

**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2023
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Alabama Department of Mental Health Board of Trustees was held on Friday, February 10, 2023, in-person and virtual.

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Dr. Pippa Abston welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

Roll Call was conducted:

BOT Members Present:

Kim Boswell, Commissioner (In-Person)
Dave White, Governor's Senior Policy Advisor, representing
Governor Kay Ivey (In-Person)
Donna Foster (In-Person)
Dr. Cynthia Bisbee (Virtual)
Larry Bailey (In-Person)
Rodney Barnes (In-Person)
William Pete Cobb (Virtual)
Judge Christopher Hughes (Virtual)
Dennis Stripling (Virtual)
Jade Wagner representing House Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter

BOT Members Absent:

Lt. Governor Ainsworth
Speaker Mac McCutcheon
Judge Sheri Friday
Leslie Sanders
Dr. Sandra Parker

Others Present:

Kathy Sawyer, Associate Commissioner for DD
Natasha Jackson, Associate Commissioner for Administration
Nicole Walden, Associate Commissioner for MH/SA
Tommy Klinner, Chief Legal Counsel
Malissa Valdes, Director of Public Information
Ada Katherine van Wyhe, Chief of Staff
Berenice Artis, Administrative Assistant
Mr. Alander Rocha, State Reporter

Dr. Abston asked if there were additions to the agenda and for approval. Mr. Bailey moved to accept the Agenda and Mr. Barnes seconded. Approved by acclamation without additions.

Review and Approval of November 18, 2022 Minutes

Dr. Abston asked if there were any additions to the minutes. Mr. Barnes moved to approve the November minutes. Ms. Foster seconded. Approved by acclamation without additions.

Commissioner's Report:

Introductions:

- Ms. Renee' Reese, Chief Financial Officer
- Ms. Denice Morris, Director of Substance Use Treatment & Development and State Opioid Treatment Authority
- Dr. Christine Rembert, Director Facility Services.

Following the introductions, Commissioner Boswell opened the meeting commenting on BOT members whose terms were nearing expiration. The three members, Mr. Pete Cobb, Mr. Rodney Barnes and Judge Sherri Friday have advised of their willingness to continue to serve on the Board and requests to extend their appointments have been forwarded to the Governor's Office for consideration and approval.

ADMH continues on the road to progress and its System of Care with the ribbon-cutting and phenomenal grand opening of the JBS Crisis Care Center on January 24, 2023.

The Department recently received three Executive Orders from the Governor's Office with two of the most noteworthy orders, EO# 734-Public Records, where ADMH is updating the process and form to be added to the Department's website. EO#728 affects the state motor pool, which we're informed is slated for closure. This closure will affect the department's access to the usage of state vehicles. ADMH is tasked with surplusage of the older and inoperable vehicles. We are slated to meet the deadlines put forth in the executive order with no anticipated issues or delays.

Commissioner offered further comments regarding 988 access to services, which continues in positive progress. Bureau of Pardons and Paroles re-entry program officers have been trained in crisis intervention; the department is working with Medicaid. the Alabama Department of Corrections and Bureau of Pardons and Paroles on prisoner integration, substance disorders and medication assisted facilities.

West Alabama Works – Recognized as the best workforce development program in the state with the city of Tuscaloosa having some very concrete plans that will affect the workforce. These plans include training which will make positive impacts with a 1-week training program at Shelton State Technical College; a 3-level Certification process for mental health worker training.

The Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) program is slated to be re-established in the state of Alabama's community colleges and will begin at Shelton State. A Medication Assistant certification that teaches individuals how to administer medication as prescribed and aligns with

the Alabama Board of Nursing guidelines is in the works. Commissioner added the Department will look at how this fits in with the Nurse Delegation program.

Druid City Hospital (DCH) has a program known as Daily Pay where workers get paid the same day or at the end of the work week. ADMH is looking at this process that may be a better pay system for providers, but may prove difficult for state employees, even as it has improved workforce retention at DCH.

Commissioner Boswell instituted Communication Partners, inviting them to attend the bi-weekly Associates' Meeting. The Communication Partners include Dr. Christine Rembert, Dianne Durbin, Beverly Johnson and Collier Tynes. She also announced that child and family services will be under the leadership of Beverly Johnson, Director of Prevention Services.

Mr. Larry Bailey commented that the last two years of his Board membership has been the most exciting time for him and looks forward to continued service on the Board. As the ADMH and the Board of Trustees appreciates Mr. Bailey and his service on the BOT, ADMH regrettably learned that Dr. Pippa Abston will be leaving the BOT as Vice Chair and moving to accept a position in a community health care center in Northern California. Commissioner Boswell, the BOT members and the entire staff of the Alabama Department of Mental Health wish Dr. Abston much success in her future endeavors and her continued service to her patients.

Budget Request:

On February 23, 2023, Commissioner Boswell presented the Alabama Department of Mental Health FY24 Budget Request, Charting the Course: An Alabama State of Mind to the Executive Budget Office and the Governor's Finance Director

• Professional Workforce		
○ Mental Health Safety Net		
▪ SA (4M) and MI (15.5M)	GF	\$19,500,000
○ DD Workforce Investment	GF	\$11,125,411
		○ Total = \$30,625,411-General Fund
• System of Care and Partnerships		
○ Infant and Early Childhood	ETF	\$ 1,032,730
○ School-Based Mental Health	ETF	\$ 1,000,000
○ Prevention and Improved Outcomes	GF	\$ 1,100,000
○ Autism Services – Adults	GF	\$ 500,000
○ Crisis Care	GF	\$ 3,500,000
○ DD Waiver Wait List	GF	\$ 5,151,110
	TOTAL	\$43,449,216

Commissioner Boswell presented that as part of Workforce Strategy efforts to align wages across settings, an RFP process was launched with the department obtaining an objective third party to conduct a rate study for services provided through the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The goal of the study was to establish accurate rate models that will reflect

reasonable costs that providers need to sustain and deliver services consistent with state requirements and individual service plans.

Study results supported an increase in the average wage for:

- Support Coordinators to \$23.43 an hour
- Direct Support Professionals to \$14.51 per hour

Commissioner also reported that as of February 7, 2023, some of our programs shuttered due to workforce issues resulting in 42 agencies with 140 settings closing. These closings affected 1,012 consumers.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION – Natasha Jackson

- Associate Commissioner Jackson commented on the success the Human Resources Division achieved with hospital recruitment.
- She further advised of the GQR Contract extension through July 2023 with the built-in capacity for ADMH staff with less than 3 years.
- ARPA-\$5million for MH/SA providers through December 2024 using the same method as HRSA, CRF funds distribution.
- Commissioner advised of the \$11million from ARPA, Round 1 equated to \$6million for the hospital diversion unit of 30 beds and \$5million for provider relief. She added that Bryce will resume admissions next month, March 2023.

MH/SA Division – Associate Commissioner Nicole Walden

- Associate Commissioner Walden commented on the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and ADOC partnering to improve treatment and recovery support services for people with substance use disorders (SUD) during their incarceration and upon reentry into the community. Rodney Barnes volunteered to assist in this pilot program.
- In a similar issue of service to Alabamians suffering from substance use disorders, AC Walden advised of SUD Family Coach Training with the goal of having up to 60 trained individual.
- The crisis center openings have been an overwhelming success with JBS ribbon cutting on January 24, 2023 and Carastar scheduled to be operational in February. A temporary Indian Rivers center is scheduled for opening March 2023 as they move forward with construction on a new, permanent location. SpectraCare in Dothan is on board with plans in place for a July 2023 opening.

DDD – Associate Commissioner Kathy Sawyer

- Associate Commissioner Sawyer advised that Glenwood & The Learning Tree, two of the department's largest providers, rescinded their offer for providing services as they are unable to accommodate a larger population due to a workforce shortage.
- AC Sawyer commented on DDD working with DHR and other state officials regarding the various issues and concerns of individuals and children with special attention and commitment to serving DHR complex cases.
- DDD is exploring increased funding to recruit/retain specialized providers. Negotiations with three national providers, Benchmark, Project Transitions and Project Star, are being considered.

- Since July 2021, AC Sawyer reported 140 settings have closed, 40 less providers and approximately 1,012 people impacted by these closures.

Office of Public Information – Malissa Valdes

- JBS Ribbon Cutting, 200+ guest were in attendance.
- Strike Out Stigma baseball game, Friday, May 5, 2023 with weeklong media coverage with the Veterans Administration.

Office of Chief of Staff – Ada Katherine van Wyhe

- Legislative Priorities:
 - 988 Cell Phone Surcharge- Proposed \$1.00 per phone line per month to fund 988 and expansion of crisis services statewide.
 - Alabama Opioid Settlement Funds-Official recommendations from the Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council.

Budget Priorities

- *Professional Workforce* – \$30.6 million
 - Mental Health Safety Net – \$19,500,000
 - Developmental Disabilities Workforce Investment *NEW* – \$11,125,411
- *System of Care & Partnerships* – \$12.3 million
 - Infant & Early Childhood *NEW* – \$1,032,730
 - School-Based Mental Health Collaboration – \$1,000,000
 - Prevention & Improved Outcomes *NEW* – \$1,100,000
 - Autism Services for Adults *NEW* – \$500,000
 - Crisis Care – \$3,500,000
 - Developmental Disabilities Waiver Wait List *NEW*- \$5,151,110

Stakeholder Discussion

No discussion

Other Business

No other business

Adjournment

There being no further business before the group, the meeting adjourned at 11:43AM. Dr. Abston and Commissioner Boswell thanked the members for their participation.

Dr. Abston spoke of how she enjoyed working with the ADMH Board and wished everyone the best in the future as this was her last meeting with the Board. We wish her well in her future endeavors in Northern California.

Respectfully Submitted:

_____ Date: _____
Kimberly G. Boswell
Secretary of the Board and Commissioner

_____ Date: _____
Donna Foster, Vice-Chair of the Board

The Alabama Legislature convened for the 2023 Regular Legislative Session on March 7, 2023. The Governor called a special legislative session which began March 9, 2023, to appropriate the second round of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. On March 16, 2023, the Governor enacted Act 2023-1 which allocates a combined \$23 million to the Department of Mental Health – \$18 million for noncapital expenses and provider payments, and \$5 million for the reimbursement of COVID-related expenses. The Legislature re-convened for the Regular Legislative Session on March 21, 2023. On April 25, 2023, House General Fund Budget Chairman Rex Reynolds filed HB389 – The Alabama 988 Act, along with seventeen bipartisan co-sponsors. The Alabama 988 Act would establish a 988 surcharge on phone lines, a funding mechanism identical to how 911 is funded for 988. In Alabama, every phone user pays a \$1.86 per month per phone line user fee for 911 Emergency Services. The new 988 surcharge would allow for a 98-cent monthly user fee per phone line. These funds would be held in the 988 Crisis Care Fund for the sole purpose of sustainably funding the statewide expansion of 988 and crisis services: Mobile Crisis Teams, Crisis Centers, and 988.

2023 Legislative Priorities (as presented in February 2023 Board of Trustees meeting)

- *General Fund and Education Trust Fund Budgets* – as recommended in the Governor’s budget. The ADMH received no decreases in either state budget.
- *988 Phone Surcharge* – authorized by the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act (Public Law No: 116-172) and as reviewed and approved by the 988 Study Commission created by Act 2021-359.
- *Alabama Opioid Settlement Funds* – official recommendations from the Opioid Overdose and Addiction Council for the approved state use of abatement funds submitted January 2023.

HOUSE GENERAL FUND BUDGET (HB 124 + HB125): The General Fund budget and supplemental budget have passed the House and are now in the Senate.

ADMH General Fund Line Item	FY23 Budget	Governor's FY24 Budget	Governor's Difference over FY23	House FY24 Budget	Difference between Governor's & House FY24 Budget	New Total Difference over FY23
Crisis Intervention & Sensory Training	\$450,000	\$450,000	0	\$900,000	+ \$450,000	+ \$450,000
988 Call Center Capacity Building (NEW)	0	\$500,000	+ \$500,000	\$500,000	0	+ \$500,000
Rural Crisis Care	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000	+ \$3,000,000	\$6,000,000	0	+ \$3,000,000
Crisis Centers (all 6 now in one line item)	\$36,000,000	\$36,000,000	0	\$36,000,000	0	0
Community Mental Health Centers	\$4,250,000	\$4,250,000	0	\$6,250,000	+ \$2M for CMHCs	+ \$2M for CMHCs
DD/SA Community Provider Rate Increases	\$1,237,025	\$8,928,571	+ \$5.5M for DD + \$2M for SA	\$10,928,571	+ \$2M for DD 0 for SA	+ \$7.2M for DD + \$2M for SA

Line Item	Governor's Supplemental	House Supplemental	Difference
Taylor Hardin Secure Medical	\$23,000,000	\$23,000,000	0
East Alabama Medical Center	\$10,000,000	\$8,000,000	(- \$2 million)
Pickens County Hospital	\$10,000,000	\$8,000,000	(- \$2 million)

SENATE EDUCATION TRUST FUND BUDGET (SB88): The Education Trust Fund budget has passed the Senate and is now in the House.

ADMH ETF Line Item	FY23 Budget	Governor's FY24 Budget	Governor's Difference over FY23	Senate FY24 Budget	Difference between Governor's & Senate FY24 Budget	New Total Difference over FY23
School-Based Mental Health Collaboration	\$3.5 million	\$4.5 million	+ \$1 million	\$4.5 million	0	+ \$1 million
MI Community Provider Rate Increases (New)	0	0	0	\$3 million	+ \$3 million	+ \$3 million
Substance Abuse Provider Rate Increase (New)	\$1,892,794	\$1,892,794	0	\$2,392,794	+ \$500,000	+ \$500,000
Special Services Program	\$5,141,706	\$6,174,436	+ \$1,032,730	\$6,824,436	+ \$650,000	+ \$650,000
ID Program	\$49,356,719	\$49,406,719	+ \$50,000	\$52,406,719	+ \$3 million	+ \$3,050,000

MHSA BOT Report May 2023

Crisis Centers Carastar Crisis Care Center ribbon cutting was held on April 5, 2023, in their newly remodeled permanent location. They officially welcomed their first patient in the new building on April 6th. They have seen an increase in the number of referred patients as a result of media coverage and law enforcement. Indian Rivers CMHC has adjusted their opening date to mid-June due to revision of building plans and the relocation of the permanent address. (System of Care and Partnerships)

Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHC) On March 15, 2023, ADMH was awarded a one-year CCBHC planning grant to develop and implement certification systems for CCBHCs, establish Prospective Payment Systems (PPS) for Medicaid reimbursable services, and to prepare an application to participate in a four-year CCBHC Medicaid Demonstration program. On April 20, the CCBHC Project Director presented an overview of the grant requirements, expectations, and timeline to CMHC State Executive Directors. (System of Care and Partnerships)

Prevention ADMH partnered in fentanyl awareness efforts with the ODDS ARE ALABAMA campaign. A press conference was held at Jackson Hospital on March 13, 2023. Alabama has received 23,261 calls to 988 since the July 16, 2022, launch. Statewide marketing and communication of 988 is underway. Statewide Health Disparities Training for the provider network continues. To date nineteen (19) provider agency representatives have been trained with a total of 64 participants. (System of Care & Partnerships; Knowledge & Awareness)

CDR As part of the BJA grant (Project Possibilities) which is a partnership with Pardons and Paroles and UA, funds support the continued development and operation of a centralized repository for substance use data from stakeholders across the state. Pardons and Paroles has signed a data-sharing agreement and discussions are underway to implement data-sharing processes. DOC has been meeting with the Data Committee to determine which data elements are appropriate to share within the online dashboard. (System of Care & Partnerships; Knowledge & Awareness)

Substance Use Treatment Naloxone has recently been approved as over the counter medication. ADMH is working on a new plan for distribution of this medication as it is anticipated that it will be easier to reach individuals in need and first responders. The official approval for Naloxone to become an OTC is anticipated to be finalized by the end of the summer. (System of Care & Partnerships; Knowledge & Awareness)

Peer Programs Trainings for Certified Peer Specialist-Adult, Certified Peer Specialist-Youth, Certified Peer Specialist-Parent, and Certified Recovery Support Specialists continue, and the use of peer support continues to expand into new settings including Crisis Centers and Crisis Mobile Teams. More than 300 peers gathered for the annual CRSS Conference in Bessemer from March 29th through March 31st in Bessemer. Peer support workers earned 16 hours of continuing education credits from a variety of speakers on a variety of topics. In collaboration with Wings Across Alabama, the Peer Office hosted The Alabama Institute of Recovery April 10th through April 12th. Over 500 people benefited from educational presentations and community gatherings. (Peer and Family Engagement; System of Care & Partnerships)

State Hospitals Taylor Hardin has hired a new Facility Director. She will start May 1st and brings knowledge of mental health and hospital management to her role. (Professional Workforce)

Division of Administration

The **Division of Administration** provides vital support to the Alabama Department of Mental Health’s facilities/central and regional office staff.

BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES (*PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE*)

- Current staffing levels for contract workers through Wynden Stark LLC (d/b/a GQR Global Markets) are as follows: Harper Center 8 (RNs) contract staff, Taylor Hardin 65 contract staff (55 MHWs, 10 RNs) and Bryce Hospital 52 (46 MWHs, 6 RNs) for a total of contract 125 contract, the original contract was for 135 workers.
- The GQR Contract is scheduled to end on July 28th. A new RFP is being drafted, and funding options are being explored for qualified contractors to continue the contract for these positions.

BUREAU OF FINANCE (*ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH*)

- The Bureau began working with the Examiners of Public Accounts to start fieldwork for the Statewide Single Audit of Federal Award Programs. The Provider Relief Fund and ARP Rural Distribution, and the Block Grants for Community Mental Health Services were selected for audit.

LAND AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT OFFICE (*ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH*)

- The Office began working with the State DOT and the ADMH’s operating divisions to plan for the agency’s response to the elimination of the State Motor pool, per Executive Order 728.

BUREAU OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (*ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH*)

- Biometric timeclocks were fully implemented at the Harper Center. This automated timekeeping system eliminates the paper timecards currently used, provides an interface for employees to check vacation and sick leave accruals, and integrates into our existing Kronos timekeeping system.
- In March 2023, BITS completed the upgrade of the Phone System Software/Hardware at the Facilities and Regional Offices. The upgrade allows improved security from computer hacks, access to the newest features and capabilities, and compliance with new Federal and State regulations – including Kari’s Law and Ray Baum’s Act. Kari’s Law ensures anyone can reach a 911 call center when dialing 911 from an MLTS.

OFFICE OF OBRA PASSR (*SYSTEM OF CARE & PARTNERSHIPS*)

- The OBRA Office processed 857 significant change applications to determine eligibility for nursing home placement and identify ongoing mental health needs.

NURSE DELEGATION PROGRAM (NDP) (*PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE*)

- NDP participated in two new provider orientations, training 44 nurses to become delegating nurses, updating 48 on NDP changes, and training four nurses to become NDP trainer nurses.

OFFICE OF POLICY AND PLANNING (*KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS*)

- The Office of Policy and Planning participated in meetings with the Alabama Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, the Alabama EMA, and SAMHSA’s Disaster Technical Assistance Center to identify federal and state resources and services available to victims of the tornadoes on January 4th. As a result of the meetings, the ADMH Mental Health and Substance Use Division applied for a Regular Services Program (RSP) grant, which provides crisis counseling assistance to disaster survivors for approximately nine months.
- The Office of Certification Administration (OCA) began validating the workflow for piloting and producing Phase 1 of the OneFlow automated certification process (expected rollout June 1, 2023). OneFlow will automate the current manual certification application and approval processes, provide a more efficient certification application option for providers, and identify required data elements for federal and state grant reporting and programmatic data assessments.



Developmental Disabilities Division

HCBS Waivers

(As of May 1, 2023)

•Community Waiver Program (CWP)

Total Enrollment of 250

Operates in 11 Counties across 5 Regions

•Intellectual Disabilities Waiver (ID)

Operates in 67 Counties

Total Enrollment of 4,500

•Living at Home Waiver (LAH)

Operates in all 67 Counties

Total Enrollment 544

HCBS Compliance Update

HCBS Compliance Group	# Of Providers	# Of Settings	# Of Individuals
Providers/Settings Compliant	166	741	2287
Providers/Settings Non-compliant	10	25	82

Notes:

CMS approved Alabama’s State Transition Plan March 14, 2023

Alabama is still awaiting CMS approval of the Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

Interagency Initiatives

- Bi-weekly meetings with DHR Children Staff continue. As of this report, a total of six (6) children in DHR custody have been placed by DDD in special residential services; three (3) are pending intake by the provider and three (3) additional cases are pending eligibility determinations. All placements and services are projected to be secured in the next 45 days.
- Bi-weekly planning meetings with DHR Adult Staff are scheduled to start this month.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the agencies is still being finalized.



Office of Public Information

May 12, 2023

Supporting the ADMH Strategic Plan

System of Care & Partnerships; Knowledge & Awareness

Alabama Crisis System of Care

Carastar Health had a grand opening of their permanent location in March. Indian Rivers plans to open their temporary center in June. We plan to publish a 6 month update Crisis Center information (late

Knowledge & Awareness

988

988 Progress Report was created and shared in late March. The Alabama 988 Act was on the calendar of the Legislature on April 25th and is in motion.

Knowledge & Awareness

Annual Report

The annual report is in progressive stages of review, with stories written, and art being finalized. This is expected to come out in May/June.

Knowledge & Awareness

New Logo and Graphics for ADMH

The ADMH’s rollout of the logo and elements have still been met with enthusiasm and appreciation. New tablecloths, resource cards and folders have been ordered to use at conferences and other events.

System of Care & Partnerships

HCBS

The HCBS Education and Advocacy Workgroup is acting collaboratively to spread the rules and programs related to HCBS to families and individuals with regional trainings, more social media postings and promotion by partners.

Professional Workforce

Paid Advertising and Promotion – Workforce

We have ads running with WVUA, Alabama Nurses Newsletter, Monthly emails and online site for nurses and mental health techs, to increase recruitment. We have created promotional ads placed on all social media sites and sent directly to facilities to share at events, etc.

New Onboarding Document to better familiarize staff with dept. resources and Welcome Emails for New Staff: These have been created and are share with dept.

Knowledge & Awareness

Mental Health Awareness Month

A communication plan has been created with specific tactics to share each day/week with stakeholders. We updated our Media Guide (and will share that during the month) to ensure correct language is being used. There are events planned by us and our partners such as Strike Out Stigma Baseball game on May Friday, May 5, 2023.