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**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S OF
ALABAMA AWARDED \$2 MILLION GRANT TO ESTABLISH PEDIATRIC MENTAL
HEALTH NETWORK**

Birmingham, Ala. - The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) and Children's of Alabama have been awarded a \$2,009,323 grant from the [Health Resources and Services Administration](#) (HRSA) to establish a pediatric telemedicine health network to better serve children and their families living in rural Alabama.

The five-year grant will create a network of providers called the Alabama Pediatric Telemental Health Network and use evidence-based telehealth methods to train, educate and equip rural primary care providers to support early identification, diagnosis, treatment, and referral of children/adolescents with behavioral health conditions in a timely manner. The grant names the ADMH as the lead agency and Children's as the primary implementation partner.

The network will be modeled after an existing framework established 15 years ago with Dr. Marsha Raulerson, a Brewton, Alabama pediatrician, and Dr. Tom Vaughan, a Child/Adolescent Psychiatrist at Children's.

"The need for mental and behavioral health guidance is a growing issue among children in Alabama and nationwide," said Commissioner Lynn Beshear of the Alabama Department of Mental Health. "This grant enables us to provide preventive care that can offer hope and assistance for families in our state."

In the second year of the grant project, an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant will be incorporated to the network of mental health providers to help pediatricians address social, emotional and behavioral issues specifically in infants and young children under the age of five. A primary goal is to establish and strengthen the knowledge and confidence of a child's primary care provider to manage the mental health component in conjunction with their overall health.

[HRSA](#), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the primary federal agency for improving health care to people who are geographically isolated, economically or medically vulnerable.

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The Alabama Department of Mental Health is the state agency responsible for serving Alabama citizens with mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders. For more information, visit <http://www.mh.alabama.gov/>

Since 1911, [Children's of Alabama](#) has provided specialized medical care for ill and injured children, offering inpatient and outpatient services throughout central Alabama. Ranked among the best pediatric medical centers in the nation by US News & World Report, Children's provided care for youngsters from every county in Alabama, 46 other states and seven foreign countries last year, representing more than 676,000 outpatient visits and more than 15,000 inpatient admissions. With more than 2 million square feet, Children's is the third largest pediatric medical facility in the U.S. For more information, visit childrensal.org.

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