



Alabama Department of Mental Health Board of Trustees Meeting

In-Person / Virtual

Friday, May 15, 2026

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 10:06 a.m. and called roll.

II. Roll Call – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell, Board Secretary

Trustees Present:

Secretary, Commissioner Kimberly Boswell
Dave White, Proxy for Chair, Governor Kay Ivey
Rodney Barnes
Michael Murphree, Proxy for Dr. Cynthia Bisbee
Johnna Breland
Dr. Edward Hall
Jay Scherer
Mayor Charles Ward

Trustees Absent:

Lt Governor Will Ainsworth
William “Pete” Cobb
Vice Chair, Donna Foster
Judge Sherri Friday
Colin Harris
Judge Christopher Hughes
Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter
Leslie Sanders

Interested Parties Present:

Camille Cumuze, ADMH Associate Commissioner for Developmental Disabilities
Brooke Hibbard, ADMH Associate Commissioner for Administration
Nick Hines, ADMH Chief Legal Counsel
Mary Ogden, ADMH Executive Assistant to Commissioner Boswell
Dr. Christine Rembert, ADMH Director of Facility Services
Collier Tynes Dixon, ADMH Chief of Staff
Malissa Valdes, ADMH Director of Public Information
Nicole Walden, ADMH Associate Commissioner for Mental Illness & Substance Use
Dr. Will Rutland, UAB Montgomery, Heersink School of Medicine
Emma Katherine Dykes, Intern with Governor's legal office
Kimberly Osborne – Doctoral Student with Jacksonville State

III. Review and Approval of the Agenda – Secretary Kimberly Boswell

There were no additions to the agenda. Rodney Barnes moved to accept the agenda as presented, which was seconded by Dave White. However, without a quorum, no action was taken.
(Attachment 1)

IV. Review of the February 20, 2026, BOT Minutes – Secretary Kimberly Boswell

The Board did not have a quorum and could not vote on the previous meeting's minutes.
(Attachment 2)

V. Commissioner's Report – Commissioner Kimberly Boswell

- Mental Health Block Grant Funding Bill - “Early Action and Responsiveness Lifts Youth Minds Act” - The Commissioner explained an amendment to Title XIX of the Public Health Service Act proposes to give states flexibility to use up to 5% of Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) funding for prevention and early intervention. Under the current grant, youth are required to have a diagnosis to be served. This change would make services available to youth without a diagnosis. Mental Health America’s advocacy efforts for the Early Action and Responsiveness Lifts Youth Minds Act are happening at the federal level, and we can share more information on how you may be able to help support it as it moves through the legislative process.
- ADMH FY 2027 Budget Appropriations - The Department received a \$3M reduction in its FY 2027 General Fund appropriation. However, the Department received \$2.5 million for civil commitment beds and \$500,000 for 988 in Opioid Settlement Funds, totaling \$3 million. Thus, the Department remains at level funding.
- ADMH FY 2027 Budget Presentation - The Commissioner reviewed the FY 2027 Budget Request Presentation to the Board to continue to inform them of the Department’s challenges and opportunities. The Budget Presentation is attached. (Attachment 3)
- Alabama Mental Health Task Force – A bill was passed to establish a Mental Health Task Force, and the first meeting is set for June 3, 2026. We will be working with several members of the legislature. It is a great opportunity to provide them with a deeper level of understanding about the Department and its budget. As we know more, we will send information to the Board.
- Introduction of Dr. Will Rutland - Commissioner Boswell welcomed Dr. Will Rutland, who has been recommended to the Governor to serve on the ADMH Board of Trustees. Dr. Rutland serves as the Director of the Psychiatry Residency Program at UAB, and he leads the state’s first “street psychiatry program” at UAB Montgomery’s campus. Dr. Rutland informed the Board that the street psychiatry team engages with individuals in the Montgomery area every Wednesday morning, and they provide care directly to individuals in high-risk areas of Montgomery. Dr. Rutland offered to the Board to join them one Wednesday and provided them with his contact information.

VI. Divisional Reports

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

Chief of Staff Tynes Dixon reported that the Alabama Legislature ended its 2026 Regular Legislative Session on April 9th. The ADMH legislative team tracked 181 bills, with 58 of those being enacted.

There are two special projects that the Commissioner’s Office has been working on. The first is a project for veterans to receive ETMS (EEG Guided Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation). Tynes Dixon gave a brief overview of the science and background of it and highlighted that ADMH has submitted a proposal to Senator Tuberville’s office for a Congressional Directed Spending Grant to fund the program in Alabama.

Secondly, Tynes Dixon reported on the continued work with NYU implementing trauma systems therapy. She updated the board members on the progress of the three pilot programs and the work that the Complex Case group is doing to help the individuals that we serve.

There was brief discussion regarding FDA approval for the ETMS program, but the Commissioner updated the board that they are currently in the final stage of approval from the FDA. This concluded the Chief of Staff's report.

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

Associate Commissioner Walden updated the Board on crisis centers. South Central Mental Health's Rural Crisis Center was scheduled to open in June but has been delayed to early July.

A new Director of Substance Use Services, Brooke Phillips, has been hired. Second, ADMH applied for a learning initiative through SAMHSA to develop a Tobacco Free Recovery Action Plan Goal targeted towards adolescents and transition age youth. Alabama was one of 10 states that were awarded. The initiative will help train our behavioral health clinicians who provide adolescent services for substance use disorder, in the areas of vaping/smoking, what kind of interventions should be utilized and the implementation of a standard of care in all our agencies. AC Walden will continue to provide updates about this initiative in the coming meetings.

AC Walden also noted that ADMH held three Adolescent Crisis Response and Behavioral Health Summits (May 4, 5, and 6, in Huntsville, Birmingham, and Mobile). Over the three days, 450 people attended, with only 10% being our providers.

C. Division of Developmental Disabilities – Camille Cumuze, Associate Commissioner
(Attachment 6)

Associate Commissioner Cumuze began her report by informing the board that CMS has determined ADMH in compliance with Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS) requirements. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) was officially released from corrective action that began many years ago. Further, CMS was complimentary of the Department's efforts. The Commissioner reminded the board that if we did not come into compliance with HCBS, approximately \$600M of our budget was at risk. The DDD staff worked extremely hard for many years, with many thanks to former Associate Commissioner Kathy Sawyer.

AC Cumuze then discussed the deficit in the DDD budget, as well as how new enrollments and the changing needs of individuals already on the waiver impact the division's expenses. Once individuals are on the waiver and their needs inevitably change, they are entitled to increased services that meet their needs. Not only are the needs of our waiver participants increasing, but the at-home caregivers are also aging. This results in an increased need for residential levels of care that are more costly. With more than 5,000 people enrolled on the waiver, DDD is keeping a close eye on how much these changing dynamics are driving the deficit and limiting enrollments to emergencies.

AC Cumuze then reported the DDD is working on consolidating its **three** waiver services to **one** waiver, and we are working in partnership with Alabama Medicaid and CMS. We are looking towards improving our services, serving people in the least restrictive settings, and meeting their needs while being mindful of the budget. A draft is due early fall this year.

AC Cumuze then provided an update regarding the Incident Prevention Management System (IPMS). There was a bill that was filed during the legislative session that concerned the department, as it altered the reporting requirements for providers. In an effort to work with our

providers, we have been meeting with the group and the bill sponsors to come to an agreement on some of the requirements. We have a meeting scheduled next month where we will hopefully be at a reasonable place on agreeing without having to consider legislation next year.

Following AC Cumuze's report, there was discussion regarding the waitlist numbers for the waivers and how cases are becoming increasingly complex. This concluded AC Cumuze's report.

D. Division of Administration – Brooke Hibbard, Associate Commissioner
(Attachment 7)

Associate Commissioner Brooke Hibbard began her update with noting that the finance office has already begun preparations for the FY2027 budget now that session is over.

AC Hibbard then gave a HR Update, informing the board that ADMH has been tracking staffing since June 2022, and we have seen a 40% increase in staffing at the facilities. She provided additional statistics regarding staffing for the expansion.

AC Hibbard then reported on two projects that will both increase efficiencies in the department. The first is the modernization project for OBSRA PASSR Program, which is the nursing home screening division. This is currently a paper process that will be switched to an IT database, that should be completed in mid-August. The second process is one that has been previously reported on for the Office of Certification that has also gone to a digital database. Both processes were heavily laden with paper, so moving to digital systems will be much more efficient for the Department, the providers, and those we serve. This concluded AC Hibbard's report.

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

Malissa Valdes reported that May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and there has been a lot of activity in her office. Malissa noted that the Stike Out Stigma game was well attended, and that the next upcoming event is the Art Show in the Old Supreme Court Library on May 21st.

Valdes noted that the new ADA Compliance requirements for state agencies' websites have been pushed back to 2027. Her office is continuing to help the rest of the Department meet these requirements by adjusting digital documents and website features.

Valdes highlighted that June is PTSD Month, and ADMH will be pushing out materials that were the result of the PTSD Committee that the Commissioner served on. Also in June, it will be the second anniversary of Bryce Hospital Museum being open and encouraged members to stop by if they are in the area.

Lastly, Malissa reported that the Mental Health Matters License plates are officially available to registered Alabama drivers and noted the revenue that it will bring to her office for promotional materials.

F. Bureau of Legal Services – Nick Hines, General Counsel
(Attachment 9)

Commissioner Boswell introduced Nick Hines, the new general counsel for the department.

Nick Hines highlighted the department has made great strides in exiting mediation for the *Hunter vs. Boswell* case and continues towards compliance with the consent decree. Hines then reviewed the department's full plan of getting the Taylor Hardin waitlist to 100.

Hines continued with his report by informing the board that there are more than 100 cases handled by the 6 ADMH attorneys, that have a variety of topics. Nick highlighted that on top of the cases, ADMH legal is trying to be better teachers for the judges across the state. Thus far, ADMH legal has held two continuing education programs for judges and will continue this effort. There was further discussion on how ADMH legal is working with judges to help them understand other treatment options such as jail-based services.

There was more discussion with Dr. Rutland regarding the need for forensic psychiatrists, and UAB's interest in adding additional fellowships. Additionally, Dave White inquired more about the mediation with Judge Thompson, with the Commissioner answering his questions in detail. This concluded Hines' first report to the Board.

G. Board/Stakeholder Discussion

Board member Johanna Breland asked if there were individuals with lived experience represented on the Mental Health Taskforce. There was brief discussion on the membership of the taskforce and Commissioner updated the members that we will be meeting with the sponsor of the legislation soon.

VII. Other Business

None.

VIII. Next Meetings

All meetings begin at 10:00 a.m.

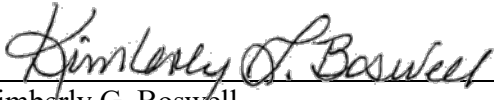
A. August 21, 2026

B. November 20, 2026

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business before the board, Rodney motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dave, passed unanimously, and was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

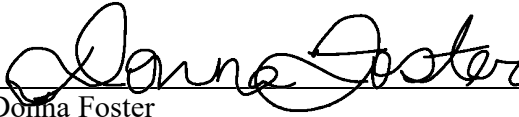
Respectfully Submitted:



Kimberly G. Boswell
Secretary of the Board and Commissioner

8/21/26

Date



Donna Foster
Vice Chair of the Board

8/21/26

Date