

THE OUTLOOK

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



To staff at Bryce, Mary Starke Harper and Taylor Hardin, thank you for your dedication and tireless effort during this challenging time. To staff at the Central and Regional offices, thank you for your support and efficiency!

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Click [here](#) to view the Video for the Commissioner's full Message:

- Thank you for your flexibility and enormous effort during these challenging and uncertain times.
- It is imperative to know you play a critical role in stopping the spread of the virus; and our success depends on every person adhering to best practices, including wearing masks, continued practice of physical distancing, and washing hands frequently.
- Keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools to avoid being exposed to the virus.
- Together we can succeed in keeping everyone safe and healthy.



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publicinformation.DMH@mh.alabama.gov | 334-242-3417



COVID-19

THE SUPPORTIVE & COLLABORATIVE WORK OF ADMH FACILITIES

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many health care facilities are taking the necessary precautions to not only ensure patient safety, but also support the needs of our frontline workers. From the onset of the pandemic, essential workers at ADMH facilities in Tuscaloosa worked together constantly and efficiently to maintain a clean and healthy environment.

For example, as a hub of inpatient psychiatric services, Bryce Hospital operates 24 hours a day, therefore the workers had to rethink their practices to ensure patient and employee safety. Maintaining a clean and healthy environment requires a strong attention to detail – now with even greater urgency. The employees at Bryce are continually educating themselves with the latest CDC and ADPH best practices to ensure everyone feels more at ease during these uncertain times.



STRESS AND COVID-19

Outbreaks can be stressful!

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be **overwhelming** and cause **strong emotions** in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community **stronger**.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

○ Fear and worry about **your own health** and the **health of your loved ones**

○ Changes in **sleep** or **eating patterns**

○ Difficulty **sleeping** or **concentrating**

○ Worsening of **chronic health problems**

○ Worsening of **mental health conditions**

○ Increased use of **alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs**

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

DURING THE CHALLENGING TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

Infectious disease outbreaks, like the current coronavirus (COVID-19), can be scary and can affect our mental health. It is important to stay informed and there are also many things we can do to support and manage our wellbeing during such times. The COVID-19 pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health and its providers statewide have maintained mental health, substance use disorder and disability services, whether in-person, online or through special events like drive-throughs, to the individuals we serve. We know how important these services are to individuals and families and help to keep a sense of normalcy in their lives during this time of change.

ADMH hosts a webpage dedicated to COVID-19 resources with links to help manage stress, anxiety, offer online group meetings, and much more. Log on to <https://mh.alabama.gov/covid-19-and-mental-health/> to see all tips, resources and videos.

REDUCE YOUR STRESS:

- Know the **common signs of stress**.
- Talk with **family and friends** by **phone, text, or email**.
- Take breaks from **news stories, including social media**.
- Practice **healthy habits, including exercise**.



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AND ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL LAUNCH SURVEY ON WORKPLACE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

AlabamaWorks! and the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) have partnered with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the University of Alabama, and the Vital Initiative to conduct a statewide survey on workplace health. Vital is a research, implementation, and training initiative working towards improving the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Alabama.

Employers of all sizes and from each industry sector are highly encouraged to respond to the survey as responses are critical for the future of workforce in Alabama. Responses will be accepted from now through August 31, 2020.

[Click here to take the Survey](#)

CRISIS CARE

NEXT STEP IN THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

No one is immune from the impact of untreated behavioral health needs. Each year, there are thousands of preventable tragedies that may be addressed with proper mental health resources such as suicide prevention, overdose treatment, early psychosis intervention, or violence prevention. People in the U.S. with severe mental illnesses die at least 25 years sooner than the general population as they go untreated and undiagnosed. Each year, 25% of individuals meet the criteria for a mental health diagnosis. These are our friends, our family members and ourselves.

Right now, in our communities, jails and hospital emergency departments are often the first entry point for an individual in need. These facilities are not equipped to care for individuals with serious mental illness. Neither have the personnel or the resources. Due to the lack of a crisis care system in Alabama, individuals in a mental health crisis often have encounters with police officers, medical first responders, hospital emergency room staff or end up in correctional facilities, without getting the proper treatment and diagnosis they need.

What is happening in our state and the mental health sector to create change? Several programs have been instituted to create a culture of change and decrease stigma, so individuals get the right care, at the right time, in the right setting. School-based Mental Health Collaborations, new programs to treat First Episode Psychosis, Supported Employment programs, and peer support in various settings offer levels of care that may prevent a mental health crisis from ever occurring.

In addition to these amazing programs, the Alabama Department of Mental Health has begun the journey to a full Behavioral Health Crisis Continuum, that will include the creation of crisis diversion centers, beginning with three across the state in the

next fiscal year. These centers will:

- Reduce the number of hospitalizations and arrests
- Reduce the frequency of admissions to hospitals
- Help individuals in crisis achieve stability
- Achieve sustained recovery and provide linkage to community agencies and organizations, psychiatric and medical services, crisis prevention and intervention services.

The department is currently offering technical assistance to state mental health authorities and recently received Requests for Information for the crisis diversion centers. The Request for Proposal is now available until August 28, and posted at <https://mh.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RFP-Crisis-Diversion-Center.pdf>.

We now have an opportunity, with significant help from Governor Ivey and key legislative investment, to transform the crisis system of care, dramatically lower healthcare costs, reinvest those dollars to better the quality of life, achieve better health outcomes, and improve life for those with acute mental health needs.

SHARE IN THE CONVERSATION ONLINE

GET SOCIAL WITH ADMH



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Follow us on **Twitter**



Subscribe to us on **YouTube**



Follow us on **Instagram**



Find our jobs on **LinkedIn**



View our photos on **Flickr**



A NEW CAMPAIGN TO STRENGTHEN OPIOID PREVENTION EFFORTS

The [Alabama Department of Mental Health](#) (ADMH) recently introduced the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) initiative, a three-year Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funding opportunity. The grant will afford Alabama the opportunity to strengthen and expand its statewide opioid prevention efforts. The initiative offers enhanced opportunities with the Alabama Department of Public Health and activities will include deepening coalition networks and an inspired statewide media campaign – [H.O.P.E.: Hold On, Pain Ends](#).

[The campaign](#) will provide resources and information to prevent opioid misuse and overdose to those in need. In coordination with the Public Health department, the campaign will be able to identify and increase access to substance abuse treatment services in communities where drug addiction is common.

Apply to be a Mental Health Worker

**INTERESTED IN A CAREER THAT
IMPACTS THE LIVES OF OTHERS?**



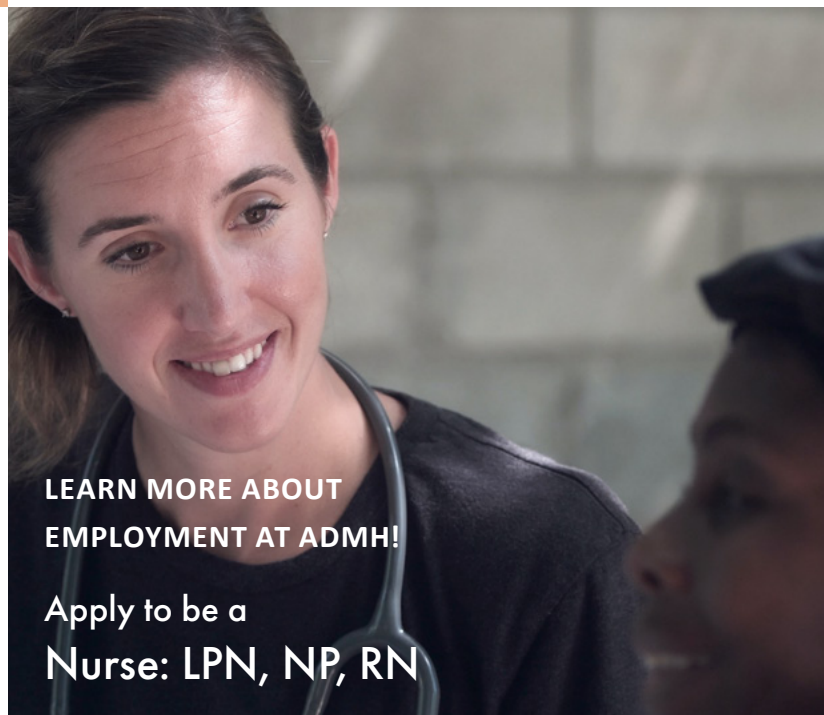
Looking to better the lives of others, while working with dedicated professionals? We want you on our team! The Alabama Department of Mental Health invites you to explore current job announcements that are available in a variety of positions and geographical locations. Currently ADMH employs approximately 1,300 individuals in all levels of direct care services, administration, and support staff throughout our three facilities in Tuscaloosa and the central personnel office in Montgomery.

Individuals seeking a career in mental health will receive assistance in and through the application and placement process. Visit <https://mh.alabama.gov/human-resources-management/> to find a list of current job announcements, information on how to apply, and our application for employment. If you have questions that are not answered in the application instructions feel free to contact the ADMH Human Resources at 334-242-3112. ADMH strives to be on the forefront at the mental healthcare industry, guided by our mission to Serve, Empower, and offer support to individuals with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.



GOVERNOR IVEY'S NEWSLETTER

Learn more about the Office of Governor and its exciting initiatives in the brand-new newsletter! Click [here to read more](#) and Subscribe.



**LEARN MORE ABOUT
EMPLOYMENT AT ADMH!**

Apply to be a
Nurse: LPN, NP, RN



Disability Counts!

2020census.gov • census.alabama.gov

EVERYONE COUNTS IN ALABAMA

Every 10 years, the U.S. census is sent to every household in the country. It contains 10 simple questions and only takes 6 minutes to complete. It's a safe and secure way to obtain \$13 billion in critical funding for our state's future.

Did you know completing the census impacts our community directly? Your response to the census is important, and its more than a population count. Funding to Alabama for critically important programs that affect health care, education, housing assistance, infrastructure development and more is tied in some form to census data. Persons with disabilities or disorders are often undercounted. We want to make sure everyone has a voice. Every Alabamian must be counted!

Having enough funding for programs and services depends on the government having correct information. Without having the accurate information Alabama is at risk for losing proper funding that could be used for essential services and programs for mental health, substance use disorder and developmental disability services. Don't wait, fill out the 2020 Census today and do your part to make Alabama Count! <https://census.alabama.gov/>

Make Mental Health Count.

Take the 2020 Census!

www.nami.org/census



National Alliance on Mental Illness

AUTISM SERVICES

AND THE ALABAMA INTERAGENCY AUTISM COORDINATING COUNCIL

Although the Alabama Department of Mental Health's (ADMH) Autism Services has only been open for enrollment since November 1st, they have been a long time coming. Since 2006, when the state's Autism Task Force was created, Alabama has been working toward better serving the Autism community.

In 2009, with needs identified, the Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC) and State Autism Coordinator positions were created to develop a plan for improvement, implementation, and inclusion. Within the next few years, with the help of the AIACC, advocates, and state leaders, the Behavior Analyst Licensing Board would be established, Regional Autism Networks (RAN) would be funded across the state, and legislation (such as HB284) would be passed to mandate coverage of applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy by most insurance policies. With ABA coverage and the education, training, and technical assistance offered by the RANs now available, many individuals and families impacted by autism are able to find and access life-changing supports and services.

ADMH Autism Services began enrollment for providers and clients Fall 2019 and is excited to continue this process to provide for



Alabamians in need. The process is as simple and mainstreamed as possible for both groups. Client and provider applications can be found on the ADMH website at <https://mh.alabama.gov/autism-services/> or requested at autism.dmh@mh.alabama.gov or by phone at 800-499-1816.

[ADMH Autism Services](#) Client and Provider Applications available online.

To view a current listing of enrolled Medicaid ABA providers in Alabama, click [here](#). You can also access the listing by clicking on "ABA Providers" on [AL Medicaid's website](#). Learn more at <http://www.autism.alabama.gov/>



RETURNING TO THE WORLD

TIPS FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY RETURN TO DAILY LIFE AND WORK

1. Wash your hands. 20 seconds with soap and water or with a hand sanitizer that's greater than 60% alcohol, because the main mode of transmission is touching surfaces that someone has coughed or sneezed on and then touching your face. First line of defense, handwashing!
2. Continue to keep the 6' distance when possible when near co-workers.
3. Forego the handshake. Offer a big smile or a 'elbow shake'!

TIPS FOR RECOVERY FROM STRESS AND ANXIETY RELATED TO COVID-19

[Re-Thinking Crisis](#)

[Self-Care Assessment](#)



NEW STATE RESOURCES AND CERTIFICATE OPPORTUNITIES

INFANT & EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

The ADMH Office of Infant and Early Childhood Special Programs is excited to share a new set of ZERO TO THREE resources celebrating Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health policy successes in several states, including Alabama, and a new certificate program at Troy University.

In 2016, we launched the IECMH Financing Policy Project to support states' advancement of IECMH assessment, diagnosis, and treatment policies that will contribute to the healthy development of young children. [Alabama](#), [New Mexico](#), [South Carolina](#), [Tennessee](#), and [Washington, DC](#) are just some of the project participants that have designed and successfully moved IECMH policy. Explore their policy stories and lessons learned [here](#).

Also, a new IECMH Counseling Graduate Certificate at Troy University launches in July 2020. This project was funded by PDG B5 and will begin accepting applications now. Those interested can access information about the program and submit an inquiry [here](#).

Course Description: Throughout the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Counseling Certificate at TROY, you will benefit from coursework designed by the University's knowledgeable faculty and licensed mental health professionals. The faculty in the Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation and Interpreter Training not only have special skill sets that are invaluable to teaching in this area, but the department is also partnered with "First 5 Alabama" and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education to bring you the best curriculum.



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



Protect your health.

ALABAMA INSTITUTE OF RECOVERY CANCELLED

The Alabama Institute of Recovery had been postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19. At the time we were hoping that conditions in Alabama would improve enough to allow us to safely gather at the end of the summer.

Considering the uncertainty of our current situation, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Alabama Institute of Recovery. Attendance at AIR is usually around 800 people, and we believe that canceling is our safest, best option in the current atmosphere. We want to decrease the risk of transmitting the virus at such a large gathering.

We regret that this decision is necessary, and we are look forward to resuming with AIR next spring. We are processing refunds and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please contact [Michael B. Autrey](#), Director, Office of Peer Programs for more information.



ADMH STAFF SHOWCASE:

BRITTNEY DABNEY

Brittney Dabney is the new Public Information Specialist in the Office of Public Information. She comes to ADMH from Tuskegee University, where she served as Communications and Marketing Specialist in the Office of Communications, Public Relations and Marketing.

Dabney brings a decade of experience in strategic communications, digital media engagement and advancing marketing and public relations strategies. Prior to her role at Tuskegee University, she worked at WVAS 90.7 FM, affiliated with National Public Radio as a Correspondent Reporter, covering legislative, state and local news. During her tenure with WVAS, she received the Associated Press award for Medium Market: Best Reporter and Medium Market: Best Lifestyle Feature.

She serves in several local, regional and national organizations including Public Relations Council of Alabama, Montgomery Junior League, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc, Beta Nu Omega Chapter.

She holds a bachelor's degree in communications from Alabama A&M University and a master's degree in integrated marketing communications from West Virginia University.

In her spare time, she can be found reading the latest Southern Living Magazine issue, browsing Instagram and home décor blogs. She is an interior design enthusiast. During the holidays she enjoys creating "tablescapes" for family holiday dinners, creating the perfect holiday space for a home.

Dabney is married to Det. Raynard Dabney, and together they have one daughter, Bailey Rae and a Jack Russell Terrier, named Sphinx – who looks exactly like 1995 children's television show character, Wishbone.

Bridging Divides:
Respect &
Working Together



BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

RESPECT & WORKING TOGETHER

The State of Alabama Employee Assistance Program recently offered the presentation: [Bridging the Divide: Respect & Working Together](#). This presentation offers information to all staff on how to respectfully understand each other and work efficiently and with a positive attitude, together!

[VIRTUAL] LEARNING AND LOTS OF FUN

AT THE ARC OF MADISON COUNTY

Since the global shut down due to COVID-19 pandemic, much of the normal face-to-face interaction has now been converted into virtual interactions. Adapting to a new norm has been hard on everyone. We are now more limited to our homes, and some of us isolated from our social circles. Now more than ever, it is important that we all stay mentally healthy, and the Arc of Madison County has come up with creative ways to stay engaged with its clients and community.

Every week the Arc of Madison provides engaging virtual support services by offering cooking classes, fields trips, art making and music classes. Arc Technology Liaison, Lei Jackson, works to create procedures and training modules for the staff that allows them to become better acquainted with new devices and software. With the new norm of virtual care, Jackson has been able to push technological advancement to the forefront of convenience.

“We spent the majority of April and May brainstorming what “virtual support” meant to The Arc. After figuring out the logistics, training staff, securing equipment and software, we felt confident enough to begin on a very small scale at the end of May,” Jackson explained. “The idea to modernize the technology has helped everyone’s job become a little easier.”

Clients are offered a wide spectrum of choices and they can pick the classes that fit their preferences. Jackson says clients are excited to see their friends and caregivers are enthusiastic to have additional support at home.

“Isolation is a real worry with the demographics that we serve, so being able to reach out and see a smile across a zoom class has been helpful in making our families and clients feel connected to their world,” said Jackson.

“I think that people are coming to accept that stay-at-home measures may last longer than they originally planned – but the hourly interactions we offer gives those involved something different to add to their daily calendar,” she continued.

In her role Jackson says it’s fun and fulfilling, as her objectives change each day, however, from this vantage point, she says she’s able to see that her job is vital in keeping The Arc operating smoothly.

For the month of July nearly 400 individuals participated in the virtual services. Jackson says, the participation numbers have been encouraging and she hopes to continue the trajectory upwards.

For more information on how you can join in the virtual fun, reach out to Lei Jackson at ljackson@hsvarc.org.

PREVENTION + DESIGN

The prevention team at CED Mental Health Center held a billboard contest for students. The winning design, created by a middle school student at Crossville Middle School, can be seen on Highway 68 between Sand Rock and Collinsville. Congratulations go out to Velvie Smith!



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

HEROES IN OUR FACILITIES

ADMH staff at the facilities was honored by the State Department of Personnel for their work during the pandemic. We thank those mentioned and all staff for their dedication and tireless effort during this challenging time. Thank you!



Dr. Mark Woods is the Medical Director at the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH). Dr. Woods was instrumental from the beginning in developing and implementing processes within ADMH hospitals to minimize the possibility of widespread exposure of COVID-19. Dr. Woods continuously consults with the Infectious Control Specialist in Tuscaloosa and with Public Health to ensure all possible precautions are followed. In addition, he works tirelessly to skillfully manage ADMH's supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as well as overseeing the treatment of COVID-19 positive patients housed in the newly established quarantine unit. Dr. Woods' exemplary service during this time remains the steady and trustworthy source of guidance for ADMH senior staff and thus for the ADMH system of care - both in ADMH hospitals and for staff working with our community providers. Thank you Dr. Woods for your dedicated service to ADMH, as well as, the patients within ADMH's care!



Marguerite Walker is a RN Supervisor at Mary Starke Harper Geriatric Psychiatry Center for ADMH. Ms. Walker is known as being a team player and having a strong commitment to patient care even if it means a long work day. Ms. Walker steps in and works overtime and will adjust her schedule to ensure adequate nursing coverage when needed. Ms. Walker volunteered to work the COVID Unit, tested all the patients without any hesitation, ensured the unit was properly set up for PPE usage, and took the initiative to clean and organize the unit without being asked and without complaint. She is an asset to not only the Mary Starke Harper Geriatric Psychiatry Center but also to ADMH. Thank you, Ms. Walker!



ADMH's Harper Heroes



The Harper Heroes are employees at the Mary Starke Harper State Mental Facility that provides mental health services for individuals in the State that have a severe mental illness and are 65 and over. ADMH opened an alternative care site away from the facility to assist ADMH in providing care to COVID-19 patients. The Harper Heroes work in direct care with COVID-19 patients, caring for these patients by providing assistance needed to care for them and going above and beyond in their care of these patients. The Harper Heroes are Mental Health Workers I and II and include: Joyce Norwood, Sarah Hurst, Vera Milton, Jackie Humphries, Raymond Hendrix, Diane Patton, Earlie Jones, Willie Jackson, Mary Anderson, Gabriel Watson, Cynthia Pruitt, Alexis Small, Shandra Zanders, Chiquita McCoy, Shanna Porter, Rose Thompson, Kimberly Tubbs, Aleah Smith, Debra Richardson, Briana Finch, Diykhembe Bishop, Janie Burns, Candace Cochran, Gayle Duncan, Brittany Mullenix, Latija Cochran, and Megan Moore. Thank you to the Harper Heroes for their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic!



NAMIWalks Alabama is going to be a little different this year. In the interest of the health of our participants, and keeping in mind the restrictions on large groups, we had to take a step back and evaluate what would be best for our 2020 NAMIWalks Alabama.

We count on NAMIWalks Alabama to provide funding for our programs and advocacy, which is needed more than ever. Therefore, we have made the decision to convert our Walk to a virtual event this year, and we are pleased to announce a walk for our times, “NAMIWalks Your Way: A National Day of Hope.” A Virtual Walk.

With World Mental Health Day taking place on **October 10th**, many of the NAMI Walks across the country are uniting and are moving their virtual Walk dates to coincide with World Mental Health Day. That includes our **NAMWalks Alabama**, which had previously been scheduled for September 26th and is **now scheduled to take place on October 10th**.

NEXT STEPS

- 1. Register** – if you have already registered for our 2020 walk, then you are registered for NAMIWalks Your Way: A National Day of Hope on October 10. If you have not registered, click here www.namiwalks.org/alabama
- 2. Self-Donate** – In times of uncertainty and flux, mental health services are needed more than ever. The best way to show your support is to make a self-donation on your fundraising page. People who self-donate raise 8 times more than those who don't!
- 3. Decide What You Will Do** – Will you track steps? Will you hula-hoop? Will you walk around the block with friends (socially-distanced)? Will you sip and paint with your friends on Zoom? The only limit of NAMIWalks Your Way is the reach of your imagination and the breadth of your compassion.



Serve • Empower • Support