



## Alabama Department of Mental Health Board of Trustees Meeting

*In-Person / Virtual*

Friday, May 16, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Commissioner's Conference Room

### **I. Call to Order**

Secretary Kimberly Boswell called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

### **II. Roll Call – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell, Board Secretary**

#### Trustees Present:

Secretary, Commissioner Kimberly Boswell  
Dave White (Proxy for Governor Kay Ivey, Chair)  
Larry Bailey  
Rodney Barnes  
Judge Sherri Friday  
Dr. Edward Hall  
Judge Christopher Hughes  
Dr. Sandra Parker  
John Scherer

#### Trustees Absent:

Vice Chair, Donna Foster  
Catherine Gayle Fuller (Proxy for Lt Governor Will Ainsworth)  
Jade Scofield (Proxy for Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter)  
Dr. Cynthia Bisbee  
William “Pete” Cobb  
Colin Harris  
Leslie Sanders

#### Interested Parties Present:

Andrea Hutchings, Director of Legislative and Constituent Affairs  
LaVonda Blair, Associate Commissioner for Administration  
Malissa Valdes, Director of Public Information  
Kathy Sawyer, Associate Commissioner for Developmental Disabilities  
Nicole Walden, Associate Commissioner for Mental Illness & Substance Use  
Tommy Klinner, Chief Legal Counsel  
Dr. Christine Rembert, Director of Facility Services  
Mary Ogden, Administrative Assistant to the Commissioner's Office

### **III. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell**

There were no additions or changes to the agenda. Larry Bailey moved to accept the agenda as presented; Rodney Barnes seconded. Agenda accepted unanimously. (Attachment 1)

### **IV. Review of the February 14, 2025, BOT Minutes – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell**

There were no corrections to the February 14, 2025, minutes. Rodney Barnes moved to accept as written; Larry Bailey seconded. Agenda accepted unanimously. (Attachment 2)

## V. Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell

- Commissioner Boswell introduced our new board members, Dr. Edward Hall and Mr. Jay Scherer, who both bring years of experience with services to people with developmental disabilities.
- The Alabama Legislature adjourned “Sine Die,” May 14, 2025, making the end of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session.
- A national report has been published that overdose deaths have decreased, and we are excited that methods are saving lives. Commissioner Boswell added that if anyone is interested in getting Narcan kits we'd be happy to send them to you.
- The Veteran's Mental Health Steering Committee's (VMHSC) Comprehensive Plan was presented to and approved by the House and Senate Veteran and Military Service Committees. It now goes to the Governor for approval. The VMHC made six (6) recommendations:
  - Establish the Alabama Veterans Resource Center (Act 2025-20) and support the \$5M appropriation in the Education Trust Fund Supplemental to establish the Center.
  - Support the \$2.5M in the Education Trust Fund appropriation to expand Traumatic Brain Injury Programs in Alabama.
  - VMHSC Comprehensive Plan
  - Implement the Storing Ammunition and Firearms to Enhance Resilience (S.A.F.E.R.) Together Program in Alabama through Act 2025-93.
  - Develop a partnership agreement with ADMH and ADVA to address the collaborative efforts required to implement the plan.
  - Organize a Veterans Mental Health Summit to educate providers, veterans, and their families.
  - Evaluate best practices using data from pilot programs to determine which programs should be replicated statewide.
- The ADMH Leadership Team has been working on our Strategic Plan. Our objective is to present the plan to you at the next board meeting.

## VI. Divisional Reports

### A. Chief of Staff and Legislative/Constituent Affairs Report –Collier Tynes Dixon

(Attachment 3)

- During this year's Legislative Session, ADMH tracked 237 bills related to mental health, developmental disability (DD) services, healthcare, human resources, state agencies, and other topics. Fifty-three (53) have been enacted into law, four (4) are currently on the Governor's desk. Some highlights:
  - **Act 2025-171** – Adult-size changing tables bill. This bill addressed installing and maintaining adult-sized, adjustable changing tables in public buildings, which will be a requirement for new buildings and those being renovated in 2028.
  - **Act 2025-183** – Accountability Courts. This act changed the statute on drug courts and expanded its scope for individuals with mental illness, substance use disorder, as well as Veterans who are justice involved.
  - **Act 2025-236** – The 310 Boards Bill was signed this week and shifts their board composition to not require an executive committee. If a Board elects to have an executive committee, Probate Judges and Sheriffs or Sheriff's staff must serve on the executive committee if they are already appointed to the Board.
  - **HB 166** – Bans the use of cell phones during the instructional day in K-12 schools.

- Collier reviewed a constituent case that involved very complex needs. Our staff worked hand in hand with the provider, service coordinator, school, and family to ensure secure residential placement. This is not the only case we are seeing that is this complex. The board discussed potential costs of these complex cases.

**B. Division of MHSU –Nicole Walden, Associate Commissioner (Attachment 4)**

- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Update – Ms. Walden discussed CCBHC being the transformation of our system when it comes to mental health and substance use and how we provide services. At the Federal level they have specified 15-17 outcome measures to report on at state and clinical levels. To accomplish this, the Department has completed the following:
  - We have invested in a platform called Netsmart which reports on the outcomes. Our first demonstration year ends July 2025 and six months after that we will complete an evaluation report talking about what happened in our first 12 months based on those evaluation measures. We hope to see the difference this model is making.
  - A three-day CCBHC Financial Blueprint Training was held. The model for CCBHC changes how our providers are paid through a PPS rate (Prospective Payment System Rate). All levels of the ADMH clinical and fiscal staff, and all of Medicaid’s clinical and fiscal staff attended. There were things that ADMH and Medicaid had different thoughts on, and we were able to address them with all of the experts and stakeholders sitting in the room. We now understand what goes into determining the PPS rate for each agency, as each agency will be paid a different PPS rate based on where they are, who they are serving, and how many people they’re serving. Part of the reason to include Medicaid was we want them to know we’re being 100% transparent about how this PPS rate works, to make sure they understand the PPS rate at the same level we do, so that they know what they’re buying.
- Tier I and Tier II Providers.
  - Tier I – AltaPointe and Wellstone, have been certified by the state as CCBHC effective July 2024. Work is coming up on a year and going well. We are starting to see a big difference.
  - Tier II Providers – these are providers who claimed they are not ready yet. As of July 2024. We have two coming on board this year, Mountain Lakes in July 2025, and, potentially, Northwest Alabama Medical Health Center, either July 1<sup>st</sup> or October 1<sup>st</sup>, as you can do this quarterly. We are holding weekly work session with our Tier II consultants to help them understand what the 9-core services they must offer are, which must follow the ASAM model of care for substance use.

**C. Division of Developmental Disabilities – Kathy Sawyer, Associate Commissioner (Attachment 5)**

- Associate Commissioner Sawyer discussed the three waiver types used in Alabama (Intellectual Disability Waiver, or ID Waiver, Living at Home Waiver (LH Waiver), and the Community Waiver Program (CWP). The waiting list to obtain these waivers has grown to 1,800 people, as the complex nature of the new crisis we are seeing is a major challenge to our providers and system. This quarter, we staffed 105 cases across Alabama. We were fortunate to provide services for 52 of those when we are seeing individuals with borderline high IQs, but they are presenting significant behavioral challenges. Further, many individuals have autism, a diagnosis that we did not see at this rate in past years. We commonly refer to these individuals as “Dually Diagnosed.” Our providers have struggled to meet the needs of this growing population, as they require much more intensive services and supports. These providers must provide special-level staffing for these individuals, which can require 1-1 to 3-1 staffing, in a lot of homes across the state. There are not many providers in our system

who are willing to take these individuals; however, the costs are extreme. We are currently serving approximately 400 individuals out of our population with special-level staffing.

We are working through these challenges, to redesign the system to meet those needs.

**D. Division of Administration – LaVonda Blair, Associate Commissioner**

(Attachments 6)

- LaVonda Blair presented her PowerPoint “Money Matters” (Attachment 7), discussing the comparative analysis of the department’s revenue profile and our spending levels for FY24 and FY25, and key highlights of including revenues, expenditures, and various types and sources of funds.
- ADMH continues to see improvements in increasing full-time staff and decreasing contract staff at facilities.

**E. Office of Public Information – Malissa Valdes, Public Information Officer**

(Attachments 8 & 9)

- The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Capitol Showcase is happening now, where artwork created by individuals with mental illnesses, substance use disorders, developmental disabilities, and co-occurring conditions is exhibited. Artwork is currently displayed at three locations, the Bryce Museum, Montgomery Airport, and the State Capitol. We’ve received extremely positive feedback.
- Our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Strike Out Stigma baseball game is tonight. Trustee Rodney Barnes will be throwing out the first pitch, and staff member Mary Ogden will sing the National Anthem.
- We concluded Employee Recognition Week last week, which included a wellness walk, a sweet snack bar, and other fun events as a little respite for the staff.

**F. Board/Stakeholder Discussion**

No reports.

**VII. Other Business**

No other business.

**VIII. Next Meetings**

All meetings begin at 10:00 a.m.

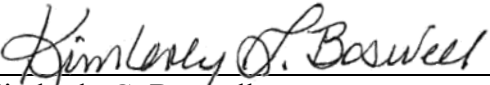
**A.** August 15, 2025

**B.** November 21, 2025

**IX. Adjournment**

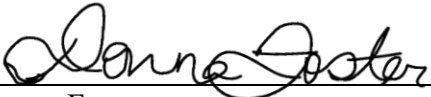
Christopher Hughes made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Rodney Barnes, and the meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
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Kimberly G. Boswell  
Secretary of the Board and Commissioner

08/15/25

Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Donna Foster  
Vice Chair of the Board

08/15/25

Date