

THE OUTLOOK

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



WELLSTONE CRISIS CENTER RIBBON CUTTING

Over 200 guests attended the opening of WellStone's new Crisis Center on September 19th, adding to the burgeoning Alabama Crisis System of Care! Governor Kay Ivey, Commissioner Kimberly Boswell and Chief Executive Officer Jeremy Blair hosted the energetic audience which included crucial stakeholders from the north Alabama area. The center, WellStone Emergency Services (WES), a 24/7/365 facility for assessment, referral and treatment for individuals with mental health and substance use disorder crises, adds generously to the wide continuum of care that WellStone offers the community at large.

WellStone is also north Alabama's designated call center when people call the 988 national crisis hotline. This means when anyone contacts the hotline during a mental health or substance use crisis, responses are provided through WellStone. Officials with WellStone say since the number recently changed, they have helped hundreds of people. That's another big step for mental healthcare.

We look forward to the success of WES and continuing to improve the mental health of the people they serve!





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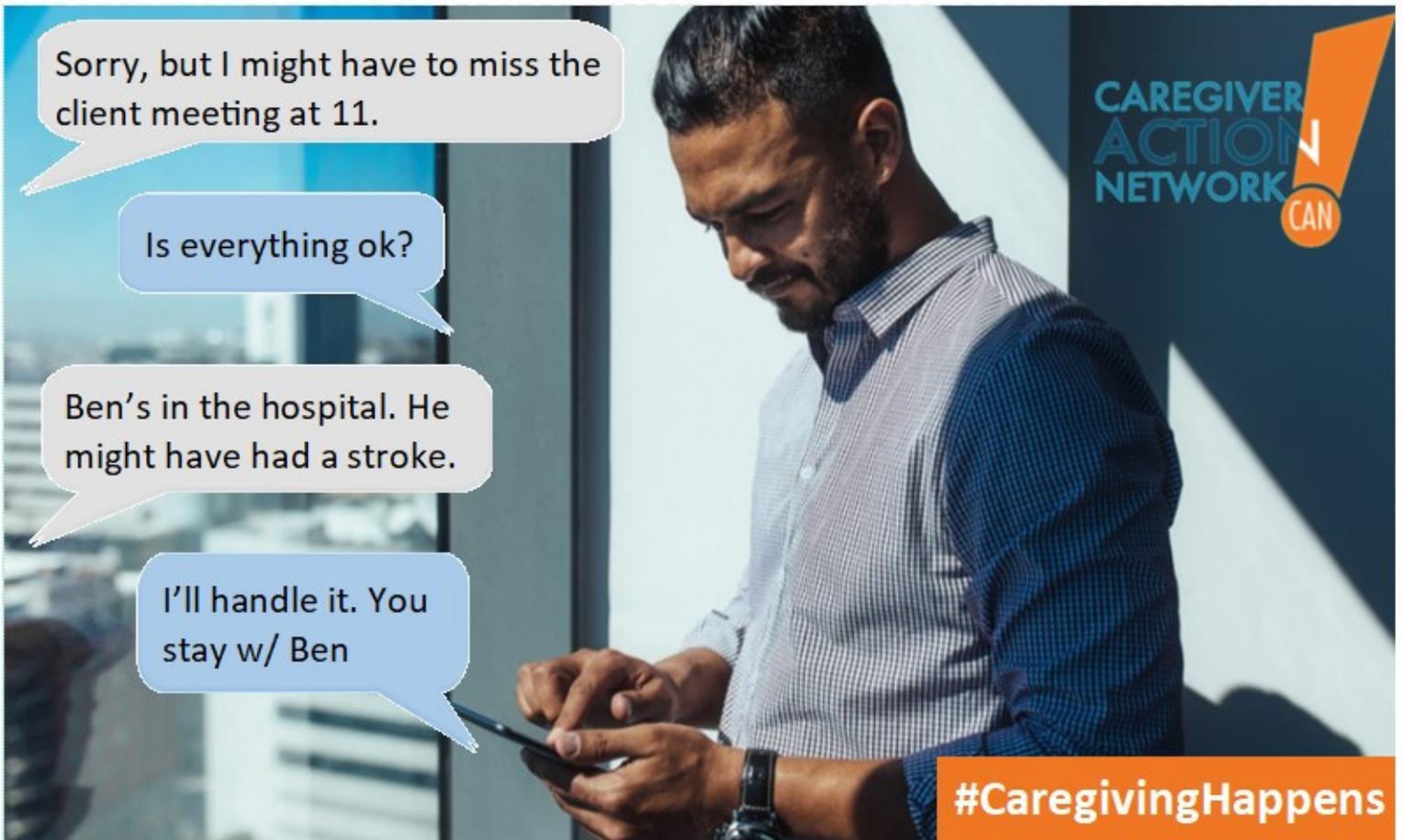
Want to be included in the next issue? Send us your stories, achievements, initiatives, events...etc!

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

NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

Each November, National Family Caregivers Month is observed to recognize and honor family caregivers. During the month, we have the chance to raise awareness of the challenges that caregivers encounter, educate communities, increase caregiver support, and acknowledge their contributions and efforts.

In the United States, families are the major source of assistance for older people, those with mental illness, and individuals with disabilities. Many caregivers work in addition to providing care, and studies show that caring has a major emotional, mental, physical, and financial toll. Caregivers must have adequate support, information, and resources to preserve their mental, physical, and emotional health in order to serve and aid their loved ones. To learn more about National Family Caregivers Month, visit: <https://www.caregiveraction.org/national-family-caregivers-month?>



MONTGOMERY



FBSS

FAITH BASED SUPPORT SPECIALIST

FAITH-BASED SUPPORT SPECIALIST TRAINING CONFERENCE

Who: Clergy of all Faiths

When: December 8 - 9, 2022 (Thursday and Friday)

Time: 8:00am-4:00pm each day

Where: USA University Commons - Room 3240



**Foundation for
Opioid Response Efforts**

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION AT:
256-525-8191 | FBSS.ASAPREV.COM | ASAPFBSS@GMAIL.COM



24/7/365 Access



48 Total Beds



23-Hour Max Stay in Temporary Beds



1-3 Day Stay in Extended Observation Beds



Crisis Care Centers provide a stronger continuum of care in the mental health community, establishing an essential link between those who need care and the organizations who provide that care. As a dedicated place for individuals experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis, this facility provides rapid stabilization and helps connect individuals with the inpatient or outpatient care they need.

The Region II Crisis Care Center, named the Craig Crisis Care Center will be operated by [JBS](#) as a designated place for communities, law enforcement, first responders and families to provide them with the professional services they need.

[Craig Crisis Care Center](#), expected to be operational in December, will be a place for individuals, 19 or older, who are actively experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.

Gov. Kay Ivey, the Alabama State Legislature, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health have funded six Crisis Centers that offer services at staged levels. These centers improve access to behavioral healthcare services for individuals who are experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis. Additionally, the centers aid jails and hospitals throughout the state by alleviating the burden to house and care for individuals in need of services.

ADMH thanks Governor Ivey and legislative investment, which helps to expand and transform the Alabama crisis system of care, dramatically lower healthcare costs, reinvest state dollars, achieve better health outcomes, and improve life for those with acute mental health needs.

Project | SEARCH® SUCCESS STORY

CALHOUN COUNTY



Everyone who meets Sallie Hall falls in love with her. When she laughs, the whole room lights up. She is truly a pleasure to be around. She has several passions, including cooking, retail therapy, family time, learning, and arts and crafts.

Sallie entered Project SEARCH of Calhoun County in August 2022 as one of the program's first deaf students ever enrolled. Because of her communication obstacles, she is unique. Sallie does not communicate with American Sign Language fluently. Due to numerous unsuccessful medical procedures and well-intentioned doctors who told Sallie's parents she would speak, Sallie was not taught American Sign Language. Sallie, at the age of thirteen, was completely deaf.

As Sallie was getting ready to exit her high school to transition to Project SEARCH of Calhoun County, she was faced with yet another obstacle. Sallie was diagnosed with diabetes. As difficult as this diagnosis was, Sallie's family supported her and helped her embrace a new lifestyle, complete with a strict meal plan and blood glucose checks.

Sallie began the 2022–2023 year by making connections with other interns, skill trainers, and the instructor. As interns and staff began to use ASL apps, pictures, body language, and support from the deaf side of Alabama Department of Rehab Services, communication became easier than we could have imagined. We had two interpreters initially, but after recommendations were made, Sallie had a deaf mentor to help her at the start of her first internship rotation. Sallie and her friends even joke around with one another and share private inside jokes.

Sallie's initial rotation was in housekeeping. She learns best by modeling. Sallie's mentor models cleaning activities for her, and she can now clean bathrooms on her own. Sallie is hard-working and enjoys spending time with her friends. She is able to navigate the hospital with the assistance of her friends and mentor. Sallie is in charge of pushing all of the buttons on the elevator.

Sallie's next rotation will more than likely be in the kitchen. We enjoy watching her develop and learn life skills. Sallie's family is encouraging and understands that being around people and having a purpose in life makes Sallie happy. Sallie is a true inspiration, and we are honored to have her as a part of Project SEARCH of Calhoun County.



DID YOU KNOW?

Fentanyl test strips, which detect deadly opioids in other drugs, are available now in Alabama. Visit to <https://www.jcdh.org/SitePages/Programs-Services/CommunityHealth/SubstanceUseandAddiction/NaloxoneFentanylTraining.aspx> to complete a short form to register and obtain the strips. Fentanyl is an extremely deadly opioid that is often added to illegally sold drugs to enhance their effects. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid 10 to 50 times more potent than heroin and is often added to other drugs.



RE-ENTRY SEMINAR

ALABAMA PARDONS AND PAROLES

The Alabama Pardons and Paroles Re-entry Training Seminar held in early October, provided officers and attendees with information on vital assistance available to those on probation or parole. A number of state agencies were there to share their services and resources available to formerly incarcerated individuals.

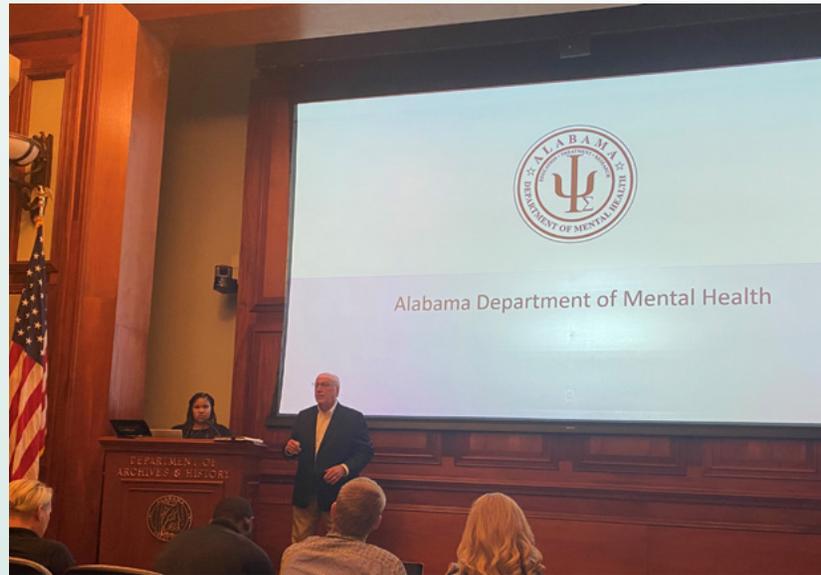
The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) joined the seminar to discuss the many benefits of our crisis centers and the substance abuse programs offered through the ADMH. Everyone completes programs at their own pace; some people move through them more quickly than others, and not every treatment is suitable for everyone. However, when treating a patient, ADMH likes to take a holistic approach and support them in all areas of their life where they are having difficulties.

AltaPointe Health came to address and assist the officers with their own mental health. Being an officer is accompanied by significant levels of burnout. Everyone there was provided with grounding techniques that could be used in the middle of a busy day to help with high stress and anxiety.

The Department of Labor and Ingram State Technical College discussed job placement. Ingram State Technical College is the only correctional educational college in Alabama, and they offer technical skills training. By helping individuals on probation or parole find good-quality careers, this can help minimize recidivism.

The Department of Human Resources discussed Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and our food assistance programs. Many formerly incarcerated individuals are supplied with food assistance support services when they are released in order to enhance their quality of life and lower their recidivism rate.

The Department of Veteran Affairs presented the services that veterans are offered once they are released and discussed how to properly identify veterans and provide them with the access and care they require.



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Call for Services

ADVOCACY

1-800-367-0955

AUTISM

1-800-499-1816

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

1-800-361-4491

MENTAL ILLNESS

1-800-367-0955

PEER SUPPORT

1-800-832-0952

SUBSTANCE USE

1-844-307-1760

www.mh.alabama.gov

Your voice is important – We want to hear from you!

Share your experiences and opinions in a survey about Developmental Disabilities Support Coordination!

In late October or early November, you may receive a survey about your satisfaction with support coordination.

You will receive this survey by mail and/or email. We need to hear from both participants and families, but ask that only one survey be completed per household.

The survey can be completed online or on paper. Filling out the survey is your choice – it is completely voluntary. All answers are anonymous and not connected to your name.

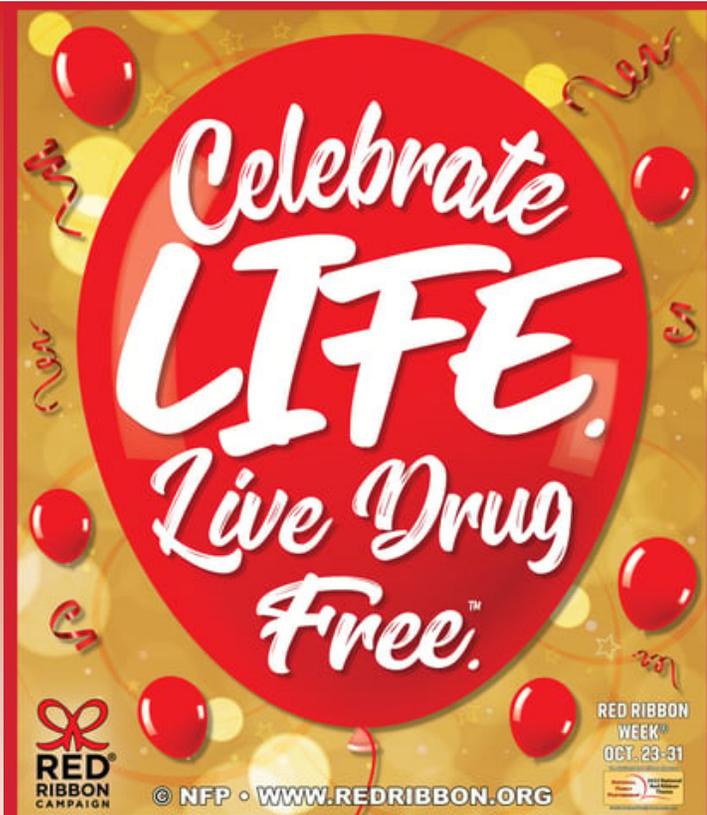
The survey is very short and will take 5-10 minutes to complete. The answers received will help us understand what is working well and what could be better about the support coordination that you and/or your family member receives. Completing this survey (or choosing not to complete this survey) will not affect your services and supports in any way. Results will be grouped together before they are shared, and your answers will not be linked to your name or identity.

There are no right or wrong answers. It's your opinion that matters!

If you have any questions about this survey, please reach out to any of the following people:

- Brittany Brashaw, Planning and Quality Assurance Specialist III at brittany.brashaw@region3.mh.alabama.gov; Phone: (251)-283-6217
- Kourtney Berry, Planning & Quality Assurance Specialist III at kourtney.berry@region1.mh.alabama.gov; Phone: (256) 898-2825
- or Arricka Player, Planning & Quality Assurance Specialist III at Arricka.Player@region5.mh.alabama.gov; Phone: (205) 916-7741

*[Health Management Associates \(HMA\)](#) is conducting this survey on behalf of the State of Alabama Department of Mental Health.



RED RIBBON WEEK

[Red Ribbon Week](#) takes place each year from October 23 through 31st. The Red Ribbon Campaign serves as a catalyst to mobilize communities, educate youth and encourage participation in drug prevention activities. The ADMH and its providers celebrate the week annually and host events to promote prevention.

This year, two of the Retirement Systems of Alabama's properties in Montgomery and Mobile were lit up **RED** to celebrate the event!

The 2022 National Red Ribbon Week Theme, Celebrate Life. Live Drug Free.™ was created by Emily King, Chelsea Abbott, and Celise Wicker, 7th graders at Wayland-Cohocton Middle School in Wayland, New York. The Theme is a reminder that everyday Americans across the country make significant daily contributions to their communities by being the best they can be because they live Drug-Free!

ADMH STORY OF SUCCESS

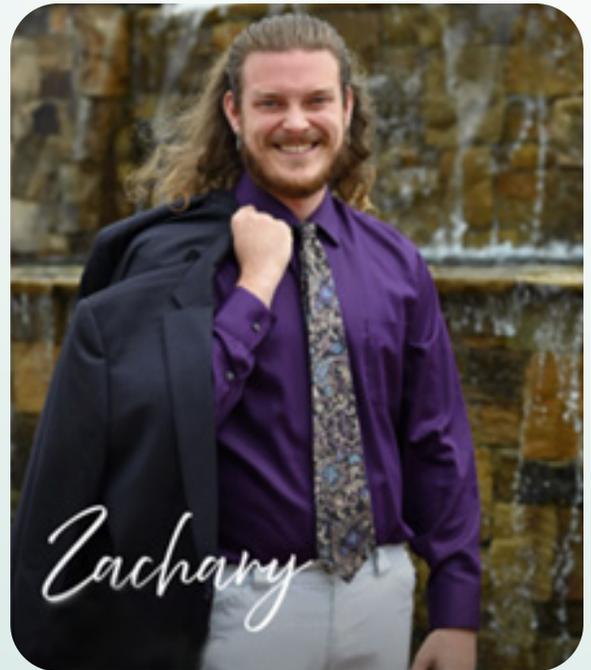
The ADMH Office of General Counsel was recently part of a complex case regarding a young man, Zachary, with mental health needs – now on his journey of recovery. Thanks to the dedication of a key ADMH staff member, Eddie Hixon and the support of others in the office, the young man is now enjoying an independent and successful life!

His family recently wrote to ADMH:

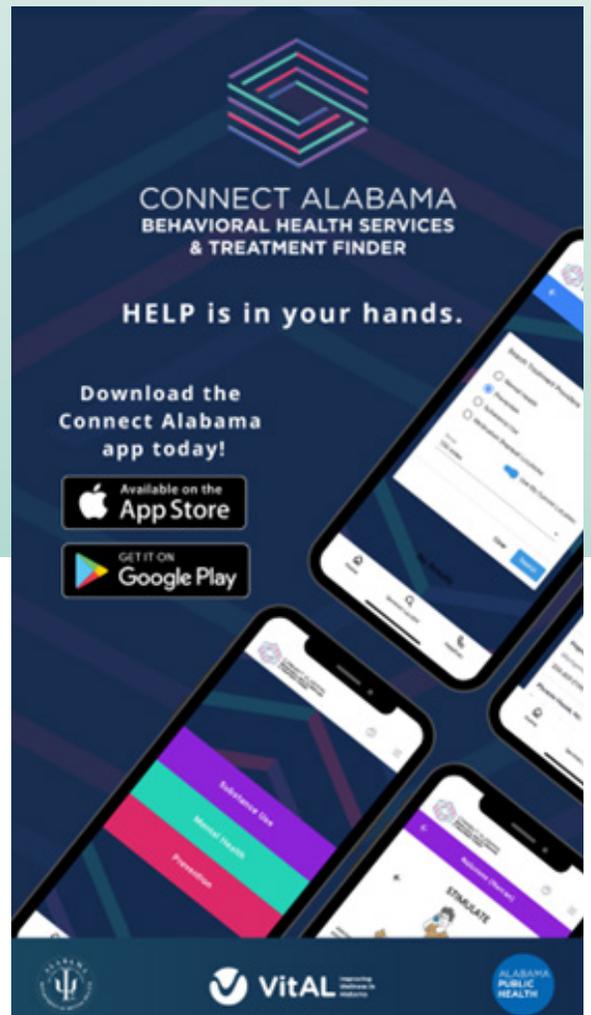
"I wanted to share with you our family's great appreciation for Eddie Hixon (ADMH), and his handling of my son's case on behalf of the Alabama Mental Health System. ADMH and Mr. Hixon was outstanding in balancing the needs of my son, Zachary, with the needs of your mental health and legal system. Our family traveled this road for almost 10 years after my son had a psychotic break in November 2012. Zachary was unconditionally released by the judge in July 2022. Much of Zach's success in navigating this time was due to Mr. Hixon's continued support and concern for his welfare as well as the welfare of those around him.

While this was a horrible time and a horrible situation for all parties, Mr. Hixon was kind, caring, and professional as our family wove our way through uncharted territory while trying to be sure our son was safe, and getting the help that he needed to recover.

An update: *Zachary graduated with a 4.0 GPA from UNC Charlotte in May of this year. He obtained a Bachelor of Science in Public Health with a minor in Psychology and plans to concentrate in the mental health field. He maintains a healthy lifestyle attending to his mental, emotional, and physical wellness. He has worked very hard for his recovery along with assistance from persons such as Mr. Hixon. Zach is certainly a success story and a credit to the care he received by all parties while in Alabama. Thank you and all of your employees for taking care of my son and returning him to our family. We are forever in your debt."*



HELP IS IN YOUR HANDS! Download The Connect Alabama Behavioral Health Services & Treatment Finder App Today! The Connect Alabama App can assist you in finding treatment for you or your loved ones who struggle with mental illness, substance use disorder, or who want to learn about prevention. Download today!





STAFF SHOWCASE

COLLIER TYNES,

DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE & CONSTITUENT AFFAIRS

With a background in state government, child mental health services, and legislative advocacy, Collier is excited to begin this new venture. Collier served First Lady Dianne Bentley as her Chief of Staff until 2015. In this position, she assisted with the passage of the First Lady’s Legislative Agenda, which included the doubling of funding for domestic violence services and major law enforcement reforms. After her time in the Governor’s Office, Collier served as Chief of Staff at Gateway, Birmingham’s first and oldest social services agency that provides therapeutic foster care, school-based therapy, and family counseling services. While at Gateway, Collier’s favorite project was managing the project to achieve The Joint Commission Behavioral Health Accreditation, as well as overhauling the processes this required.

After six years serving vulnerable children and families, Collier could not “unsee” the issues and solutions she saw on the ground and returned to Montgomery as Executive Director of VOICES for Alabama’s Children, to lead Legislative Advocacy efforts for children’s issues as well as the release of the Alabama Kids Count Data Book. In the 2022 Regular Legislative Session, Collier assisted in securing the first state investment in childcare services through the Legislature.

THE RESILIENT MIND

THE EAP CONFERENCE

Mental health is just as important as physical health. This year’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) conference centered around embracing mental health and building and strengthening resilience for mental health. It was discussed how resiliency plays an important part in our mental health.

Resilience is the process of successfully adapting to traumatic or challenging life events, threats, or other significant sources of stress. Resilience influences us in a variety of ways. It enables us to overcome hardship, cope, recover from life obstacles, and work through trauma. Just like our brains can grow, heal, and change throughout life, people are just as resilient. People evolve, learn, heal, and grow throughout their lives.

Building and increasing resilience is vital for our mental health because it allows us to deal with difficult situations and manage stress better, and it can assist with a variety of mental health disorders. Taking care of yourself, learning healthy coping skills, developing and maintaining healthy boundaries, forming a community, increasing positive thinking, seeking treatment, and counteracting harmful beliefs are all ways to enhance and grow your resilience.

Being resilient does not imply that you have not experienced challenges, or any difficulties and it won’t make your problems go away, however, it aids with adaptation amid adversity, which assists in taking care of our mental health. To learn more about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), visit <https://riskmgt.alabama.gov/empasstprogram>.



The State Combined Campaign (SCC) continues accepting pledges until December 31st. Please connect with your Keyworker and submit your pledge card today!

Visit the SCC webpage for all resources <http://www.statecombinedcampaign.org/>.



ADMH Staff who left the Department:

Bryce Hospital

Shirley Maddox
Linda Miller
Clarence Owens
Angela Roulaine

Central Office

Eleanor Coleman
Connie Batiste
Trena Blair-Edwards
Nancy Jones

Taylor Hardin

Lisa Boswell
Karen Ellard
Rebecca Thomas

DR. TAMMIE MCCURRY

FAREWELL PARTY

Dr. Tammie McCurry served at the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) for five years. During her time at ADMH, Dr. McCurry was dedicated and committed to the many roles she performed, especially as the Associate Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. ADMH staff gathered to celebrate her time at ADMH and to bid Dr. McCurry a sweet farewell, expressing their support for her future aspirations and for her commitment and diligence while at ADMH.



Serve • Empower • Support