

THE OUTLOOK

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Thank you to our State Employees and all our staff at ADMH! The week of September 28 - October 2 celebrated all state employees. At ADMH, we value and appreciate the dedication of our staff, especially during this challenging time of COVID-19. Governor Ivey recognized employees with a proclamation, thanking all staff for the “highest level of ethics, performance, customer service, and efficiency.”

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Piper Beshear', is written in a cursive style.



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Want to be included in the next issue? Send us your stories, achievements, initiatives, events...etc!

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Public Relations Toolkit

Resources for Our Community Partners

Updated June 2020

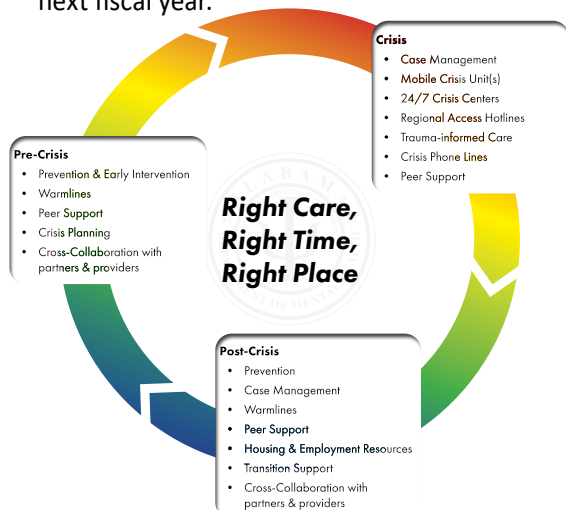
DID YOU KNOW?

The ADMH Office of Public Information created a Public Relations Toolkit to assist partners and providers in promoting their organization and services? Check it out at <https://mh.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PR-Toolkit-2020.pdf>. For information or questions, please call ADMH Office of Public Information at 334-242-3417 or email publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov.

CRISIS CARE IN ALABAMA

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Alabama Department of Mental Health has begun the journey to a full Behavioral Health Crisis Continuum, which 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 has now received Request for Proposals from local mental health authorities in the state. A review of the proposals and award will be made in October.

We thank Governor Ivey and the legislature for the life-saving investment that will broaden the reach of mental health care in our state. Stay up to date with the progress of this work by visiting <https://mh.alabama.gov/initiatives/>.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CRISIS CARE: TESTIMONIAL FROM WELLSTONE-CULLMAN

CHRIS VAN DYKE, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, WELLSTONE

"The probate judge in Cullman county called late one afternoon. It was closing time at the courthouse and there was a woman there who seemed to be in distress but would not speak and would not leave. The new Wellstone Mobile Crisis staff drove over immediately to assist. We found her in the lobby, unable to answer questions with more than a couple of words, very anxious, and accompanied by three deputies. We spent some time building trust and planned to take her home, that is until, when we learned that she was homeless and had been out in the extreme heat for an unknown amount of time.

We helped to place her in a hotel for the night. She slept 17 hours. Upon waking, she was better able to communicate. We learned that she is living with a developmental disability and mental illness. She had been physically abused and was completely estranged from her family. She had come to the courthouse for a hearing on a misdemeanor charge but did not know what to do once she got there.

That day at the courthouse, she could have been arrested or admitted to a hospital. But instead we placed her in a shelter, started case management and outpatient mental health services. She is now in process of finding an apartment with the help of her case manager, resolving her legal issue and continuing the journey of recovery."

Alabama Family Central



THE ONE STOP CONNECTION TO
RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

Governor Kay Ivey recently announced the creation of **Alabama Family Central** a comprehensive, easy-to-use web and mobile destination that offers parents and families, guardians, teachers and caregivers a one-stop connection to programs and services in Alabama. Information on childcare, education, family services and health services can all be found [here](#). Mental healthcare information is included in this site, with links to relevant programs.

The site will highlight resources that are relevant and timely to the needs of children. While many children are still attending school remotely, Alabama Family Central is currently highlighting A+ Education Partnership's new COVID-19 Parent Resources [site](#). The website offers organized, easy-to-use resources to assist parents and caregivers as they help their children learn from home. From online learning basics to help for every grade and subject, these resources are meant to support and supplement the information school districts are providing to families.

For questions or comments from public, please contactalfamilycentral@apcteam.org at Alabama Family Partnership or (334) 271-0304.

ADMH LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE JOB APPLICATION

The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) has launched a **new electronic job application process**. The new electronic application is easier to access, complete, and submit. It also allows the applicant to update and resubmit an application once submitted, resolving previous obstacles identified in the recruitment process.

ADMH Director of Human Resources, Lynn Hubbard said, "This new process promises great things for both job seekers and the Alabama Department of Mental Health. We are so pleased to implement this additional step in our strategy for workforce development, an essential pillar in providing a gateway to care for all those served by the department."

The job application process also provides efficiency and time-saving features to expedite the processing of applications once they are received. Automatic routing of applications to internal programs, storing of applicant information, applicant notifications, and data reporting processes will free up ADMH Human Resources staff to focus on the critical steps of interview and selection.

Cindy Schrum, ADMH Information Technology Manager, said, "During the past few months, our ADMH workgroup have worked like a team from the movie, *Avengers*, to continue ADMH's Digital Transformation Journey. Our journey began with a partnership

between our Electronic Health Record and an Enterprise Document Management System called Laserfiche. Now we are using Laserfiche to move a step closer in our journey with the introduction of an Electronic Application Process Workflow.

The workgroup led by the Bureau of Information Technology, also included integral input from Human Resources Management and Public Information. Schrum continued, "This workflow is modeled after our current business model but automated with many timesavers for both the applicant and Human Resources staff. Now this is not the end of our journey, but rather only the beginning. Like Captain American waking after being trapped in ice for 70 years, ADMH is firmly on its way to a digital transformation."

Please view the new application on the **[ADMH Human Resources Management page](#)**.



SEPTEMBER 13-19, 2020

ADMH and providers were proud to celebrate Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, annual celebration to recognize the life-changing contributions of the direct support professional (DSP) workforce who support people with disabilities and older adults. These individuals are some of the most critical aspects of disability services, as they help more Alabamians to remain safe, healthy, and independent in their homes.

"Direct Support Professionals, those who are on the front lines providing the most personal supports and care to more than 6,000 Alabamians, are critical to our service delivery system. Through their work, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are assisted to lead a self-directed life and contribute to the community," said Terry Pezent, Associate Commissioner of Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Department of Mental Health.

PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

The Alabama Department of Mental Health is in the process of transforming the delivery of Medicaid Waiver programs to engage and empower all individuals to build a plan and vision for their own lives within the communities where they live. This change focuses on a person-centered approach which examines existing strengths and abilities each individual possesses, as well as the strengths of their communities and natural supports, to identify the combination of supports and services that will assist in achieving their life goals.

For existing ID/LAH waiver programs the changes began on October 1, 2020. For the new Community Waiver Program, beginning January 1, 2021, the changes will start with the program.

Individuals will have a primary voice to identify and celebrate their strengths and abilities, and those of their natural supports and communities, while exploring what is possible or needed to achieve their life goals. Families will see that person-centered, strengths-based planning, leads to person-centered, strength-based support for their loved ones.

Support Coordinators will assist individuals to develop their own plan to meet their goals and vision for their best life. A **Conversation Guide** will help to begin the process. Direct service providers will collaborate on putting the person-centered plan into action and assist in delivering opportunities for individuals to achieve their life goals. Communities will be engaged and will see and benefit from the active involvement of individuals, families, and providers that advance the collective good.



**NAMIWALKS YOUR WAY ALABAMA:
A NATIONAL DAY OF HOPE –
OCTOBER 10TH**

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**.

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.

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.



ADMH STAFF SHOWCASE:

BRADLEY MAX

I am originally from Milwaukee, WI where I graduated from Marquette University High School (a Jesuit, all-boys, college prep school!). During this time, I was active in sports including wrestling and track and field as a pole vaulter. I also participated in Junior Statesmen of America and was elected as a junior congressman. By all accounts, I was an overachiever!

I continued my education at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, where I majored in Political Science with a minor in Spanish. While I loved this field and subject, throughout my undergraduate career I worked in Residence Life, where I found my real passion. Following graduation, this work brought me to my next adventure in Rockford, Illinois where I served as a Residence Hall Director for a complex of four buildings. It was this position that inspired me to return to school for my master's degree following the tragic event of one of my residents completing suicide within the Residence Hall. To pursue the next step in my education and life, I returned to Milwaukee to attend the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee where I obtained my Master of Science in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in Community-based Mental Health. At this point, I jumped headfirst into mental health work, taking a position with the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center working with youth ages 12 to 24 dealing with a variety of issues. After leaving UW Milwaukee, I moved to Chicago, IL to work with the geri-psych population through Adapt of Illinois. This specific adventure changed my life beyond the wonderful professional experience as it led me to my husband. We eventually decided to move to Alabama in 2015 to be closer to his family. Despite what many may believe, Alabama and Wisconsin are **a lot** alike! So far, I have enjoyed my time in Alabama, and look forward to many more years!

I enjoy cooking, video games (admittedly I am a bit of a geek!), and spending time with my dogs and cat. All of my pets are named after other animals: a dog named Robin, another dog named Foxy, and a cat named Rabbit. We recently purchased our first home, so a lot of my time is spent in the yard gardening right now. I

love colored glass and am slowly building a depression glass collection. This supports my love of flea markets, antique shops, and open stall vendor markets!

With regard to my career, working to enact positive change has always been one of my passions. After graduate school, I moved to Chicago, IL where I worked with Adapt of Illinois. Adapt is a state contract agency that works to facilitate discharges from the state hospital system in Illinois to less restrictive settings where we offered intensive psychosocial rehab services with the goal of continuing the consumer's transition through the continuum of care. In 2015, my husband and I choose to move to Alabama. While I searched for the right fit of position for me, I worked in Substance Abuse services in a correctional setting at Alabama Therapeutic Educational Facility. I later obtained a position with Chilton-Shelby Mental Health Center (now Central Alabama Wellness). I started as Day Treatment Coordinator, and advanced to Residential Division Director. I was also CAW's nonviolent crisis intervention trainer (SAMA) and maintain certification as a Mental Health First Aid Instructor.

I am entering ADMH as the MI Housing Coordinator. Housing is a vital need in the community. Safe, affordable, and stable housing impacts all parts of an individual's life. Without this basic need met, it becomes challenging, if not impossible, for a person to focus their resources on recovery. Further, lack of housing acts as a barrier for individuals transitioning through the continuum of care who may not be able to develop a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment in the community without viable options for living arrangements. Housing touches most every facet of an individual's life and for consumers demonstrating this need will become an integral part of treatment and recovery. This work will support the efforts of all other Adult MI Community Programs to help ensure this need is met and that recovery is fully realized for the consumers served.

I choose to work in mental health because I have always believed in the importance of making a difference in the community. A lesson learned from high school has always stuck with me. It is one of the six key values of the Jesuit tradition: Be a man for others. This value embodies a spirit of giving and providing service to those in need and standing with the poor and marginalized. In this spirit, I find this work to be meaningful, rewarding, and challenging. Most importantly, I believe that through these efforts real change is possible that can make the community better.

PROVIDER SHOWCASE:

ALTAPOINTE LAUNCHES FIRST EPISODE PSYCHOSIS PROGRAM

Psychosis is the onset of a serious mental illness and includes symptoms such as seeing and hearing things that others do not, strange or bizarre beliefs, or disorganized thinking. Typical diagnoses include schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, or bipolar with psychotic features. Yet many people with a serious mental illness do not get the proper diagnosis or treatment. However, early intervention can help people with psychosis live healthy, productive lives and manage their symptoms effectively.

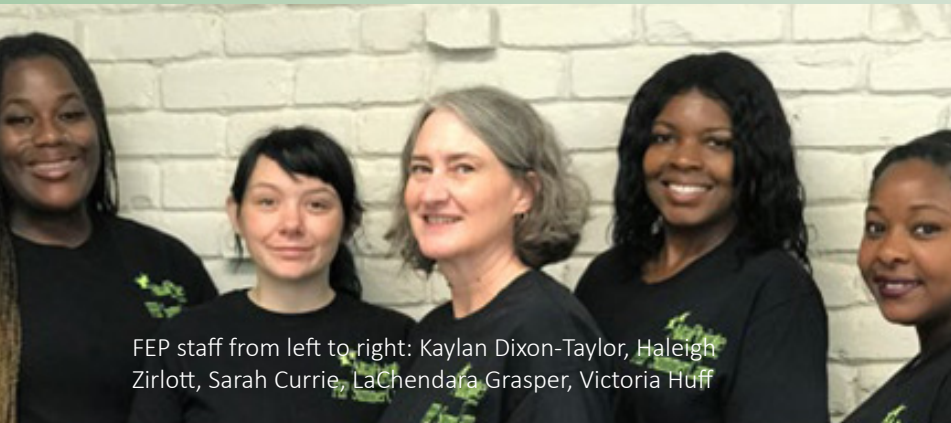
AltaPointe's new treatment program, First Episode Psychosis, provides treatment to patients and is seeing much success. There are only three FEP programs in Alabama: one in Jefferson County, one in Huntsville and the one at AltaPointe Health. AltaPointe received program certification in February 2020. Staff members work with young people between the ages of 15 and 25 who are experiencing their first psychotic episodes. "The great thing about the program is that we can wrap them with services since it is a team approach. We have an intensive care coordinator, an employment/ education specialist, a youth peer, family peer support, a nurse and myself as the therapist/coordinator," said Sarah Currie, LICSW, First Episode

Psychosis coordinator. The program is very tailored to young people so that the staff can be responsive to their treatment needs. Haleigh Zirlott, FEP youth peer specialist, says the program is an invaluable resource for teens and young adults dealing with the pressure of serious mental illnesses.

"Growing up, I struggled with a spectrum of mental disorders. I was unaware of the impact it was going to have in my adult life. With lack of psychoeducation and little support, I felt stranded, defeated and tired," Zirlott said. "Throughout my experiences with mental illness, I've learned the key factors to a better quality of life. Being a youth peer specialist allows me to be the person I needed during my recovery."

LaChendara Grasper, parent peer support specialist, brings personal experiences and learned knowledge to families participating in the program. "A majority of the circumstances they are learning to cope with, I can understand. A mental illness diagnosis can be frightening for the young person and their family. My role allows me to relay resources, available options, and support towards mental health stability."

For more information on the First Episode Psychosis Program, call (251) 602-6468.



FEP staff from left to right: Kaylan Dixon-Taylor, Haleigh Zirlott, Sarah Currie, LaChendara Grasper, Victoria Huff

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

#BETTHE1TO RAISE THE CONVERSATION

All of us can help prevent suicide. Every year, [the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#), other mental health organizations and individuals across the nation raise awareness of suicide prevention during September. While the month is now over, this is still something we can do every day!

[#BeThe1To](#) is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's message and helps spread the word about actions we can all take to prevent suicide.

**SEPTEMBER IS
SUICIDE PREVENTION
AWARENESS MONTH**

**#BeThe1To
Help Stop Suicide
Before It Happens**



ALtogether

CARING. SHARING. GIVING.

Alabama State Employee Combined Charitable Campaign

State Combined Campaign Kicks off Now!

State employees are an integral part of the **State Combined Campaign (SCC)** to help to secure much needed funding for children and adults in need in our state. The SCC is an annual opportunity to donate to your favorite charity – and do so through the ease of payroll deduction. You can give a small monthly gift that will result in a large annual donation. It's a gift you will never miss, that someone else will never forget. Please give!

Please view a Message from Governor Ivey



You can also view information online:

- Searchable charity guide http://www.statecombinedcampaign.org/charities/?wpbdp_view
- Fillable or printable Pledge card <http://www.statecombinedcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-Fillable-Pledge-Form.pdf>
- Instructions on how to fill out Pledge card <http://www.statecombinedcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/How-to-fill-out-your-pledge-form.jpg>
- 2020 ALtogether video: http://www.statecombinedcampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/SCC-video-small.mp4?_=1



NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH – SEPTEMBER 2020

INDIVIDUALS AND PROVIDERS SHOWCASE THAT
RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

September was **National Recovery Month** and this long-standing, national observance promotes the societal benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery for substance use and mental disorders, as well as promoting that recovery is possible. This year's theme "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connection*" spread the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services and community providers celebrated, **with a dedicated webpage** packed with a calendar of virtual events, art and poetry created by individuals in recovery, success stories, anti-stigma information and community provider videos. Check out all the videos and art, showcased on our site, until October 31.

DATES TO REMEMBER

MENTAL HEALTH RELATED EVENTS OF INTEREST

10/10	Wellstone MHC - Drive Thru Health Fair Medal Honors Park
10/14	Mountain Lakes- Opioid message Mask Giveaway Douglass Town Hall
10/18	<u>Alabama EI and Preschool Conference</u> Virtual, October 18-21
10/19	South Central MH - Covington County Fair October 19-31
10/24	Wellstone MHC – National Drug Take Back
10/22	Red Ribbon Week October 22-31
10/24	Drive Thru - Autism Resource Fair Regions Field, Birmingham
10/31	Mountain Lakes - “Don’t Fall for Opioids” Event Arab Warehouse Grocery
10/31	Mountain Lakes - “Say BOO to Opioids” Walk Scottsboro Square

MASK ON, ALABAMA.

MANDATED IN THE



STATE OF ALABAMA

Serve • Empower • Support