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Maddox: State in Mental Health Care Crisis

Gubernatorial challenger Walt Maddox says Alabama, once a leader in providing mental health care, is now in a mental health care crisis.

Sept. 24, 2018, at 5:39 p.m.

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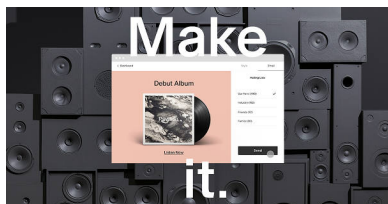
By KIM CHANDLER, Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Standing with a probate judge who described how he can sometimes not find treatment beds for people who need to be committed, gubernatorial challenger Walt Maddox said Monday the state is facing a mental health care crisis and must put more resources into treatment.

The Democratic nominee opposing Republican Gov. Kay Ivey held a news conference outside a closed psychiatric hospital in Montgomery. Maddox said a shortage of mental health services could be addressed by Medicaid expansion and his lottery and gambling proposals to put more money into treatment.

"Alabamians are hurting," Maddox said.

Maddox said the state's failure to expand Medicaid under Ivey and previous Gov. Robert Bentley is "maybe the worst" health care and economic decision the state has made.



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"How we treat our fellow man is, I believe, one of the ways we will be judged. Right now, under the Bentley-Ivey administration, those vulnerable to mental illness have been forgotten about. The decisions regarding their lives are budget-driven, in the hopes [Alabama \(/news/best-states/alabama\)](/news/best-states/alabama) will forget about them."

Ivey issued a statement through her campaign that, "I am committed to ensuring we continue to help Alabamians lead healthier, safer and happier lives."

Ivey said she appointed an experienced and dedicated new mental health commissioner, secured additional funding to create new programs and services, and ensured the Department of Mental Health had a voice on a number of commissions and task forces.

She also said earlier this month that she is not opposed to Medicaid expansion, but questions how the state would pay for it.

Maddox argued the economic investment in health care would pay for itself. He has also suggested striking a compact with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to pay for the state's share of expansion.

The state in 2012 announced the closure of most psychiatric hospitals in an effort to move people to community-based treatment, a step that was supported by patient advocates. However, Maddox contended the state has failed to adequately fund crisis care and other community services.

Maddox said his proposal to start a state lottery would provide \$25 million for "wraparound" mental health services in public schools.

Montgomery County Probate Judge Steven Reed, who is supporting Maddox in the race, said he sometimes cannot process petitions for mental health commitment because there are no treatment beds available.

He described families trying to keep tabs on ill family members because there are no treatment options. He said some "had to lock themselves inside of a bedroom because the loved one may be going through a spell or having some hallucinations."

He said there are no adolescent treatment beds in the county.

"That is a risk to them. That is a risk to our community ... It is a major problem not having enough beds in our community and throughout this state," Reed said.

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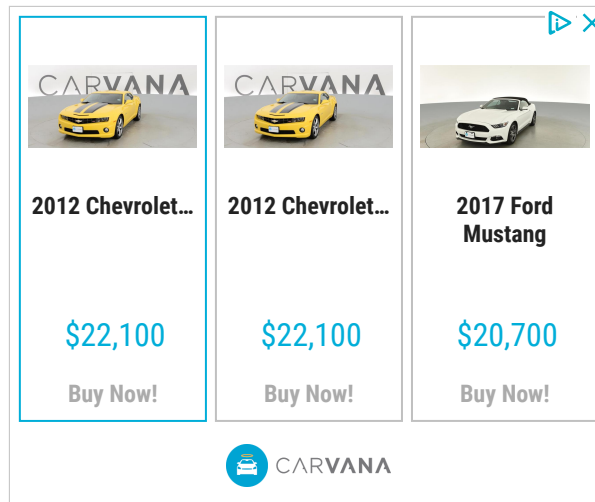
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[Judge Rules DA Candidate Violated Several Bar Rules \(https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/maine/articles/2018-09-25/judge-rules-da-candidate-violated-several-bar-rules?](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/maine/articles/2018-09-25/judge-rules-da-candidate-violated-several-bar-rules?int=undefined-rec)

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Sept. 25, 2018

A judge has ruled a Republican candidate for district attorney in Maine violated several state bar rules, including unlawful conduct stemming from unwanted sexual advances.



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Sept. 25, 2018

Police in Vermont say thieves have been taking hemp from a farm in Colchester, apparently mistaking the plant for marijuana.

[Judge Increases Bond for Alabama Trio Charged With Abuse](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/alabama/articles/2018-09-25/judge-increases-bond-for-alabama-trio-charged-with-abuse?int=undefined-rec)

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Sept. 25, 2018

A judge has increased the bail for three adults arrested after Alabama authorities found a 13-year-old boy naked and chained at home.

[Burlington Voters to Vote on \\$70 Bond for High School](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/vermont/articles/2018-09-25/burlington-voters-to-vote-on-70-bond-for-high-school?int=undefined-rec)

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Sept. 25, 2018

Voters in Vermont's largest city will be asked whether to approve a \$70 million bond to improve the Burlington High School. WCAX-TV reports that the money would go to capital improvements, even possibly a new high school.

Sex Assaults Reported at Wake Forest Frat Under Scrutiny

(<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/north-carolina/articles/2018-09-25/sex-assaults-reported-at-wake-forest-frat-under-scrutiny?int=undefined-rec>)

Sept. 25, 2018

Two reports of a sexual assault have been filed in connection with a fraternity under interim suspension at Wake Forest University.

Child Shoots Man While Playing With Gun Left Near Toys

(<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/kansas/articles/2018-09-25/child-shoots-man-while-playing-with-gun-left-near-toys?int=undefined-rec>)

Sept. 25, 2018

Authorities say a child picked up a handgun that was left next to a pile of toy guns and shot a man at a Wichita home.



Officials: Deaths of Couple Found by Kids Was Murder-Suicide

(<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/pennsylvania/articles/2018-09-25/officials-deaths-of-couple-found-by-kids-was-murder-suicide?int=undefined-rec>)

Sept. 25, 2018

Authorities say a Pennsylvania man strangled his wife before killing himself inside their western Pennsylvania home.

[Child Shoots Man While Playing With Gun Left Near Toys](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/kansas/articles/2018-09-25/child-shoots-wounds-man-with-gun-he-thought-was-a-toy?int=undefined-rec)

[. \(https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/kansas/articles/2018-09-25/child-shoots-wounds-man-with-gun-he-thought-was-a-toy?int=undefined-rec\)](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/kansas/articles/2018-09-25/child-shoots-wounds-man-with-gun-he-thought-was-a-toy?int=undefined-rec)

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