

# THE OUTLOOK

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



Swearing-in for Commissioner Boswell. Pictured left to right: Commissioner Kimberly Boswell, her husband Cary Boswell, and Governor Kay Ivey. Photo source: [Governor Ivey Flickr](#)

## WELCOME, COMMISSIONER KIMBERLY BOSWELL!

Governor Kay Ivey appointed Kimberly G. Boswell as Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health on December 16, 2020, stating, *“She (Kimberly) has spent the entirety of her professional career devoted to helping struggling individuals and I appreciate her willingness to serve in this new capacity. Her background as a mental health provider as well as administrator makes her uniquely qualified.”*

The Commissioner’s goals include furthering an accessible, interconnected, effective and just system of care for individuals served by the Department of Mental Health. Commissioner Boswell has more than 36 years of experience working with individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities. She previously served as Chief of Staff, Associate Commissioner for Administration and Director of Human Resources for the Department. Over the course of her career, Commissioner Boswell worked as a planner to improve human service delivery systems, a program evaluator, a School to Work transition coordinator, and also served as the state office administrator for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

*“My social work education has served me well in understanding human and organizational interactions and how they work together to serve people. I am excited about the future of mental health and the opportunity to work with our dedicated employees and community partners to **serve, empower and support** the individuals we serve,”* said Boswell.

Since November 2019, Commissioner Boswell has served as a member of the Milbank Memorial Fund Reforming States Group. She is currently a member of the National Academy for State Health Policy and the Long Term and Chronic Care Committee. Commissioner Boswell serves on the Friendship Mission Board - a long-term shelter for men, women and children who are homeless in the River Region, and Mescal’s Children Center for Hope, which is a Christian ministry serving children in Kenya.

Commissioner Boswell earned her Master of Social Work from the Florida State University College of Social Work in 1984, with a specialization in planning and program evaluation. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree from The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

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

[publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov) | 334-242-3417

*“We are grateful for another opportunity to provide Alabama citizens with links to essential supports, during this challenging time of the pandemic.”*

Dr. Ileeia Cobb, Director  
Office of Policy and Planning, ADMH



ALABAMA | P | A | R | TOGETHER

# COVID-19 CRISIS INFORMATION LINE

## AVAILABLE NOW:

# 1-888-442-1793

The Alabama Department of Mental Health and Alabama Emergency Management Agency stand together, more prepared to assist citizens in the state with additional resources related to COVID-19 mental health needs, with the awarding of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) AL APART TOGETHER grant for FY21.

**The state now offers crisis resources, help, and information from regional providers, through one easy to access statewide Information Line, 1-888-442-1793.** Any individual, including but not limited to, children, older adults, individuals with disabilities, healthcare professionals, first responders, and administrators working on the frontlines who are experiencing stress or anxiety related to COVID-19, may call **the Information Line at 1-888-442-1793.** The Information Line will connect individuals with appropriate staff and programs in their local communities to provide vital resources and services.

When an individual seeks assistance from the Information Line, several options are available, including: referral services; online support groups; educational materials for social distancing; quarantine, and isolation, and emotional wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak; and managing anxiety and stress techniques. For more details on the Information Line, please contact the ADMH Office of Public Information at [publicinformatin.dmh@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:publicinformatin.dmh@mh.alabama.gov), 334-242-3417.



# GOVERNOR IVEY ANNOUNCES ALABAMA FAMILY CENTRAL WEBSITE

CONNECTING FAMILIES WITH A ONE-STOP ONLINE RESOURCE

On January 22, Governor Kay Ivey announced the **Alabama Family Central** website, a free, comprehensive, easy-to-use website with mobile access that offers parents and caregivers, families, and teachers a one-stop connection to programs and services in Alabama. Programs, tools and information on child care, education, family services and health services can all be found **on the site**.

“Alabama Family Central will assist Alabama citizens to continue to build strong healthy families by ensuring parents and children in our state have access to crucial information and resources from numerous state agencies, service providers and non-profit organizations,” **Governor Ivey** said. “Great parents need strong partners. I thank the state agencies and other partners for this wonderful new resource,” Ivey continued.

The site highlights **relevant and timely resources** to address the needs of families. Child care listings, county health departments, other health services, education resources, and many more are found easily on the site. Currently, Alabama Family Central is highlighting **A+ Education Partnership’s COVID-19 Parent Resources site**, a vital resource, as many children are still attending school remotely.

To address a need identified by the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet, this site was collaboratively created by state agencies and other partners to support Alabama families as a compilation and link to available resources that can assist with issues related to the health and well-being of children and families. The Alabama Legislature supported this effort with \$500,000 in funding from the FY21 Education Trust Fund budget.

Information about the site will be communicated on agency partner websites, the Alabama Family Central Facebook page, online videos, radio, and billboards throughout the state.

The Alabama Family Central website is a **collaboration** managed by the Alabama Partnership for Children and includes:

- Office of the Governor of Alabama
- A+ Education Partnership
- Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
- Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education
- Alabama Department of Education
- Alabama Department of Human Resources
- Alabama Department of Mental Health
- Alabama Department of Public Health
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Alabama Medicaid
- Alabama Office of Information Technology



Explore **Alabama Family Central** Now

Dr. Pippa Coulter-Abston, Vice Chair of the ADMH Board of Trustees submitted this testimony for the Alabama Department of Public Health. Please read her and her family's experience with COVID-19.

# Faces of COVID



On November 27, the day after Thanksgiving, the day before he would have watched the Iron Bowl, my father, Philip Coulter, died from COVID-19.

He was an amazing man. He taught me so many things. He taught me to be honest and fair. He taught me to think for myself.

When I hear people say you don't have to worry about COVID because it only affects old people or sick people, that's my father they're talking about. My father was 82. He wore his mask and avoided public places, but he had to go to physical therapy for his Parkinson's. He was careful --- but someone still infected him.

We can't protect our elderly unless we all pitch in.

I know that he would have died eventually. But he didn't have to die alone, in an ICU, struggling to breathe.

It's too late for my father, but it's not too late for others. If we all pitch in, if we wear our masks, if we stay home when we can, if we keep distance between ourselves and others, our efforts will make a difference for our elderly.

My father mattered.

There are a lot of people at risk right now who matter --- to themselves, and to their families and those that love them.

**I don't want anybody to live in fear. I want us to live with compassion, live with love. Together we can get through this.**

Thank you.  
Pippa Abston

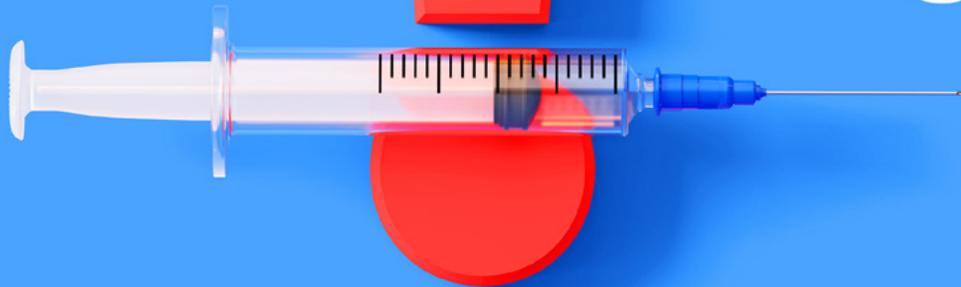


Dr. Mark Woods, ADMH Medical Director, and Dr. Zafra Zynnica, Clinical Director Harper Center recently received their **COVID-19 vaccine!** Thank you for taking an additional step to ensure safety for the individuals we serve and fellow staff!



ADPH has launched an online portal for individuals to check their eligibility for vaccination and make appointments for COVID-19 vaccinations at county health departments. Read our full news release at [go.usa.gov/xAtJc](https://go.usa.gov/xAtJc).

GET VACCINATED



[alcovidvaccine.gov](https://alcovidvaccine.gov)

ALABAMA PUBLIC HEALTH



ADMH SHOWCASE:

## AMANDA SOMDAL

**REGION IV THERAPIST, MHFA ADULT & YOUTH INSTRUCTOR, OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES**

Amanda G. Somdal, LCSW, LICSW is a 4th year Alabama resident and a Southern Californian at heart. As a kid you would find her playing soccer and riding her bike in the hills or to the library. One of Amanda’s first jobs was helping the local high school prepare for start of the new school year by copying and collating thousands of worksheet packets, orientation packets and stamping new textbooks with the high school’s name 5-6 times per book.

Amanda aspired to become a pediatrician. When she got to 10th grade biology class with a teacher who loved using Latin words, she changed her career path. Amanda discovered the field of social work and felt it fit her personality – she loves to be with people, see the good in them, and enjoys the flexibility to work in a wide range of roles. Amanda has worked with people who either don’t have people who believe in them, or that they can succeed, or are unaware of what they can do and what’s available to them.

Being a clinical social worker allows Amanda to work with people to make their world a better place. She enjoys sharing her experiences and knowledge by giving presentations around the country on various topics such as: Deaf Mental Health; Vicarious Trauma; Self-Care; and mentoring budding psychotherapists and ASL interpreters. Amanda works as a Deaf Therapist and Clinical Lead within Office of Deaf Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health.

When Amanda isn’t working, she loves to spend time by the water with a good book, scrapbooking memories, and hanging out with her friends. She shares parenting duties with her partner - spending time with their two sons – one has grown and flown to University of Alabama as a computer engineer student and one who is a senior in high school with a goal to be a sports manager.

# LANGUAGE DEPRIVATION IS A GAME CHANGER FOR THE CLINICAL SPECIALTY OF DEAF MENTAL HEALTH

**NEW PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE FROM OFFICE OF DEAF SERVICES**

Check out [this peer-reviewed article](#) in JADARA, written by ADMH’s very own Steve Hamerding and Charlene Crump, along with Neil Glickman from University of Massachusetts Medical School.

JADARA is a widely read publication from Western Connecticut State University, which deals with research findings (pragmatic applications), program descriptions and articles on deafness, and the disciplines of rehabilitation, social services, mental health, and other related areas.



**New Year, new you-  
check out the latest  
ADMH employment  
opportunities today!**



## JOE K. LONG

Personnel Director at Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility, Joe Long, retired on January 25, 2021 after 42 years of devoted service to the Department. We wish him well and thank him for his exceptional work and dedication to those we serve!

## LAWANA KENNEDY

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, LaWana Kennedy, was selected for the Georgetown University Center of Excellence for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Echo Virtual Training for Mental Health Consultants Serving Rural, Tribal or Underserved Geographic Regions. The virtual training is a 4-month training program, with monthly Zoom calls. This will allow her to obtain expert, national level support that will directly impact her work at ADMH.

## CINDY SHRUM

Information Technology Manager, Cindy Shrum, is the recipient of the 2021 Tom Wayman Leadership Award, by Laserfiche! Shrum is recognized for leading digital transformation initiatives organization-wide to make positive changes for department administration as well as doctors and nurses throughout the state's medical network.

The Tom Wayman Leadership Award was introduced in 2014 and honors an exceptional individual within the global Laserfiche community who exemplifies extraordinary leadership, vision and commitment to sharing the Run Smarter® philosophy.



Coordinator of Children & Adolescent DD Services, Jewell Pitts, retired on December 31, 2020 after 40 years with the Department. Her journey began in Region IV, Community Services to the Central Office in 2002. We will miss her wonderful smile and passionate heart for our mission!

# REGISTER NOW FOR NAMI ALABAMA LEADERSHIP TRAINING

**REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE 2021 LEADERSHIP TRAINING WHICH  
WILL TAKE PLACE VIRTUALLY ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2021**

Leadership Training is designed for the NAMI Alabama board of directors, affiliate presidents and other local board members, and program coordinators; however, all are welcome to attend.

**The Education Committee has put together an impressive list of presenters, including this year's keynote speaker - newly appointed Alabama Department of Mental Health Commissioner Kim Boswell.**

As always, there is no cost to attend, but registration is required.

Register here for the 2021 NAMI Alabama Leadership Training:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsd-iggDsrE9EIYWsL33bZP7ynCKgfMLuv>

## **Schedule At A Glance:**

8:00 am - 8:45 am	Executive Committee Meeting
8:45 am - 9:45 am	Full Board of Directors Meeting
9:45 am - 10:00 am	Break
10:00 am - 11:00 am	ADMH Commissioner Kim Boswell
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	CED Mental Health Director, Shelia Hurley, and Clinical Director, Teresa Dawson, on the Use of Telemedicine in Community Mental Health
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	Grab your lunch and listen to the Treatment Advocacy Center's Brian Stettin discuss the outlook of mental health in the state of Alabama
12:30 pm - 1:15 pm	Panel - Perspectives on COVID on Mental Health and Wellness: Christi Collins (NAMI Alabama Peer Programs Director), Brandon Gannt (private practice therapist), and Wendy Williford (Calera Middle School Counselor)
1:15 pm - 1:30 pm	Break
1:30 pm - 2:30pm	Representative Nathaniel Ledbetter and Graham Champion will discuss the outlook for the 2021 Legislative Session and Mental Health Initiatives
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	CIT International Executive Director Ron Bruno provides an update on the continued expansion and use of Crisis Intervention Team initiatives
3:45 pm - 4:45	Affiliate Presidents Meeting

# DID YOU KNOW?

The ADMH Intranet, designed for our agency

- has tons of information,
- news to read,
- an area to share Files with your officemates,
- a Calendar to keep up with the informative presentations you may want to take part in
- learn more at [myadmh.org](http://myadmh.org)

For information or staff help with logging in, please email [publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov).

Home Department Staff News Help Calendar Files COVID-19

## ADMH intranet:

a place where our employees connect

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

### Announcements

Welcome to our Intranet! We've set up a few areas to give all employees access to the same departmental information whether you are on site at work or at home. There may also be private areas that only you and your immediate coworkers can access as needed. We hope this will be a useful way to keep everyone on the same page. Here are some basics:

- **Department** - pages related to our bureaus, divisions, facilities, and offices
- **Staff** - a directory of all of our employees
- **News** - recent announcements, newsletters, media reports, and press releases
- **Help** - a place to ask or answer department related questions
- **Calendar** - events and other goings-on
- **Files** - forms and other documents you may need

As you get a feel for the content in our intranet, please let us know if there other items that we should make available to everybody, if you have a suggestion, please email [peggy\\_olson@mh.alabama.gov](mailto:peggy_olson@mh.alabama.gov).

Recent Popular

Media Report

### Quick Links

Contact IT about:  
Issues with your computer, Zoom, connectivity...

Email Service Desk

Upcoming Events:  
trainings, conferences, observations, meetings...

View Calendar



#### Central Office

Rebecca Keith  
Shandra Woods  
Kimberly Bowens  
Jonika Reynolds  
Robert Reynolds  
Ada van Wyhe

#### Bryce Hospital

Kiana Carlisle  
Cynthia Courtney  
Sonoma Craig

Deneisha Crenshaw  
Monique Crowell  
Lakisha Daniels  
Patrice Doughty  
Saliyah Ferguson  
Marcus Gardner  
Torrian Giles  
Da'Shana Hinton  
Demontae Hoskins  
Rafael Lewis  
Felisa Manning  
Jerel Miller

Destiny Nicholson  
Hope Olmstead  
Ambrielle Orcholski  
G'Kayla Porter  
Justin Smith  
Kionna Stewart  
Ke'Darius Thomas  
Gail Wilson  
Mary Wilson  
Katherine Woods

#### Mary S. Harper

Julia Carroll  
Marcus Carter  
Alicia Foster  
Deroderick Gilmore  
Takyra Green  
Sandra Johnson  
Jaabir Stephens

#### Taylor Hardin

Melanie Adams  
RJ Bias  
Latonya Brifford  
Michael Burgess  
Alissa Cook  
Shakirra Cooper  
Demetrius Fulgham  
Lacrecia Gibson  
Julie Glass  
Karen Gresham  
Berlinski Jones  
Keandra Jones  
Willie Jones Dondre  
Joseph Ilesha Lee  
Kara Martin  
Michaela Martin  
Kristen Parnell  
Jeremy Pratt  
Lovely Stewart

# Serve • Empower • Support