I ran that clinic and saw clients until Feb 2018. In Feb of 2018, I became the Clinical Director here at Quinco. In Jan 2022, I became the Executive Director at Quinco.

What excites you most about your organization?

The thing that excites me the most about Quinco is it is like family. People here are understanding, caring and compassionate about each other as well as our clients.

If you could give your past self advice, what might that be?

The self-advice I would give my past self is to take care of yourself because no one else is going to do that for you.

What book or movie have you recently read/seen that you would recommend?

I haven’t seen any movies lately. I read books that are extreme: From one end of the spectrum to the other end such as religious cults and Christian fiction (two of my favorite right now). The book I am listening to at the present time is by Karen Kingsbury titled Angels Walking. I recommend her books as well as Francine Rivers’ books. And I enjoy watching documentaries...

What is/are your favorite thing(s) to do when you’re not working?

One of my favorite things to do, is hang out with my Tribe (there are 5 of us women from church). We like to hang by the pool, go shopping, go out to eat and just chit chat.

What vacation spot do you favor?

I favor the beach most of all. I like to listen to the waves, watch people and read.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

Most people don't know that I have sailed a small sailboat called a Star Fish when I was a teenager and in my early 20's. I learned at a Boys Club. Hahaha. The husband of the family I babysat for in my teens worked at Memphis Boys Town. He went to camp every summer. One weekend, his family came to see him at camp, and I got to tag along. The Star Fish turned over and had to get it right sided by myself. That was fun!

Phyllis Persinger

Chief Executive Officer,
Volunteer Behavioral Health
Care System

In August of 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 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



Persinger



I also lived at Natchez Trace State Park when I first got married for 8 years. I have stories to tell if anyone wants to hear about that experience especially from a Memphis City girl.

Other things colleagues might find interesting to know about me is/are . . .

I like to shop with my daughter, travel (although I haven't done much yet), sit outside on my deck and listen to the birds and watch the hummingbirds; play with my goldendoodle and spend any time, anywhere with my family. I have been married for 32 years and I have two adult children. My son is in Dental school. And my daughter is in Pharmacy school. They both graduate in a little over a year.

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.

How long have you been employed at Volunteer Behavioral Health System and what roles have you held?

I started to work at the Guidance Center in September of 1987, so 34 years ago! My goodness, I've held bunches of roles. I started as Office Manager for the Smyrna office in Rutherford County. Three years later I moved into Office Management for all four locations. In 1997, the organization officially affiliated with Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System. My first two projects were to

move the CMHAs to a centralized Access/Customer Service system (access to services has always been my passion!) and then I moved all CMHAs to one common EHR which was Qualifacts. What a big deal! These two projects became the foundation for Volunteer and made it one powerful agency. In 2002, my title was VP of Special Services. This included running Office Management and the Centralized Access system, and billing and developing commercial contracts. Then I moved to CIO, then CAO, then COO, then President, and now President & CEO! It has been a wonderful journey and it makes my heart so full!

What excites you most about your organization?

All 800 employees plowing ahead as ONE TEAM sharing ONE DREAM to make the quality of life better for all the consumers' lives that we have the privilege of impacting. VBH is such a passionate team. I love the thrill of every day working with staff, hearing the client stories and how we make it better for them. I love this team that NEVER GIVES UP.

If you could give your past self advice, what might that be?

SLOW DOWN, LISTEN MORE. With work, I wish I had fostered the team model much earlier. It is the only way to enjoy any type of success and we all know there is no "I" in TEAM. In my personal life, slow down and enjoy the little moments. We all know so many slipped by but it's never too late though. Enjoy every second of every day! Life is good, be happy.

Advice I would give to others would be don't ever say "I'm just a support staff, I'm just a CM, I'm just a whatever." Hard work and passion will take you places that you never dreamed of going. My dream was to be a teacher. I fulfilled that dream for three years in rural Virginia (God's true country) but through life and life circumstances, I landed at The Guidance Center in Tennessee. It honestly wasn't a part of my plan, but then when I took the first phone call from a distraught mother begging for help as her daughter had been sexually abused, it totally changed everything for me. God definitely has a journey for all of us. My "I'm just an Office Manager" turned into President & CEO.

What book or movie have you recently read/seen that you would recommend?

One of my favorite movies lately is Disney's Encanto. Yes, I have grandkids but this one is great for adults, too. It's magical and I love the representation of the

family. It shows the importance of keeping families together and working toward common goals. And of course, you can't miss Spider Man, No Way Home! It's Amazing!

What is/are your favorite thing(s) to do when you're not working?

Living on the Ball Field!!! I could do that all day every day!

Walking is a close second.

What vacation spot do you favor?

Most definitely the beach. Being in the sand with water and waves nearby is my happy place. The sweetest spot is Anna Maria Island!

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

Not sure about it being a surprise but my true passion is my family - my husband Greg of 42 years (that's a long time) and two beautiful children. Brandi, my daughter, teaches early childhood education and teaching as a profession in Murfreesboro. She is married to Trager and has two beautiful children. Paden is 13 and is my oldest grandchild and Tessa Bell is 10 and my only granddaughter. Nick, my son, is a firefighter and has been part of Air Guard for 16 years. He is currently serving his 4th deployment in Iraq. Not this mom's dream for her baby boy but I am so proud! Nick's wife is Liz who also teaches and they have two very, very rowdy boys, Sam (11) and James (9). I just love them so much. My grandchildren just rock this world!

Other things colleagues might find interesting to know about me is/are . . .

This is a hard one! It might be a surprise to know the scar on my face that I wear so proudly comes from a Wonder Woman act when I was 4 and rode my tricycle down a hill, over a rock wall, and hit a car. Needless to say, I don't ride a bike!

Another interesting thing...this is a sweet moment for me. My youngest grandchild was/is a child of spina bifida. At 24 weeks of pregnancy, my daughter-in-law underwent neonatal surgery at Vanderbilt. This surgery is only performed at three hospitals in the United States. They took him out of the womb, repaired the lesion on his spine, and tucked him back into the womb. Now that is a miracle!

Associate Member Organizations

Vanderbilt
Behavioral Health

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

Affiliate Member Organizations



Member Organization Happenings

Parkwest & Peninsula Hosted Virtual Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Each year, more than 1 million people in the U. S. attempt suicide, leading to approximately 48,000 deaths and over 400,000 emergency room visits due to self-inflicted injuries. In 2014, U.S. suicide deaths reached a record high and have steadily increased each year.



[Parkwest Medical Center](#), [Peninsula](#) and the [Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network](#) helped survivors remember and celebrate those they'd lost to suicide, and offered hope and encouragement through the virtual Survivors of Suicide Loss Day on November 20, 2021.

The featured speaker was Dennis Gillan. He describes himself as an ordinary guy with an extraordinary story of perseverance. After losing both of his brothers to suicide, Gillan has dedicated his time to speak about mental health and suicide prevention. He has presented a TEDx Talk, "Standing Tall in the Face of Mental Health," and continues to share his own inspirational story and message of hope to audiences everywhere. In his outreach Gillan strives to make people comfortable talking about mental health and suicide prevention. To learn more about Gillan visit [DennisGillan.com](#).

Other survivors shared their personal experiences about the loss of their loved ones. Some shared stories of how they processed their anger and their grief, along with stories about their loved ones.

The 2021 event videos can be viewed here: [TreatedWell.com/survivor](#)

About Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

After losing his father to suicide, U.S. Senator Harry Reid introduced a resolution to the United States Senate in 1999 that led to the creation of International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. Also known as Survivor Day, the recognition was designated by the United States Congress as a day when those affected by suicide can come together for healing and support. It was determined that Survivor Day would always fall on the Saturday before American Thanksgiving, as the holidays are often a difficult time for suicide loss survivors.

There is Help in Healing – Peninsula offers support group

A support group called ComPASS — Communicating the Pain as Suicide Survivors — provides a safe place of understanding and education during the journey of loss following the suicide death of a loved one. The forum is open discussion, and is free and open to anyone who wishes to attend. Mark Potts, director of clinical services at Peninsula, facilitates support groups.

Potts notes, "I serve as a resource for questions, and can sometimes validate that it's OK to feel what they're feeling. The most important thing we can tell them is their grief or sadness is nothing to be ashamed of." Potts has witnessed attendees' shared experiences provide strength and hope to someone who is grieving. "My main message to anyone feeling loss or grief is that you are not

alone. Please seek help."

He continues, "We as humans are not solitary creatures. We have a need to connect with others that is just as important to our survival as food and air. When we are grieving our tendency is to isolate, or cut ourselves off from the very thing that can help get us through it." Potts reminds us there is no time limit on grieving. "When it's a traumatic and sudden loss, the grief becomes complicated with questions we'll never have the answers to."

Currently ComPASS meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month from 6 – 7:30 p. m. No registration is required. For information on joining, please visit [PeninsulaBehavioralHealth.org/ComPASS](#).

First-Ever Schools Mental Health Summit Plans to Improve Frontier Health Offerings

Times News | March 24, 2022 | Rick Wagner | https://www.timesnews.net/living/health-care/first-ever-schools-mental-health-summit-plans-to-improve-frontier-health-offerings/article_7a8134e2-aaf4-11ec-b49e-ebb3444161f7.html

More than 60 school system counselors, social workers and



administrators from across Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee gave input to Frontier Health on needed mental health services improvements Wednesday afternoon.

The suggestions, to be compiled along with suggestions from those who could not attend, included quicker access to mental health services and more in-school offerings.

The first-ever Regional School Mental Health Summit, held at the Kingsport City Schools Administrative Support Center, sought input from participants and gave thumbnail information about services offered by Frontier Health.

The purpose of the summit was to connect with fellow community members, gain feedback on mental health service needs and to educate on services provided by Frontier Health, said Tim Perry, senior vice president of children's services for Frontier Health.

Frontier Health President and CEO Kristie Hammonds said representatives of 13 out of 15 school districts in Frontier Health's service area attended, saying the different systems and schools were diverse but also had common needs.

Frontier Health provides limited student, faculty and staff mental health services in Lee, Scott and Wise counties and Norton in Southwest Virginia. It has more offerings for the Northeast Tennessee counties of Carter, Greene, Hawkins, Hancock, Johnson, Unicoi, Sullivan and Washington and the city systems of Bristol, Greeneville, Kingsport, Johnson City and Elizabethton.

"Over the past two years of this pandemic, perhaps no other group has been challenged more with the growing mental health needs of our children than our school systems," Perry said.

"A child's behavioral health problems do not remain outside the walls of the school building but rather these issues drastically affect their education, socialization, physical health and development," Perry said. "It has become even more imperative that we work collaboratively together as we each have valuable roles to address these growing mental health needs of our children. Collectively, we are better equipped to help meet the needs of the children and families in our communities and that is the purpose in having this Regional School Mental Health Summit."

Kaylee Murphy, director of school-based services for Frontier Health — and others who led break-out sessions of mixed groups of attendees, said mental health therapy provided during the school day works well.

As for needs, almost all of the groups said more therapists and behavioral specialists are needed, with some systems having one for 500 students.

Another group said staff and faculty are not getting needed mental health services and that they, like students, have suffered mental health problems because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There are still a lot of needs in our school systems," Murphy said.

The needs listed by the various groups in the breakout sessions will be condensed and sent out to participants in a week or two, she said.

Other issues the groups discussed include suicide and suicide attempts, anxiety among high schools, problems with anger management, social and emotional immaturity, and a lack of basic social skills caused by the lack of in-person schooling during the pandemic.

Tuency rates and less family engagement were other issues brought up by the groups.

"Unless we know what the issues are, we can't address them," Murphy said.

Carey Counseling Center Names Interim Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Directors at Carey Counseling Center, Inc. named Brent Bullock as the Interim Chief Executive Officer on February 15, 2022. Brent has served CAREY in a variety of roles during his past combined 21 years at the organization. Most recently, Brent served as the organization's Chief Operating Officer and Compliance Officer.



Carey Counseling Center, Inc.



Brent Bullock

Murfreesboro Police Department is Making Mental Health Resources a Priority

News Channel 5 Nashville | Posted February 11, 2022; Updated February 14, 2022 | Author/Araceli Crescencio | View the full article, and related articles, at <https://www.newschannel5.com/news/murfreesboro-police-department-making-mental-health-resources-a-priority>

The Murfreesboro Police Department is making mental health a priority.



On Friday, the department announced a new hire, the first mental health co-responder, that will help respond to 911 calls.

"We are always rapidly evolving as law enforcement and learning from past experiences about how to have better and positive interactions and the only way to do that is to continue to progress is our training, field training officer Quinten Peeler said.

After completing training Heather Noulis will be the first mental health co-responder with the Murfreesboro Police Department.

Noulis works full-time with Volunteer Behavioral Health Murfreesboro but will work with MPD's Crisis Intervention Team.

Her expertise is a welcomed asset to the team.

"She has these skills that she can just better put in place for us and just help guide us along on our calls and show us proper routes when we're on those calls for service," Peeler said.

MPD said adding more mental health resources is a demand they heard from the community and one they think will help keep more people safe.

"It's something that we're seeing multiple police departments in Tennessee do and I fully expect in the next couple years it's going to be something that's very common in law enforcement and that's going to be a norm," Peeler said.

Last month, a deadly police shooting in Nashville left many people wondering why de-escalation tactics with a mental health expert are not the standard.

"We've started to look back on law enforcement and say how can we fix these negative encounters that we've had. And the way that police



departments have come up is why don't we put somebody with us that has vastly more training and experience in this that can ride with us and assist us," Peeler said.

Noulis's addition is just one way the department is hoping to improve. More than 60 officers have completed a 40-hour crisis intervention training. A number the department said is only going to go up.

Expansion of CenterPointe Residential Substance Use Treatment Facility

The McNabb Center broke ground on the expansion of its residential substance use treatment facility, CenterPointe, on Tuesday, February 1. This expansion will increase the number of treatment and medical detoxification beds by 40 percent and improve the building's meeting spaces and outdoor amenities. Individuals in need of treatment for substance use disorder can stay for up to 28 days at CenterPointe and receive care from licensed counselors and clinicians.

"There is a significant need for substance use treatment services in our community. We are proud that this expansion will allow for increased access to treatment options and recovery," said Jerry Vagnier, McNabb Center CEO. "The positive impact of this project extends beyond the walls of this facility. By helping treat substance use disorders, we are helping create a healthier community overall."

The CenterPointe expansion project was funded through a campaign by the Helen Ross McNabb Foundation, chaired by Ted Flickinger and Richard Maples. The project is possible because of the support of Knox County, the City of Knoxville, UT Medical Center, Clayton Homes, Thomas and Lindsey Boyd, the Boyd Foundation, Brunton Masonry and numerous private donors.

McNabb Center Begins Leasing Units at Dogwood Springs Summer of 2022

The McNabb Center will begin leasing units at Dogwood Springs this summer. Dogwood Springs is a housing community specifically designed to serve low-income seniors in the Knoxville area who wish to maintain an active and independent lifestyle. This 50-unit apartment complex will open in July 2022 and features affordable living, inviting common areas and a variety of optional on-site services. A ribbon cutting will be planned for June 2022.



Sumner County Sheriff's Office CIT Program



Volunteer Behavioral Health (VBH) is a committed partner to the Sumner County Sheriff's office Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) that was recently recognized as the State's Program of the Year by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). An awards ceremony was held to recognize the Sumner County Sheriff's office along with the Goodlettsville, Gallatin, and Hendersonville police departments for their outstanding CIT programs.

According to Sumner County Sheriff, Sonny Weatherford, "We have learned that mental health clients are patients, not prisoners. Our proud officers have become advocates for these people who are truly hurting."



McNabb Center Responds to Children's Crisis Services Needs Within the Community

The McNabb Center is responding to community needs and, with the help of federal grant funding and community partners, is developing a robust continuum of children's crisis services. In November 2021, the Center opened a Family Walk-in Center where children experiencing a mental health crisis can be assessed and receive intensive treatment with a goal of avoiding psychiatric hospitalization. In addition the McNabb Center looks forward to opening a Children's Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) at East Tennessee Children's Hospital this Spring.

"We want to change the way families experience a crisis and build a system that makes it easier to access services and alleviate barriers," said Mary Katsikas, McNabb Center clinical vice president. "It is important that, in a time of crisis, the family has the resources they need to focus on their child."

The Center was also recently awarded a \$1.1 million grant from the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to create three embedded Crisis Response Teams to help children experiencing a mental health crisis. These Crisis Response Teams will partner with schools, East Tennessee Children's Hospital and detention centers to improve outcomes from a child's mental health crisis.



“There is always room for growth”

Getting to Know Murfreesboro’s Mental Health Co-Responders

The Daily News Journal | February 17, 2022 | Seyna Clark, Special to the Daily News Journal | <https://www.dnj.com/story/news/2022/02/18/murfreesboro-police-departments-mental-health-co-responders/6789903001/>

Heather Noulis is a mental health professional, Quentin Peeler is an officer and instructor on Murfreesboro Police Department’s Crisis Intervention Team.

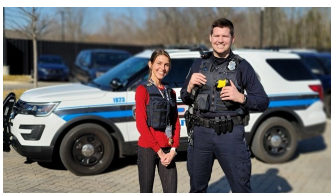
Noulis is petite, levelheaded and caring. Peeler is bold, brave and empathetic.

Noulis has always wanted to be more hands-on with local law enforcement while focusing her community work on mental health consumers. Peeler views himself as a compassionate person who is motivated and dedicated to his service.

Together, this on-duty duo is delivering on-site resources to mental health calls, including evaluations — the result of a partnership between the Murfreesboro Police Department and Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System.

“It’s us really being able to get deeper and understand a person for who they are and be able to help them for who they are,” Noulis said.

In 2021, local law enforcement fielded nearly 2,700 mental health calls in Rutherford County, said Kelsey Taylor, community response and training director at Volunteer Behavior Health Care System. The county’s mobile crisis data is one of the highest in the state, with many of the calls originating in Murfreesboro, Taylor added.



That’s why Noulis is here.

Noulis started her role last week as the police department’s first-ever mental health co-responder, working with Peeler and other officers. The belief is adding a non-police officer to these community

calls will lead to improved outcomes, while allowing officers to focus on other service calls.

“Between the two of us we have a common end goal, and I can help guide her through navigating the actual patrol world between police officers and she could help navigate me through the actual process, evaluations, etc.” Peeler said.

Noulis is a recent graduate from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, where she studied forensic psychology and forensic mental health counseling. Her education gave her a comprehensive understanding of psychological development and psychopathology, personality evaluation, psychotherapy approaches and research methods. This enhanced understanding of mental health concerns has allowed her to be more compassionate when involved with mental health issues, from diagnosing to reducing stigmas.

Peeler’s passion lies in the autistic community. He has completed most of his

volunteer work with the area’s special needs population.

More than 60 officers and dispatchers have completed a 40-hour Crisis Intervention Training course. Other officers are required to undergo specialized mental health training.

Peeler is one of the department’s instructors.

“The better the training that is provided, the better the outcomes,” Peeler said.

Taylor hopes adding Noulis to the field will reduce recidivism rates and decrease unnecessary emergency department visits.

Said Taylor: “I feel that we have come a long way and there is always room for growth, and that is what we are trying to do with this program.”

Chattanooga Police Department Program Assisting in Mental Health Calls

WDEF.COM News 12 | February 24, 2022 | Brian Armstrong | <https://www.wdef.com/chattanooga-police-department-program-assisting-in-mental-health-calls/>

Chattanooga Police Department has launched a new program to provide an additional tool in its belt to help serve the community.

Lt. Tim Tomisek, with the Chattanooga Police Department, says the department responds to 35-45 mental health-related calls a week. C.P.D. has launched a Co-Response Unit (CCRU) to assist with mental health calls.

CCRU pairs a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officer with a Co-Response mental health specialist.

He said this specialty unit allows officers to deescalate the situation and allow trained mental health experts to help treat on scene.

“I think back to my patrol days and if you go out and find someone in a mental health crisis, you have to wait for the crisis response team to respond, you’re out there for two or three hours. This way we have a mental health specialist who can do that right there on the scene to get them into a place that suits whatever that is that they’re going through,” said Lt. Tomisek.

Chattanooga resident and president of Well Being Trust, Dr. Benjamin Miller, said the teamwork aspect helps provide additional services to the city.

“Nationally about 20% of our police are usually either transporting or addressing issues of mental health. To not have a team-based approach just means that folks are gonna languish and work harder to get the help that they need,” said Miller. “They realize that this pair, this team, they’re here for my benefit. They’re here to help and perhaps the next time that person happens to call in, ...if a police officer has to go out now they’re not afraid. They’re not as afraid of the uniform, they see us in a whole new light,” said Lt. Tomisek.

Chattanooga is one of a few departments to implement this program across the country. It has the potential to decrease injuries, involuntary commitment, and psychiatric hospitalizations.

Volunteer Behavioral Health provided a grant to help pay for the program.



Need for Mental Health Services Increases During COVID

The Advocate and Democrat | February 23, 2022 | https://www.advocateanddemocrat.com/news/article_6575c2fe-1988-576f-8bd7-42b4e5b9c767.html

Volunteer Behavioral Health (VBH) recently shared what it's been doing to maintain its workforce with the increasing demand due to COVID-19.



Volunteer is a community mental healthcare provider serving 32 counties in the Upper Cumberland, Middle, and Southeast regions of Tennessee through 21 outpatient centers.

"The last two years have been difficult for all staff, but especially front-line staff," said Phyllis Persinger, CEO of Volunteer. "But they have persevered and continue to be there for our clients. That's something we always want to recognize. Mental health is health, and our staff have been and continue to truly be heroes in healthcare."

Melissa Johnson, Chief HR Officer with VBH, shared that Volunteer has restructured its compensation plan for 24-hour programs, increased LPN hourly rates by 22%, increased rates for licensed Crisis Staff by 25%, implemented shift differentials, offered incentive bonuses for working holidays, and shared Hero/Holiday bonuses for full-time and part-time staff, in addition to other initiatives.

According to a National Council for Mental Wellbeing poll from October, over 83% of member organizations reported increased demand for mental health treatment and over 69% reported increased demand for substance use treatment through the previous three months. In meeting the need, 97% said the biggest barrier has been recruiting employees.

"Adding staff members to focus on recruiting has improved the hiring process to get people in our door faster. The interaction from our pre-screening process gives us a better feel of the candidate and determines if an interview should be scheduled," said Johnson. "We continue to think of ways to improve and be nimble when it comes to hiring."

Many current challenges for the public mental health care system in Tennessee can be directly attributed to COVID-19, but a coinciding pre-COVID workforce shortage has also been a factor.

"In the business of community mental health, the costs of not having sufficient qualified staff with some tenure that clients can build a rapport with, especially in 24-hour programs, can be measured in decreased quality of care and possibly (the lives) of the individuals we serve," said Dawn Carlton, chief financial officer of VBH.

The Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations' 2019 report titled All Hands on Deck highlighted the statewide shortages and lack of adequate compensation. In December the Tennessee Department of Mental Health Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) and TennCare convened the Public Behavioral Health Workforce Workgroup with partner agencies to develop recommendations toward resolving the crisis.

TDMHSAS and TennCare then proposed \$59 million in funding to implement

their strategies around benefits and incentives, costs of services, student loan forgiveness, internship opportunities, diversity and inclusion, and more.

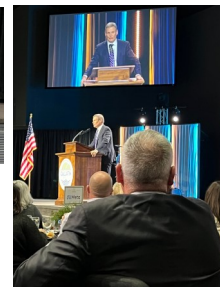
"We want to especially thank TennCare and the Department for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for their efforts to increase the rates," said Persinger. "We know we have a long way to go, but this is definitely a great start with this collaboration and these strategies."

VBH accepts all TennCare plans along with other commercial insurance and is also a participating member in the state's Safety Net program, which provides mental health coverage for both adults and children. To inquire about services or Safety Net eligibility, call 1-877-567-6051. Additionally, Crisis Services are available 24 hours a day to respond to adults experiencing a mental health crisis at 1-800-704-2651. Follow VBH at vbhcs.org and online at www.facebook.com/volunteer-behavioral-health.

'Good Morning Gallatin' Breakfast Event with Tennessee's Governor Bill Lee



Volunteer Behavioral Health representatives attended breakfast with Governor Bill Lee at the Good Morning Gallatin event on January 14th.



L to R: Representative Terry Lynn Weaver, Rep. William Lamberth, Sejal West, Shirley Jennings, Haylee McPheerson, Phyllis Persinger, Danielle Smith, Susan Phillips, Nathan Miller, and Rep. Johnny Garrett



Charter Day

VBHCS celebrates 27th official year in existence.

Volunteer Behavioral Health celebrated their Charter Day on January 12 marking their 27th official year in existence. Some of Volunteer's individual centers date all the way back to the 1960s, but this date marks the merger of Johnson Mental Health Center in Chattanooga with Hiwassee Mental Health Center in Cleveland to form Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System in 1995. In addition to activities for staff, Volunteer celebrated their community partners with appreciation visits to NEWS 2 Nashville, Wilson County 15th Judicial Recovery Court and Sheriff's Office, Mayor Tim Kelly of Chattanooga, The AIM Center, Tennova Behavioral Health, Emily Partin, Director of the Grundy County Schools Family Resource Center and Discover Together, Ascension Saint Thomas Rutherford, Captain Carrie Gensemer and Sergeant Jonathan Pope with Murfreesboro Police Department, Rutherford County Prevention Coalition, and Representative William Lamberth, TN General Assembly District 44.



Newsmaker: Self-Harm Awareness

News 2 WKRN.com Newsmaker | March 10, 2022 | Ethan Illers| <https://www.wkrn.com/what-to-watch/newsmaker/newsmaker-self-harm-awareness-month/>

March was recently recognized as self-harm awareness month. News 2's Neil Orne had a chance to talk with an expert about some warning signs you should watch out for. "They should look out for something that's isolating. They might be wearing long sleeves when it's really hot outside, someone that they are noticing marks on their body....that sort of thing," Beth Walser with Volunteer Behavioral Health said.

Walser says some of the reasons why people self-harm are to process negative feelings and to distract themselves from feelings. A lot of times, those who self-harm feel empty inside and are possibly searching for control in life.

To see the full interview, please visit <https://www.wkrn.com/what-to-watch/newsmaker/newsmaker-self-harm-awareness-month/>.



VBHCS Dayton Office Expansion

Angie Stewart, Administrative Support, is proud of Volunteer Behavioral Health's new purchase at 7196 Rhea County Highway next to their current Dayton location. Along with Director Christopher Sales and the rest of the staff, Volunteer is excited for the new possibilities they'll be able to offer clients once expansion is complete.



Governor Lee Visits McNabb Center



On Thursday, April 28th, the McNabb Center was excited to welcome Tennessee Governor Bill Lee to tour the Center's McMinn County location. During the visit, Governor Lee talked with staff about services the Center offers in the community. It was an opportunity to discuss the importance of mental health care and substance use treatment in rural communities and thank Governor Lee for his continued support. In addition to a full range of mental health care services, the Center also provides substance use treatment, homeless services and school-based services in McMinn County.

From the Office of the CEO
Jerry Vagnier



McNabb Center Leadership Updates

After 35 years of improving lives with the McNabb Center, I am announcing my retirement as the Center's Chief Executive Officer effective August 31, 2022.

I have enjoyed an unimaginable career and watched the Center grow, expand and achieve its mission. Throughout my time with the McNabb Center, I have developed many cherished partnerships and friendships with people and organizations doing great work in the behavioral health field across the state.

I am honored to announce that Mona Blanton-Kitts has been appointed as CEO, effective September 1, 2022. Mona began her career with the McNabb Center in 1986 and has seen success at every level.

I look forward to watching the Center grow under her leadership.



Be well,
Jerry Vagnier
CEO
McNabb Center

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Tennessee First Five Training Institute: Tennessee’s Commitment to Clinical Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Workforce Development

AUTHOR: Alison D. Peak, LCSW, IMH-E, Executive Director, Allied Behavioral Health Solutions

Over the past 12 years, organizations, workgroups, and laypersons throughout Tennessee have worked diligently to infuse concepts of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health into a variety of sectors and continuum of services statewide. According to ZERO to THREE, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health is the developing capacity of the child birth to age 3 to:

- Experience, regulate, and express emotions;
- For close and secure interpersonal relationships; and,
- Explore the environment and learn.

All in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children.

These efforts, their successes, and lessons learned led to the development of the Tennessee First Five Training Institute (TFFTI) in 2019. TFFTI is a Building Strong Brains Innovation Grant funded project provided by Allied Behavioral Health Solutions with strong support from TAMHO and the Association of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee (AIMHiTN). The original developers of TFFTI looked at several evidence-based practices and recognized that no single existing project would meet Tennessee’s needs for workforce development. It was clear that to begin this process of development, a project would have to build relationships with both the clinicians providing services directly to children and families and with the systems that employed and supported those clinicians. The resulting parallel training tracks are designed to strategically hold the experience of the leaders acting as change agents within their organizations and the clinicians beginning to provide IECMH services. The clinical track provides 7 evidence-based practice trainings over the 12-

- Alliance Healthcare Services
- Carey Counseling Center
- Centerstone
- Frontier Health
- McNabb Center
- Quinco Mental Health Center
- Omni/LifeCare
- Allied Behavioral Health Services
- Camelot
- Positive Living Group
- Behavior Services of the Mid-South

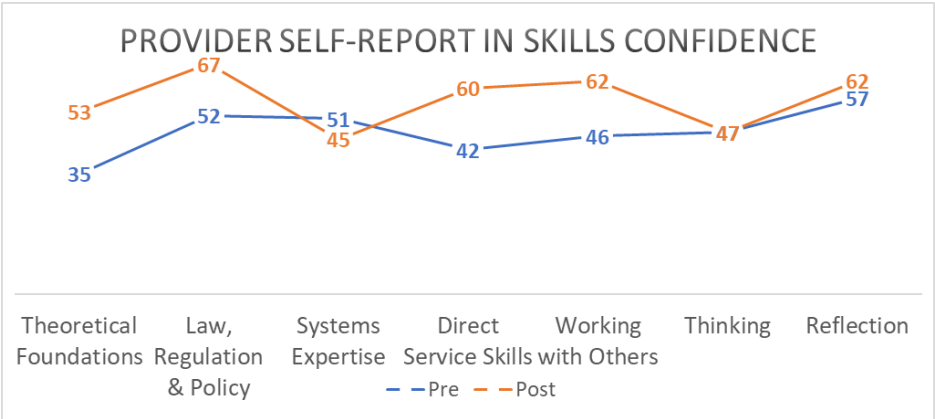
month cohort. These trainings provide broad and extensive knowledge on the foundations of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, assessment and diagnosis of children 0-72 months, dyadic interventions with young children and caregivers, and addressing the role of race and equity in clinical IECMH work. Both training tracks provide supportive reading syllabi and consistent Reflective Consultation.

Reflective Consultation is a specialized form of clinical supervision whose evidence demonstrates increased model fidelity and decreased vicarious trauma for its recipients.

TFFTI’s outcomes have been substantial. For the first two cohorts, all data metrics demonstrate statistically significant change in clinical knowledge, treatment efficacy, and clinician reflective capacity. Demographic data submitted by the clinicians also demonstrates more than 500 young children and families served to date by providers trained through TFFTI. The IECMH-Organizational Readiness for Change Assessment (ORCAs) also demonstrate statistically significant change within participating organizations’ embodiment of IECMH services, concepts, and reflective consultation. The ORCAs also demonstrate increased organizational commitment to ensuring that IECMH providers within their organizations have the necessary systemic

supports to successfully provide services to infants, young children, and families. In a recent focus group, one participant stated: “It was a sense of camaraderie...being able to connect with others across the state really helped.” Another reported “I didn’t take into consideration the benefits of group reflective supervision time for senior leaders because we usually get kind of left out. We’re doing our own thing and don’t have time for reflection.” In no short summary, TFFTI is changing the way that Tennessee provides services to infants, young children, and families.

The Department of Children’s Services has indicated intent to fund a 4th cohort of TFFTI. While these Building Strong Brains innovation funds have been foundational to developing and implementing TFFTI, sustainability and expansion is a high priority for the 4th year of funding. TFFTI will also establish a clear transition plan in 2022-2023 to join the umbrella of IECMH Training and Technical Assistance programs under AIMHiTN, thus aligning itself officially with the efforts to support and expand the larger statewide IECMH workforce development efforts. TFFTI will be announcing applications for Cohort 4 in mid-spring of 2022. For further questions or information please contact Alison D. Peak at apeak@alliedbehavior.com or Angela Webster, AIMHiTN Executive Director at angelaw@aimhitn.org.





May is Children's Mental Health Acceptance Month

One result of the challenges our nation (and the world) has faced during the last two years, is that now, more than ever, we are aware of and concerned about our mental health - and the state of our children's mental health.

Last year, we announced that National Children's Mental Health "Awareness Week" (CMHAW) would become "Acceptance Week" in 2022. The Surgeon General issued an advisory highlighting the urgent need to address our nation's youth mental health crisis further exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The advisory stresses the urgency of our new campaign message - that it's time to move beyond awareness and into acceptance - for multiple reasons.

- To accept that 1 in 5 youth experiences a mental health challenge
- To accept that mental health challenges must be met with understanding and support
- To accept that bias and discrimination toward individuals who experience mental health challenges creates a barrier to seeking treatment - and it must be eliminated
- To accept that our youth are facing serious challenges ahead that need to be addressed
- To accept that the future wellbeing of our country depends on how we support and invest in the next generation

During Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week, May 1st - 7th, we will focus on the importance of this shift from awareness to acceptance. In the coming months, we will announce our plans for the 2022 CMHAW campaign. We hope this year's efforts will inspire new thinking, action and change that help improve the state of mental health for our children and youth and their

U.S. Surgeon General Issues Advisory on Youth Mental Health Crisis Further Exposed by COVID-19 Pandemic

Please visit <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/12/07/us-surgeon-general-issues-advisory-on-youth-mental-health-crisis-further-exposed-by-covid-19-pandemic.html> to view the advisory.

Statewide Happenings

Metro Nashville to Receive \$23M Following National Opioid Settlement

The city has seen fatal and non-fatal overdoses rise for the last three years.

NewsChannel 5 Nashville | March 11, 2022 | Amelia Young | <https://www.newschannel5.com/news/metro-nashville-to-receive-23m-following-national-opioid-settlement>



In the fight against the opioid epidemic, Tennessee will receive more than \$600 million over the next 18 years following a landmark national opioid settlement.

Metro Nashville will be getting \$23 million over the same time frame. The city has seen deadly and non-fatal overdoses rise for the last three years, which has only worsened during the past several months.

After years of litigation and negotiations, Mayor John Cooper hailed the settlement and praised Metro's leadership role. "Through it all, we were fortunate to have a lead role at the table. We won these funds at no cost to the county taxpayer. My administration and Metro departments are committed to using these funds to help save lives," he said.

Initially, funds will focus on life-saving practices, such as improving early diagnosis and detection, supporting linkage to treatment and promoting retention throughout the recovery process.

Of the \$613 million going to the state, \$242 million is being split between counties. Statewide more than 150 local governments joined the settlement, including every

county and all cities with populations of 25,000 or more.

Almost all litigating local governments nationwide are participating in the \$26 billion opioid settlements between three drug distributors: AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, McKesson and opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson.

"Help is on the way," said Attorney General Herbert Slatery. "Our objective — and the reason we have aggressively held these companies accountable from the start- is to abate the crisis in Tennessee by providing direct assistance to those hit the hardest. We are grateful to our AG colleagues and our state and local leaders for their help and cooperation."

Governor Lee Announces Department of Health Leadership Transition

Today, Tennessee Governor Bill Lee announced Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Lisa Piercey's departure from state government to enter the private sector, effective May 31. Lee will name a successor in the coming weeks.

"Lisa led our state's health response through one of the most challenging crises Tennessee has faced, and I commend her faithful service to Tennesseans," said Gov. Lee. "She has played an invaluable role in my cabinet, and I wish her much success as she enters the private sector."

Dr. Piercey joined the Lee Administration in January 2019. As commissioner, she served as a member of the Governor's Unified Command Group during the COVID-19 pandemic, spearheaded efforts to innovate public health operations across the state and bolstered the healthcare workforce pipeline.

Planning and Policy Council

Planning and Policy Council meetings return in 2022. To listen to recordings of past meetings, and to verify the schedule and plans for future meetings, please visit the department website at these links:

[Statewide and Committee meeting schedule](#)

[Regional Committee meeting schedule](#)

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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

TDMHSAS' Second Annual Housing and Homeless Services Virtual Conference was a Huge Success!

Over 550 individuals in attendance!

Thank you to all who attended the Second Annual Housing and Homeless Services Virtual Conference. This event was hosted by the TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) in partnership with the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) on April 22, 2022.

We are so happy to have been able to come together again this year in an effective virtual format that, while ensuring everyone continued to be safe through the pandemic, provided the convenience of attending right where you are! Many attended independently while many also gathered in groups within their agencies to view and learn together.

Thanks to our incredible speakers and panelists who showcased an incredible line-up of topics and took the time to share their knowledge and expertise and sharing their powerful and inspiring stories of lived experience.

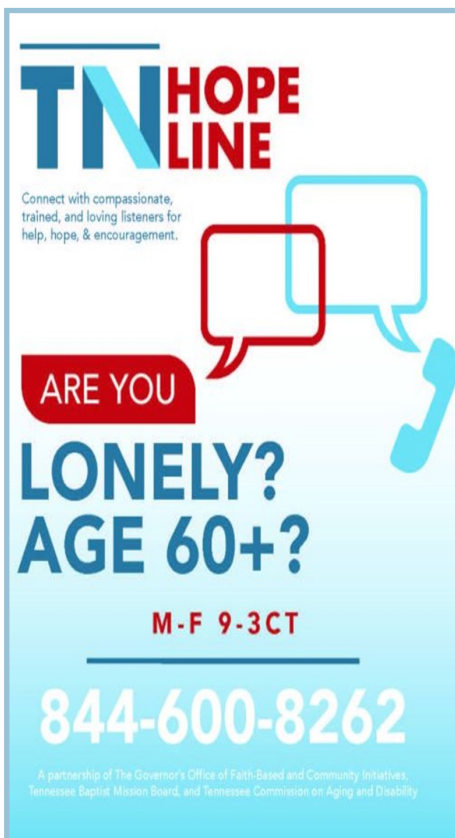
Details will soon be available for post-event access to session videos and related event information.



Let's Lead the Way!
The PATH to Re-Entry, Restoration, and Renewal
 THE 2nd ANNUAL
 HOUSING AND HOMELESS
 SERVICES CONFERENCE
April 22, 2022
 A VIRTUAL EVENT

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TN HOPE LINE
 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

Call or text for emotional support for healthcare workers, first responders, and teachers . . .



COVID-19 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT LINE FOR TENNESSEE

Need to talk to someone about feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, or depression related to work? Calltakers with the COVID-19 Emotional Support Line can help.

Tennesseans working in education, healthcare, or first responder roles can call or text:

888-642-7886

Calltakers are available: 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. (CT), 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. (ET)
 The COVID-19 Emotional Support line is a collaborative project among National Association of Social Workers-TN Chapter and the following groups:

In the event of a mental health emergency . . .

STATEWIDE
CRISIS LINE
HELP IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS
855-CRISIS-1 [TN.gov/CrisisLine](https://www.tn.gov/CrisisLine)
855-274-7471 **Department of
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**

Questions about addiction treatment
and referrals . . .

TN
REDLINE
1.800.889.9789
CALL OR TEXT
 **Department of
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services** **TN TOGETHER**
ENDING THE OPIOID CRISIS

To speak with a TDMHSAS Consumer
Advocate . . .

Need help with mental health or substance use services?
Call the TDMHSAS Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services
HELPLINE
1-800-560-5767

We can help with:

- finding mental health and substance abuse resources in your area
- questions about insurance
- finding housing options
- communicating with mental health and substance abuse providers
- questions about the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program
- filing a complaint

We are available

- Monday through Friday
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CT
- Closed on state holidays

**Department of
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**
OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov | [TN.gov/behavioral-health](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health)



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tennessee association of
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www.tamho.org

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MEMBER

JOIN TODAY!

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.

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TOLL FREE IN TENNESSEE: 800-568-2642



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by behavioral health agencies, and numerous individuals in local communities and throughout the state and nation who have an interest in the advancement of behavioral health in Tennessee.

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