



KAY IVEY
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
RSA UNION BUILDING
100 NORTH UNION STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 301410
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-1410
WWW.MH.ALABAMA.GOV



LYNN T. BESHEAR
COMMISSIONER

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CONTACT: Public Information
334-242-3417
publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov

ATTENDANCE AWARENESS

Help to Promote the Importance of Attendance and Decrease Barriers in August and September



Montgomery Ala.– In August and September, the Alabama Department of Mental Health joins with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) to celebrate and help promote [Attendance Awareness](#) to bring awareness to chronic absenteeism and the impact it has on the children of Alabama and the United States. Chronic absence is when a student misses 10 percent or more school days for any reason. Chronic absence counts all absences – excused, unexcused, and suspensions. In Alabama, more than 6,550,000 days of school were missed by students in 2018.

“We support attendance awareness efforts and [the work of the Alabama State Department of Education](#) to promote attendance at school. We are proud to partner with community mental health authorities, the ALSDE and local schools to bring mental health programs directly to students so that student challenges can be addressed and appropriately supported, helping them be more prepared to learn,” said Commissioner Lynn Beshear, ADMH.

Students with untreated mental issues experience lower educational outcomes than those who receive appropriate treatments and supports¹. They are more likely to experience difficulties in school, including higher rates of suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts, as well as lower grades and scores¹.

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ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH

*Help to Promote the Importance of Attendance and Decrease the Barriers
in August and September*

The Alabama Department of Mental Health has expanded the [School Based Mental Health Services Program](#) since its inception in 2010. The program provides mental health prevention, early intervention and treatment services through a deeper integration of mental health services between mental health centers and public schools to foster mental health care, academic, and developmental gains for children, youth and their families. Sixty school systems and 16 mental health centers participate in the program.

Chronic absences can be significantly reduced when schools, the community, and students' families work together to nurture habits of regular attendance and address hurdles that may prevent students from getting to school. It is a problem that can be solved when [the whole community collaborates](#) with families and schools². To learn more about Attendance Awareness Month and to help promote the month, please visit <https://awareness.attendanceworks.org/>.

About Us: The Alabama Department of Mental Health serves more than 200,000 Alabama citizens with mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities, and substance use disorders. The department strives to Serve, Empower, and offer support to create awareness while promoting the health and well-being of Alabamians. Visit www.mh.alabama.gov for more information.

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1 https://attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Connecting-Students-to-Mental-Health-Services_FINAL.pdf

2 <https://www.attendanceworks.org/>