

Alabama Department of Mental Health Board of Trustees Meeting

In-Person / Virtual

Friday, November 21, 2025

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Commissioner’s Conference Room

I. Call to Order

Vice Chair, Donna Foster, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m., and introduced our new board member, Mayor Charles Ward.

II. Roll Call – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell, Board Secretary

Trustees Present:

Vice Chair, Donna Foster
Secretary, Commissioner Kimberly Boswell
Dave White, Proxy for Governor Kay Ivey, Chair
Rodney Barnes
Dr. Cynthia Bisbee
Johnna Breland
William “Pete” Cobb
Dr. Edward Hall
Colin Harris
Mayor Charles Ward

Trustees Absent:

Catherine Gayle Fuller, Proxy for Lt Governor Will Ainsworth
Jade Wagner, Proxy for Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter
Judge Sherri Friday
Judge Christopher Hughes
Leslie Sanders
John Scherer

Interested Parties Present:

Sheila Black, Administrative Assistant to the Commissioner’s Office
LaVonda Blair, Advisor for Administration
Camille Cumuze, Associate Commissioner for Developmental Disabilities
Brooke Hibbard, Associate Commissioner for Administration
Andrea Hutchings, Director of Legislative and Constituent Affairs
Tommy Klinner, Chief Legal Counsel
Mary Ogden, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Boswell
Dr. Christine Rembert, Director of Facility Services
Collier Tynes Dixon, Chief of Staff
Malissa Valdes, Director of Public Information
Nicole Walden, Associate Commissioner for Mental Illness & Substance Use

III. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Vice Chair Donna Foster

There were no additions or changes to the agenda. Johnna Breland moved to accept the agenda as presented, Dave White seconded. Agenda accepted unanimously. (Attachment 1)

IV. Review of the August 15, 2025, BOT Minutes – Vice Chair Donna Foster

There were two edits to the August 15, 2025, BOT minutes. Pete Cobb moved to accept as corrected; Dr. Bisbee seconded. Agenda accepted unanimously. (Attachment 2)

V. Commissioner’s Report – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell

A. Commissioner Boswell announced that both AC LaVonda Blair (Admin) and AC Kathy Sawyer (DDD) are retiring. She introduced their replacements, AC Brooke Hibbard and AC Camille Cumuze, respectively. The new associate commissioners will work with the current associates during a transition period. Information about retirement gatherings will be announced soon.

- B. The Commissioner shared a brief slide presentation on ADMH statistics showing reductions in drug overdose deaths and opioid prescriptions. (Attachment 3)

VI. Divisional Reports

A. COS and Legislative/Constituent Affairs Report –Collier Tynes Dixon (Attachment 4)

- Chief of Staff Tynes explained we are gearing up for the legislative session which starts early on January 13, 2026. The Legislative Affairs Team is reviewing pre-filed bills. As of now, 13 of the 91 pre-filed bills is on ADMH’s monitoring list.
- COS Tynes reviewed the list of Veterans Mental Health Steering Committee pilot project awardees with the Board. COS Tynes stated that the RFP process resulted in a diverse array of evidence-based treatments and programs for Alabama veterans. One program she highlighted is providing free Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy for veterans, and studies have shown positive effects using EMDR therapy for individuals with PTSD. In response, Johnna Breland asked if the pilots see positive results whether or not these could be helpful for children in foster care with PTSD. Commissioner Boswell confirmed that ADMH would definitely want to explore how programs that show effectiveness could be applied to children in foster care. COS Tynes affirmed this and explained to the Board that children in foster care experience PTSD at extremely high rates. Rodney Barnes stated his interest in helping younger veterans and is hopeful that treatments from the pilot programs could assist them in receiving the treatment for PTSD they need.

B. Division of MHSU –Nicole Walden, Associate Commissioner (Attachment 5)

- AC Walden spoke on continuing the Crisis Centers’ trend of consistently having over 1,000 evaluations in a month for the past three months. She shared that recently Alabama was recognized as the most improved state with 988 Crisis answering rate. SAMHSA’s goal is to have an 80% answering rate; ADMH set a goal of 90%. We have consistently been over 90% since July 2025. We credit SpectraCare, our last crisis center to come on board, which shot us over 90%. They’re only 24/5 right now, and when they do open 7 days a week, you’ll see our answer rate go up even more. With such high percentages, calls made from Alabama stay in Alabama, which means they receive local resources and get immediate help if needed.
- CCBHC Update – Five Community Mental Health Centers will become CCBHCs in 2026.

C. Division of Developmental Disabilities – Camille Cumuze, Associate Commissioner (Attachment 5)

- Currently there are 1,991 individuals on the waiting list. We are seeing growth on the waiting list due to an influx of complex case referrals; children’s numbers are significant. We are tracking the needs of complex cases as well as tracking waivers more in depth.
- We will be offering **Waiver Listening Sessions** (Attachment 6) in each region so individuals, families and caregivers can share their voices and help shape the services and support provided through Medicaid waiver programs.
- We have decertified several provider settings over the quarter having concerns in personnel. Patients were relocated smoothly. We are continuing to monitor to ensure the accountability and safety of our patients and will continue to step in when there is need.
- DHR Crisis Referrals are increasing. We have extended 12 CWP slots to DHR, which is in addition to 25 set for ID/LAH waivers. Commissioner Boswell stated that we saw an increase in our special mental health funds at the end of FY2025. With this increase in funds, we are planning to use Special Mental Health Funds to open an Intermediate

Care Facility ICF). We have been in discussion with a provider in Birmingham to make this possible.

D. Division of Administration – Brooke Hibbard, Associate Commissioner (Attachment 6)

- Staffing is continuing to stabilize throughout our facilities and divisions. We still have contract staffing, but not emergency staffing (emergency staffing is more money).
- The Office of Certification Administration (OCA) has rolled out their new Automated Alabama Certification Program (ACAP). AC Hibbard shared the slides on comparative data and outcome expectations (Attachment 7). The soft launch on October 31st has been successful, and we have started registering providers and accepting apps through the system. The features in the automate system will eliminate redundancy, provide real-time status and updates, increase accuracy and timeliness; less paper pushing.

E. Office of Public Information – Malissa Valdes, Public Information Officer (Attach. 8)

- ADMH holds trainings all over the state and the Public Information Office promotes these events. We promoted Suicide Prevention month with a great amount of press.
- We have not reached the required 1,000 pre-orders for the mental health license plate. However, with just seven more orders we can request a plate without the colored background. \$41 of each tag purchase goes to Mental Health, where we will use it to promote mental health in the state providing information that informs the community where their crisis center is.

F. Board/Stakeholder Discussion

No reports.

VII. Other Business

No other business.

VIII. Next Meetings

All meetings begin at 10:00 a.m.

A. February 20, 2026

B. May 15, 2026

C. August 14, 2026

D. November 20, 2026

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Kimberly G. Boswell
Secretary of the Board and Commissioner

02/20/26

Date



Donna Foster
Vice Chair of the Board

02/20/26

Date