

The Outlook

Alabama Department of Mental Health Newsletter



The Bryce Hospital Museum Grand Opening: A Celebration of History and Service

On Friday, June 28, the [Alabama Department of Mental Health \(ADMH\)](#) hosted the Opening of Bryce Hospital Museum, which serves as a reminder of Alabama's rich legacy and integral role in the transformation of America's mental health landscape.

"We are proud to open the Bryce Hospital Museum, honoring the profound history of mental health care in Alabama," said Commissioner Kimberly Boswell, ADMH. "Bryce Hospital has been a cornerstone in the state's journey of mental health care and as a beacon of innovation and service."

The celebrated event brought together honored guests and presenters, including a video message from Governor Ivey; Speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives Nathaniel Ledbetter; Dr. Catherine Randall; and family members and friends of former ADMH Commissioner John Houston, whose unwavering commitment to all individuals served and to the preservation of mental health history, was the foundation for the Bryce Hospital Museum.

"The Bryce Museum is a testament to our state's renewed commitment to supporting mental health care," said Speaker Ledbetter. "It's been an honor to work with Governor Ivey, Commissioner Boswell and many remarkable private partners and advocates to expand access to mental health care in Alabama. Our work has only just begun, and I look forward to our continued efforts to move Alabama's crisis care system forward."

The opening of the Bryce Mental Health Museum marks a full-circle moment in our state's history. Alabama was ahead of its time when Bryce opened its doors in 1861 to its first mental health patient: a civil war soldier.

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Renowned for the use of moral treatment in service to individuals and innovative architecture, Bryce played a pivotal role in the advancement of mental health care in the state.

In the 1960s, Governor Lurleen Wallace toured Bryce Hospital and successfully persuaded the Alabama Legislature to make historic investments in mental health facilities. Today, Governor Ivey, Speaker Ledbetter,

and the Alabama Legislature have recommitted Alabama to this legacy. By approving the largest investments ever made to mental health in our state's history, Alabama's Crisis System of Care was made possible.

The museum is part of the [Catherine and Pettus Randall Welcome Center at the University of Alabama, in the historic Bryce Main property](#). The museum offers education and information through its extensive collection of photographs, artifacts,

and exhibits, while honoring history and progress of mental health care.

ADMH invites all to visit the Bryce Hospital Museum, located at the [Catherine and Pettus Randall Welcome Center at the University of Alabama](#)

To see full library of photos from the event, please visit the [Bryce Hospital Museum webpage](#).



Bryce Hospital Museum Grand Opening



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Want to be included in the next issue?

Send us your stories, achievements and events!

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334-242-3417

Alabama one of 10 states selected for CCBHC demonstration program

Awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the program funding will allow Alabama’s behavioral healthcare system to begin fully transitioning to the CCBHC business model.

“Our department has a bold vision. One day, Alabamians in all 67 counties will have access to 24/7 mental health and substance use treatment and live a full life in the community,” ADMH Commissioner Kimberly Boswell said. “Receiving this grant and the opportunity to expand our work on the CCBHC model is a major step toward this vision.”

The CCBHC model is person-centered and 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.

A transition to the model will ensure statewide expansion

of and access to mental healthcare for all Alabamians, said Shalandra Rogers, CCBHC state project director.

“One thing about this model is that it’s trying to address all of the disparities associated with care,” she said. “The acronym stands for ‘Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic,’ but beyond that it’s a means for creating access for all. It’s really transformative.”

Alabama is among 10 states chosen to participate in the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Medicaid Demonstration Program.

Ultimately, the changes will translate into cost-saving in other areas, such as

law enforcement, prisons and jails, and emergency rooms, Rogers said.

CCBHC’s are required to:

- Offer crisis services available 24/7/365
- Provide care for anyone who requests service, regardless of a patient’s ability to pay, and irrespective of residency, diagnosis or age
- Meet high-quality standards for all services offered and connect patients to care as quickly as possible

Nationally, CCBHC’s provide an estimated three million people with mental health and substance use treatment and care, with 79 percent of clinics serving more people after becoming a CCBHC, according to the 2024 CCBHC Impact Report.

States that have successfully implemented the CCBHC Model are noting improvements in 24/7 access to quality care, workforce capacity and improved patient outcomes.

The other states selected for the demonstration program are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Vermont.



Federal CCBHC Medicaid Demonstration (And SAMHSA Expansion Grants)
 State contains at least one local SAMHSA expansion grantee
 CMS-approved payment method for CCBHCs via a SPA or 1115 waiver separate from Demonstration

Mobile artist discovered art's healing power at a young age



Ty Tover working on a mural at a pediatrician's office.

As part of ADMH's annual observance of Mental Health Awareness Month each May, the department sponsors the Capitol Showcase, an exhibit spotlighting the artistic works of individuals with mental illnesses, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities.

This year's showcase featured more than 90 artists using a variety of media, including acrylics, pencil, mixed media, textiles, and photography.

Mobile artist Tyrome "Ty" Tover was among those with a piece on display. His painting, entitled "Away from Here," focuses attention on a young girl gazing out an open window at a butterfly.



The subject matter and the painting's vibrant, fluorescent shades of blue and yellow are meant to represent hope and freedom, Tover said.

"Blue is a spiritual color, a color of calmness and sometimes the color of depression and sorrow. In this painting, I also twine in bursts of yellow, which is joy, happiness, freedom, strength," said the 53-year-old, who was diagnosed with clinical depression in his 30s. "It's expressing to the world that this child wanted to be anywhere away from here – finding herself, with the freedom in that butterfly representing hope for her."

Even as a 2-year-old child, Tover knew he experienced the world differently from his friends and family.

"I didn't really understand any of it," he said. "I just knew I was always sad. Like I would have moments of sadness and quietness."

He discovered the healing power of art through his next-door neighbor, an illustrator. The two would paint and draw together.

"That's what started it. The art became my go-to, my safe space," Tover said.

The Capitol Showcase was not the first time Tover's art has been displayed publicly. In 2022, his work was spotlighted in a two-month exhibit at the Mobile Arts Council Gallery @ Room 1927 in Mobile's historic district. Another work, "Alone," won an award from the World Health Organization (WHO) and is on display in the "WHO Futures Art Exhibition: Envisioning the Future of Health in 2050" virtual 3D gallery (<https://whofuturesartexhibition.artcall.org/pages/web-gallery>).

His latest project is a painting for the walls of the pediatric waiting room at the Mobile County Department of Health, where the Mobile native works with the Ryan White Clinic as a peer mentor, advocate and art therapist.

The mural, of different types of fish in vivid fluorescent colors, is intended to demonstrate to children that "we can be the same, but different, and that's OK."

In his work at the Ryan White Clinic, Tover said, his primary message for his clients is that it's important for them to take care of their mental as well as their physical health.

"I tell them, 'Mental and physical health are sisters – they both need your attention. And don't give up. It gets better. We need you, and the world needs your light.' "



Caption for photograph

Free Naloxone kits available to public, first responders

For individuals with substance use disorder, a reversal medication such as Naloxone (Narcan) often can facilitate the transition to treatment and recovery.

Through a collaboration with the Jefferson County Department of Health, ADMH provides free kits and training on the use of Naloxone to the public and first responders.

Naloxone is an opioid antagonist which binds to opioid receptors and can reverse and block the effects of opioids such as heroin, morphine, and oxycodone. It is administered when a patient is showing signs of opioid overdose and is a temporary treatment with short-term effects.

A 2015 “Good Samaritan” law provides immunity to those prescribing and administering Naloxone and other similar medications. In 2016, a law was passed granting the state health officer or a county health officer the authority to write a standing order for dispensing Naloxone.

To access the training and apply for a free kit, members of the public may visit <https://www.jcdh.org/SitePages/Programs-Services/CommunityHealth/SubstanceUseandAddiction/NaloxoneTrainingReg.aspx>.

Raising awareness and Saving Lives: the Importance of Overdose Day

The Alabama Department of Mental Health will join organizations worldwide in commemorating International Overdose Awareness Day on Aug. 31.

The annual campaign increases awareness of overdose, remembers those who have been lost to an overdose, acknowledges the grief of friends and family, and serves as an opportunity to renew our commitment to ending overdose. The theme for the 2024 campaign is “Together We Can,” which underscores the collective strength of communities working to reduce overdose deaths.



Nikki Warren's Road to Recovery: A Testimonial of Hope

I was admitted to treatment for my heroin use just days before my 30th birthday.

What a way to turn 30—in a place that I equated to adult daycare. I had been arrested the month prior, at the height of my heroin addiction, after a several-day-long blackout and had been charged with nine felonies. I have no recollection of this blackout aside from a few flashbacks. The story was recounted to me later by different individuals, and I have pieced it together as best as I could. The last memory I can recall is going to my dealer to buy my usual bag of heroin.

It turns out the bag contained pure Fentanyl. This was before Fentanyl was common, and everyone I knew had never seen it—only heard about it. During my blackout, I know that I stole my mother's wallet, went back to my dealer to buy more, and overdosed. I was not “narcanned” or taken to the hospital, and I did not have friends or family host an intervention for me. Instead, two individuals who were trying to buy drugs from me could not get me to come to my door, so they came inside to find me lying on the floor, experiencing an overdose. If not for this, I would have died alone on my bathroom floor.

I eventually woke up in the Walker County Jail with no recollection of the previous events and only the knowledge that I was being charged with nine felonies, and I was probably going to be sentenced to prison. In an act of pure desperation, I went in front of Judge Allred and asked for help. Judge Allred gave me the help I needed, even if it was not the help I had in mind at the time. I was ordered to complete one year of substance use disorder treatment, and Judge Allred said if I completed that, then he would allow me to be a part of his drug court program. If I completed 1.5 years of his drug court program, then he would dismiss all my charges with prejudice. When I got to treatment at New Life for Women in Gadsden, Alabama, my goal was to “fake it until I make it.”

I wanted to get the next year over with and get out of there so that I could have a “normal” life. In the fourth month of treatment at New Life, my roommate left treatment one evening against medical advice and died from an overdose within a week. This was my wake-up call. I realized that I was not in a fight to be “normal” again or even to get my freedom back—I was in a fight for my life. It was only then that I began to take my time in treatment more seriously and started to follow

the suggestions given to me by individuals who came before me.

I learned to develop the tools for recovery and how to utilize them. I developed a personal relationship with my higher power. I focused on healing and letting go of my past. It took 2.5 years, but I completed drug court and got my Certified Recovery Support Specialist certification through the Alabama Department of Mental Health in 2020. I immediately started working in the field of substance use disorders and have not looked back.

This past January, I celebrated six years in recovery. Today, I am a productive citizen, a really cool aunt, the Outreach Program Coordinator for R.O.S.S., and so much more. I will graduate with my BSW in December. Every day, I am grateful for my recovery and the opportunity to share my story with others who are just like me. I know that what I went through was not wasted pain because I can share my lived experience to help others find their way out.



How Being Trauma Informed Improves Criminal Justice System Responses



On June 24-25, 2024, law enforcement representatives, behavioral health providers and peer support workers from around the state convened at the Walker County Department of Human Resources to participate in a Train the Trainer Program on *How Being Trauma Informed Improves Criminal Justice System Responses*.

The training was facilitated by Dr. Maureen McLeod and Michelle Espinosa Clark who shared information about the prevalence of trauma in justice involved men and women, the impact of trauma on behavior, and how to develop trauma informed responses in jails, prisons, detention centers, the court system and the community.

Trainee's learned how to avoid re-traumatizing individuals, how to increase public safety, decrease recidivism rates, and promote and support recovery of justice-involved women and men with serious mental illness and substance use.



Alabama's New Nationally Certified Trauma Trainers

- Amanda Gray
- April Watkins
- Brailey Busby
- Camille Holcomb
- Carl Carpenter
- Carla Bugg
- Elana Merriweather
- Gwen Thomas LeBlanc
- Joshua Lynn
- Justin White
- Lashanda Craig
- Latasha Moore
- Mark Litvine
- Miriam Garner
- Samantha Barfield
- Stephanie Dearen
- Yakima Burch



Staff Showcase: Kathleen McGehee

I recently joined the ADMH Office of Public Information as a part-time writer.

As the sister of an individual with intellectual and mental health disabilities, I have been touched by disability in a profoundly personal way. Those experiences have fueled my professional interests and led me to become a staunch advocate for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Although I am new to ADMH, I am not new to public service. Before I came aboard at the department, I worked for 20 years in the communications office at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), spending the last seven years of my career there as the department's communications director. During my tenure at ADRS, I also earned a master's in rehabilitation counseling through a Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) fellowship at Auburn University, further enhancing my knowledge of and passion for disability.

Since retiring in January 2020, I have remained professionally active, doing freelance consulting work for Alabama Care, Family Voices of Alabama, Troy University Continuing Education and Outreach and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health.

I consider myself a lifelong learner, so I relish the prospect of discovering more about ADMH and its history, services, programs, short- and long-term goals, and staff and providers. I'm grateful for the opportunity to stay involved in the world of disability services and to do my part in promoting the important work that ADMH is doing under Commissioner Boswell's leadership.

Lastly, I am honored to play even a small role in the department's mission to "serve, empower and support" Alabamians with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders.

Alabama's Developmental Disabilities Community Waiver Program

A Path to Independence and Support

Did you know that the Alabama Department of Mental Health offers a vital program to support individuals with developmental disabilities? The Developmental Disabilities (DD) Community Waiver Program is designed to provide essential services and supports that help individuals live independently and participate fully in their communities.

The DD Community Waiver Program offers a variety of services tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. These services are aimed at enhancing quality of life, promoting independence, and fostering community integration.

This program empowers individuals with developmental disabilities to live more independently and be active members of their communities. It also provides crucial support to families and caregivers, enhancing their ability to care for their loved ones.

For more information or to start the application process, visit <https://mh.alabama.gov/community-waiver-program/>.



Caption for photograph

Recovery, Community, and Connection

THE 8TH ANNUAL SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY CONFERENCE: AUGUST 16-18

The 8th Annual Substance Use Consumer Conference at Lake Guntersville State Park this August 16th through 18th is a two-and-a-half-day event for clients across the state in all levels of care receiving treatment services in the Alabama Department of Mental Health system of care. The clients are provided with education, social events, and an opportunity to celebrate their recovery efforts. The two-day event includes education on the many pathways of recovery, health care, client rights, how substance use disorder affects family members and friends, ways to reconnect, peer support, social activities, and an introduction to needed resources to obtain and maintain recovery.



This year ADMH will offer resources for naloxone, and partners such as the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Career Center, The Recovery Organization of Support Specialists, People Engaged in Recovery, Wings Across Alabama, NAMI Alabama, Alabama Alliance of Recovery Residences, Magic City Wellness Center for HIV/Hep C. testing will be there!

The conference started in 2016 and has served at least 200 people every year. This year's theme is "Start Your Story Today." This theme signifies that recovery from a substance use disorder along with mental health challenges is a lifelong process.

A life that has meaning and joy even in the most difficult of times. It is also equally as important to let the individuals in attendance know that they can restart their recovery story at any given time. The weekend is spent loving individuals to a better life no matter where they may be in their recovery process.

Another lasting impact is the fun we experience in recovery. The conference is jam packed with karaoke, dancing, games and more! We have had at times throughout the years had peers that were introduced to recovery in treatment and then attended the Substance Use Consumer Recovery Conference at Lake Guntersville. Today those individuals are Certified Recovery Support Specialist certified by the Alabama Department of Mental Health. This conference has had a lasting impact on the individuals we serve, and it is an honor and a privilege to be a part of something so special and amazing.



Congratulations!

BRIAN MOSS & SANDY PASCUAL

In May, Brian Moss and Sandy Pascual recently presented at the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) national conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

KAMAL RAISANI

Congratulations to Kamal Raisani for passing the Forensic and Addiction psychiatry board Administered by American Board of Medical Specialities. This is their third recertification.

TERESA POWERS

Teresa Powers presented at the Alabama Association of Play Therapy in June. Her presentation focused on unique presenting issues for deaf and hard of hearing children in the playroom and the impact of the interpreter in that space.

Sandy Pascual & Brian Moss



Recognition and Appreciation

Staff Highlight

Stephan White, Activity Program Aide, is being highlighted by Cheryl Stewart for his outgoing and artistic personality. He is an asset to entire Bryce Hospital. He exposes the clients to an advance level of artistry and provides outstanding decorations during special events.

Serve.
Empower.
Support.

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