

The Outlook

Alabama Department of Mental Health Newsletter



Community Partners cut the ribbon of the New Carastar Health Crisis Center

Carastar Health Unveils their State of the Art Crisis Center in Montgomery

Carastar Health held its Crisis Center Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting on April 5.

The state-of-the-art facility is a first for the River Region and replaces the temporary location on the same grounds. The expanded facility, now with 10 temporary observation chairs and 16 extended observation rooms, is open 24/7, 365 days a year. The facility is designed with a “no wrong door” approach, meaning all individuals have access to care.

According to Carastar Health Executive Director Donna Leslie, the Crisis Center is designed with the highest standards of safety and comfort in mind for everyone it serves and provides an efficient way to assess care for an individual.

“When someone has a mental health crisis, they no longer have to make a trip to the hospital emergency room,” Leslie said. “Now we have the ability to evaluate a person to be admitted, observed, or warmly welcomed when crisis care is needed.”

By dedicating a facility to those in crisis, Carastar is better equipped and staffed to serve as an advanced behavioral healthcare hub for an extended 11-county region (in partnership with East Central and East Alabama Community Mental Health Centers).

GALLERY FROM THE MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER

Table of Contents

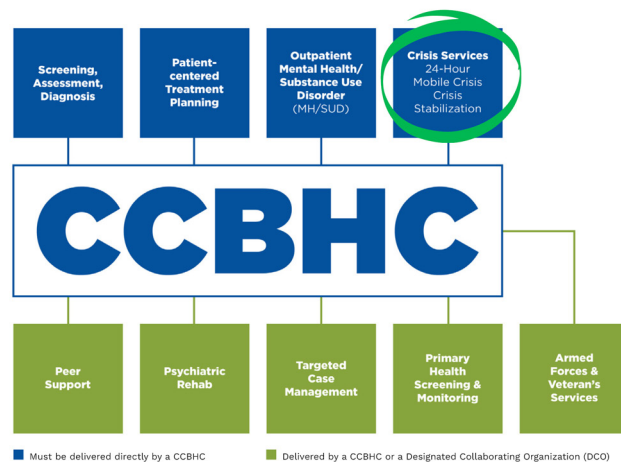
Carastar Health Unveils	1
Alabama Awarded a Grant	3
Autism Acceptance Month	4
Developmental Disabilities Awareness	5
2023 Deafness and Clinical Training	5
Provider Showcase	6-7
Parent Coaching	6
National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week	9
Expanding the Respect Initiative of Alabama	9
ADMH Staff Showcase	10
Alabama's Challenge	13
Congratulations!	14
In Memoriam	14

Want to be included in the next issue?

Send us your stories, achievements and events!

publicinformation.dmh@mh.alabama.gov

334-242-3417



Components of a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center

Alabama Awarded a Grant to Develop Statewide Criteria

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) has awarded the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Planning Grant in the amount of one million dollars to develop statewide certification criteria for CCBHCs. A Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic is a specially designated clinic that receives flexible funding to expand the scope of mental health and substance use services available in the community to ensure health equity and high-quality care for underserved populations.

Alabama’s Community Mental Health Centers and the ADMH have completed assessments to determine their preparedness for the development and implementation of the CCBHC integrated behavioral healthcare business model with high-quality care, practices, and reporting measures. This model will ensure improved access to and delivery of coordinated, comprehensive behavioral healthcare to all Alabamians.

The Alabama Crisis System of Care will be a foundational component of the CCBHC model, as the state has established six state-funded Crisis Centers, which will be operational in 2023.

The CCBHC model will also improve integration, reduce silos and support a sustainable and well-trained behavioral health workforce.

The CCBHC model is designed to increase access to behavioral health services, including crisis services, that respond to local community needs, incorporate evidence-based practices, and establish care coordination to help people navigate behavioral healthcare, physical healthcare, and social services.

Within the year-long period of the grant, the ADMH will work with Alabama’s Community Mental Health Centers to plan a comprehensive behavioral healthcare business model to reduce disparities, improve access to care for marginalized communities, and develop a payment system that will reward quality over volume. The CCBHC model will also improve integration, reduce silos and support a sustainable and well-trained behavioral health workforce. A transition to the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic business model will ensure that statewide expansion of and access to mental healthcare for all Alabamians.

Autism Acceptance Month

Celebrating Differences, Creating Connections,
Empowering Communities

Celebrate Autism Acceptance Month in April with ADMH and partners, such as the [Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council \(AIACC\)](#), the [Regional Autism Network](#), and [Autism Support of Alabama](#), among many others! We will share messages and personal stories of awareness, acceptance, and inclusivity, beginning with the signing of a Proclamation for by Governor Kay Ivey.

We invite you to share in the Autism Society's celebration and [resources](#), which encourage acceptance and celebrate differences. The Autism Society's mission is to create connections and empower everyone in the Autism community with the resources needed to live fully. What can you do? Learn more [here](#).

According to Autism Speaks, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) refers to a broad range of conditions

characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech, and nonverbal communication. ASD is more than four times more common among boys than among girls. More than 3.5 million Americans live with an autism spectrum disorder.

One in 44 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to the Centers for Disease Control (2021).

Signs of autism usually appear by age two or three. Some associated developmental delays can appear even earlier, and often, it can be diagnosed as early as 18 months. Over the years,

the number of individuals diagnosed with ASD has increased, but research shows that early intervention leads to positive outcomes later in life for people with autism.

[The ADMH Office of Autism Services](#) values the uniqueness of all individuals and strives to provide comprehensive supports, serving hundreds of children and youth and their families, throughout all regions of the state. To learn more about the office and services offered, please visit <https://mh.alabama.gov/autism-services/>.

[The Regional Autism Network \(RAN\)](#) is supported by the AIACC and consists of five universities that serve as hubs for professional training programs, technical assistance and consultation services, direct assistance, and public education programs. The RAN is staffed by experts in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The RAN networks are housed at Auburn University, University of Alabama, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Alabama in Huntsville, and University of South Alabama. Each Regional Autism Network strives to connect people with ASD, their families, educators, and service providers to the information and/or services that best meet their needs.

April is
Autism
Acceptance
Month



2023 Deafness and Clinical Training

The 2023 Deafness and Clinical Training is a two-day event that will be hosted April 20th-21st.

This year, the conference will focus on comorbid medical and psychiatric illnesses. The presenter, Dr. Wilson, is a psychologist and board-certified neuropsychologist.

To learn more and to register for the training, visit <http://www.mhit.org/2023-clinical-training.html>.



Byron White, DeAnna Ferguson, Governor Kay Ivey, Commissioner Kimberly Boswell and Darryle Powell at the March 2023 Proclamation Signing Hour

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month is observed every March. This year's theme was "Beyond the Conversation," which highlighted the ways people with and without disabilities come together to form strong, diverse communities.



**Developmental Disabilities
Awareness Month 2023**

Beyond the Conversation

#DDAM2023

This year's theme asked the question, "Once the conversations have taken place, what comes next?" This month offers us the opportunity to ask, "What are communities doing to create change?"

Governor Kay Ivey has proclaimed March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, helping to raise awareness about the challenges and barriers for people who live with disabilities and advocating for the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities.

During Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, increasing awareness about the inclusion, acceptance, and understanding of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of the community is necessary because the development of an inclusive community is vital for the benefit and well-being of people with disabilities. The Alabama Department of Mental Health is dedicated to enhancing and increasing resources and services so that people with disabilities can reach their full potential.

To learn more about support for individuals with disabilities, please visit <https://mh.alabama.gov/developmental-disabilities-services/>.



Volunteers helping at Arc of Madison County

Arc of Madison County – A Day of Service

In celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Service and as a way to foster relationships and build community, the Arc of Madison hosted its 1st Annual Day of Service on January 13th at Gateway Place Apartments in Huntsville.

The Day of Service was organized around the central theme of serving the community and environment. Twenty-seven volunteers participated in activities that were designed to assist senior residents of Gateway with the removal of unwanted items from their apartments. Volunteers removed trash, recycled boxes, and other household items from the residents' domain.

The Day of Service included positive interactions and communication with Gateway residents and staff. Volunteers joined the residents for lunch and several riveting games of Bingo. Numerous residents expressed their gratitude and

elation for the services rendered and welcomed the volunteers to come again. With the assistance of the Community Manager, Judy Henderson, the volunteers are scheduled to visit the residents of Gateway Place once a month. It is the goal of the Arc of Madison County to continue the services provided to the residents on January 13 while expanding to other activities such as Letters of Love, Lunch with a Senior, and a Mother's Day Tea.

EVENT ACTIVITIES:

- Waste removal from 86 apartments
- Breaking down and removing boxes for recycling
- Removal of household items
- Lunch and Bingo with residents

EVENT ORGANIZERS:

Judy Henderson, Community Manager of Gateway Place Apartments
Sharon Myers, QDIP, Arc of Madison County
Blanca Booker, CSP, Arc of Madison County

Parent Coaching – Teaching Families to Support and Love during Challenging Times

Families need someone.

They need other families—in addition to hope, encouragement, an understanding ear and shoulder and someone to believe them—all of whom can offer support and care during times when it is most needed. They need someone, especially when a loved one is in crisis from substance misuse or has had an overdose. Having someone who has “been there” goes a long way when walking alongside a hurting, desperate family member.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health and Substance Use Division, in collaboration with state partners and The Partnership to End Addiction, have joined together to train family members of loved ones struggling with substance use. A training was recently held and consisted of 15 self-paced, virtual modules designed to equip family members with the tools and skills to be effective coaches in support of others in whose shoes they previously walked.

The Family Coach training took time and commitment, resulting in 15 family members being equipped and ready to offer support. The Partnership Family Coach training would have been quite costly for some to attend, but ADMH funding offset this burden at no cost to the volunteers who will now be utilized as support agents for ADMH-certified SU programs. An additional 15 family members will begin the training in May, expanding the program and providing support to families statewide.



Arc of Madison County
— A Day of Service



Parent Coaching: Offering peer-to-peer support

For families struggling with a child's substance use or addiction, it can be life-changing to talk with someone who has gone through this before. By speaking with someone who has "been there," parents can learn how to stay connected with their loved one and get the support and encouragement they need.

Parent coaches help other caregivers to:

- Understand the reasons why their child may be using substances
- Learn ways to talk with their loved one about their substance use
- Practice simple strategies that can help promote positive changes in their child's behavior
- Focus on self-care as an important part of creating change in their family

Our parent coach program uses a peer-to-peer, shared experience model using the Invitation to Change Approach created by CMC: Foundation for Change. This is a unique mix of evidence-based principles including Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT), Motivational Interviewing, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

“

The experience was so great. I don't know if I could have made it without my parent coach. It's so different to hear from someone who's gone through it. Just an amazing relationship and an incredible experience.

Parent Coaching
Participant

“

Peer-to-peer sessions felt like connecting with a friend who gets it.



“

There are a lot of families out there that are torn apart – but families can heal. Young people can get better.

Paul Kusiak
Parent Coach

Parents interested in receiving peer-to-peer support can visit drugfree.org/helpline to connect with our helpline and get started.

To download this flyer, visit drugfree.org/promote.

9.23.20

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week

The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) celebrated the annual National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week (NDAFW®), along with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

The weeklong observance was held March 20th – 26th, to inspire dialogue about the science of drug use and addiction among youth. It provided an opportunity to bring together students, educators, mental and physical healthcare providers, and community partners to help address youth drug and alcohol use in communities and nationwide.

“National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week offers prevention partners and providers around the state the space and time to share crucial information with teens who ask questions and can give direct responses,” said ADMH Director of Prevention, Beverly Johnson.

ADMH has 23 Certified Prevention Providers that offer prevention activities aligned with the Centers for Substance Abuse and Prevention strategies, including Alternative, Community-Based Process, Education, Environmental, Information Dissemination, and Problem Identification and Referral. Through these strategies, providers implement and participate in prescription drug takeback events, health fairs, media campaigns, and various other national observance activities.

NDAFW

National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week

Expanding the Respect Initiative of Alabama

The Alabama Department of Mental Health’s Office of Peer Programs is expanding the RESPECT Initiative of Alabama statewide! The RESPECT Initiative of Alabama (RIA) offers participants training to help develop the skills necessary to turn their experiences with mental health or substance use challenges into inspirational presentations.

Mike Autrey, director of Peer Programs, stated, “The Respect Initiative of Alabama (RIA) offers peers an opportunity to take control of their personal stories. RIA Graduates find healing and clarity from learning how to articulate the struggles and challenges they’ve overcome. The RIA empowers graduates, which serves as a powerful antidote to the stigma and shame attached to mental illness.”

The RIA empowers participants by identifying, appreciating, and valuing their unique perspectives. Participants recover their sense of self by acknowledging and embracing their experiences. To learn more about the RESPECT Initiative, visit <https://mh.alabama.gov/division-of-mental-health-substance-abuse-services/peer-programs/>.



INTERPRETING IN MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH A MULTICULTURAL LENS

April 15th, 2023

Registration:
<https://forms.office.com/g/mbhE2a1s4H>
DEADLINE: April 10th, 2023



9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Presentation will be in ASL

Location: State of Alabama. Department of Mental Health - Conference Room.

1301 Jack Warner Pkwy, Tuscaloosa, AL, 35404

Cost: Free of charge

CEUs: 0.25 PPO

For: Interpreters in Alabama working or wanting to work in mental health settings

In this workshop:

- Participants will acquire three tips, gain more knowledge, and a list of resources available when working in multilingual settings.
- Participants will be able to discuss three skills needed when working with multicultural clients in mental health. They will be able to list three areas of concern when working in a multicultural or multilingual setting in mental health environments.
- Exposure to five tips for teaming with Deaf interpreters in mental health



Brian A. Moss (BAM)

BAM is the Visual Gestural Specialist for the ADMH Office of Deaf Services. BAM grew up in Montgomery where he attended mainstream schools during his early educational years. Later he emerged himself in Deaf culture as a student at the Alabama School for the Deaf. He graduated from Jacksonville State University with a Bachelor of Social Work in 2019. BAM worked as a Deaf Care Worker for several years under the ADMH. In the past year, he has presented on various topics related to cultural demands in the mental health field and is currently pursuing the opportunity to become a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) in near future.

Co-facilitators
Sandy Pascual, MS, MBA, NIC,
CoreCHI, OCHI, Q-MHI
Mansilla, MA, NIC, QMHI, BEI
Advanced Trilingual



ODS is an Approved RID CMP Sponsor for continuing education activities. This program is offered for 0.25 CEUs at the PPO Content Knowledge Level. RID activity code 0263.0423.05. ODS promotes an environment of mutual respect free of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or any other protected class. For more information or for reasonable accommodations, please contact us at: claudia.mansilla@mh.alabama.gov or sandy.pascual@mh.alabama.gov. Facilitators will communicate with the participants by April 2nd, 2023, if the event needs to be cancelled. This activity is free of charge, no refunds needed.

ADMH Staff Showcase: Melissa Beck



Melissa Beck

Much of my life has been spent in Alabama, with brief stints living in New Orleans, LA, and New York, NY. I was born in Birmingham, Alabama, at the now-closed Monclair Hospital. I spent many of my formative years in Montgomery before moving to Birmingham at age 16 and remaining there for many years. I graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in Communication Studies and am now pursuing a Master's in Public Health from UAB. My concentration is Population Health and much of my focus is on substance use disorder.

I love to read both fiction and nonfiction. Spending time with my husband, Jason, and our two rescue dogs is also a favorite way to fill my days. We enjoy traveling, hiking, cycling, and gathering with friends and family. Although it is not necessarily a hobby, I do spend a good deal of time participating in the recovery community, which I enjoy greatly.

Much of my early career was spent as a pharmaceutical representative at Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in a variety of sales territories with products ranging from allergy medications, antidepressants, pain relievers, and more. I jokingly say that I went from trying to get people on drugs to getting people off drugs. I also served as a Senior Manager in Sales Operations at their headquarters in New York, NY.

After completing treatment for opioid use disorder, I had great interest in being a part of the solution and working to improve substance use disorder treatment opportunities for those in Alabama.

After completing treatment for opioid use disorder, I had great interest in being a part of the solution and working to improve substance use disorder treatment opportunities for those in Alabama. Prior to working for ADMH, I worked as a Certified Recovery Support Specialist at the

Recovery Resource Center and UAB Beacon Recovery.

In my current role, I serve as a statewide coordinator for substance use disorder peer support services. Since I am new in this role, I am learning how our team interacts with and supports other offices. There is a great deal of crossover between Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and Mental Illness (MI), so I look forward to working closely with those in this area. Recently, I have been able to work with those who are contracting for treatment facilities as well as prevention.

As a person in long-term recovery who has worked with underserved populations, such as those in financial need, people who are homeless, and other populations experiencing disparities, I saw first-hand the great need for affordable, accessible treatment options. My hope is that the peer support specialist movement will continue to grow and that more resources will be readily available for those in need.

**988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE**

No matter where you live in the U.S.,
you can easily access 24/7 emotional support.

Call or text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org/chat to
chat with a caring counselor.

We're here for you.





PAWS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

FAMILY FUN DAY



CENTRAL ALABAMA WELLNESS AND THE SHELBY HUMANE SOCIETY IS HOSTING AN EVENT TO BRING AWARENESS DURING MENTAL HEALTH MONTH THAT ADOPTING A PET CAN BOOST YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS!

WHEN: MAY 13, 2023

WHERE: ALABASTER DOG PARK
VETERANS PARK, 7305 HIGHWAY 119,
ALABASTER, AL 35007

TIME: 10 AM - 12 PM

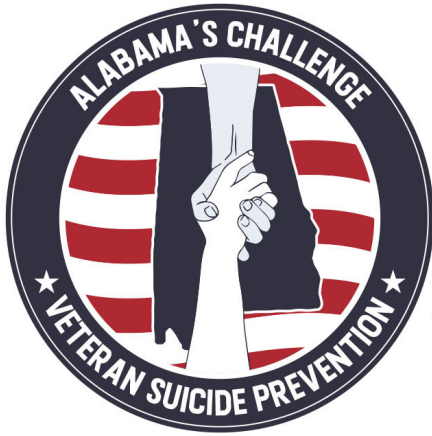
**Feel free to bring your pets on a leash!*

Food Trucks Yard games Doggie paw-geant Bounce houses



ADOPT
A DOG!





ALABAMA'S CHALLENGE FOR PREVENTING SUICIDE AMONG SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

Alabama's Challenge for Preventing Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families (SMVF) is an initiative aimed at creating an impactful, long-term outcome across the state as the Alabama Department of Veteran Affairs continues fighting stigma about mental illness.

UPCOMING TOWN HALLS AND EVENTS

April 26

Anniston town hall and resource/job fair
Anniston City Meeting Center (10 a.m.)

May 2

ADMH/ADVA/Biscuits News Conference
Riverwalk Stadium (10 a.m.)

May 5

ADMH Strike Out Stigma
(Montgomery Biscuits Game)
Riverwalk Stadium

May 6

ADVA Service Never Stops
(Montgomery Biscuits Game)
Riverwalk Stadium

June 9

Enterprise town hall and resource/job fair
Enterprise Civic Center (1 p.m.)

August 23

Auburn town hall
Auburn City Court (2 p.m.)

For more information the Alabama Challenge, visit <https://va.alabama.gov/alabamas-challenge-for-preventing-suicide-among-smvf/>

SAVE *the* DATE

Substance Abuse Youth Summit

ALABAMA

SAYS

2023

Prattville, Alabama

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 P.M.

**Central Alabama Community College -
Prattville Branch
1320 Old Ridge Road
Prattville, Alabama 36066**

Congratulations!

ALLYSSA COTE

Allyssa recently earned certification as a Qualified Mental Health Interpreter and also transferred from being one of the Bryce-based interpreters to Region I in North Alabama.

KENT SCHAFFER

Kent was elected President-Elect of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) and will become the President of this 57-year-old national organization of professionals working with deaf people. He will be the third ODS staff person to hold the presidency, following Steve Hamerdinger (2005–2007) and Charlene Crump (2015–2017).

GESSNER WILLIAMS

Gessner has enrolled in school after many years. She says it's challenging at times, but at the age of 51, she is proud of herself. Her husband and daughters keep her motivated.



Melanie Allen

In Memoriam

Melanie Allen, Mental Health Social Worker III at Mary Starke Harper Center, passed away on March 19.

OBITUARY

Grief Counseling for ADMH staff is available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), managed by Behavioral Health Systems, Inc. (BHS). Staff can directly contact BHS at 800-245-1150 or 205-879-1150. In situations where group grief counseling may be most beneficial, department heads should contact the relevant HR Office to coordinate this service through EAP.

Serve.
Empower.
Support.

ADMH Office of Public Information
publicinformation.DMH@mh.alabama.gov
334-242-3417

