



A Message from Commissioner Williams

Dear Friends,

I wanted to check in and see how you're really doing this holiday season. It's no secret the holidays are really tough for a lot of people. You see all the decorations and parties happening and you expect to feel a certain way, but you just don't for whatever reason. Maybe you lost a loved one this time of year or you miss the sunshine or whatever it is on your heart, you're just not feeling it this year.

I want you to know you're not alone, and it's OK.

Whichever holiday you celebrate, the holiday season is about living honestly what's in your heart. We all have our own roads, and we all have things that come up in our daily walks that knock us down from time to time. What matters is how you get up... Who you lean on to help you up... Who you're able to help up along the way.

My hope for you this holiday season is that you'll give yourself a break and some grace. And if you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling, please reach out. You'll find there truly are people who love you and care about you and want the best for you. And that is the best gift of all.

Have a blessed day,

Marie

TDMHSAS Celebrates Milestone Number for Certified Peer Recovery Specialists

TDMHSAS is proud to share that currently there are more than 1,000 Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRS) in Tennessee! CPRS are people with lived experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges who are trained and certified to use their past to help others on the road to recovery.

As of December 1, 2022, Tennessee has 1,018 active Certified Peer Recovery Specialists. In the lifetime of the program, 2,005 Tennesseans have earned their CPRS. Additionally, Tennessee has 85 CFSS and eleven CYAPSS who are current in their certification.

In response to ever-increasing demand for peer support training this year, TDMHSAS and its partners greatly expanded access to the CPRS training and eliminated any waiting list. There are now four full-time CPRS trainers and two to three trainings every month. In just the last year, more than 600 peers have been trained.

Learn more about peer support in Tennessee and watch video profiles of certified peers on our website at

The Power of PEER SUPPORT
How Tennesseans are using their lived experience of behavioral health challenges to help others.

If you've ever had it the expression "lead a mile in my shoes," you know the essence of peer support services. Peer support empowers people living with behavioral health challenges to connect with someone who's "been there." By sharing their experiences, strengths, knowledge, and hope, Certified Peer Recovery Specialists deliver the evidence-based practices in a method that conveys respect and personal responsibility.

CERTIFIED PEER RECOVERY SPECIALISTS ARE:
System Navigators, Recovery Role Models, Recovery Skills Teachers, Personal Story Sharers, Support Group Leaders, Advocates and Educators

TENNESSEE'S CERTIFIED PEER RECOVERY SPECIALIST PROGRAM ENSURES CONSISTENCY, QUALITY, AND PROFESSIONALISM IN PEER SUPPORT SERVICES.

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists have:

- Lived experience of mental illness, substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorder
- A minimum of 2 years of recovery
- A willingness to share their personal recovery story
- Completed an intensive, 40-hour training
- Agreed to abide by the CPRS Code of Ethics
- Committed to 10 hours of continuing education each year
- Access to ongoing supervision

Why are peer support services important?
Research shows that peer specialists model an engaging others into the recovery process with their being example that recovery is real, they can offer contact with people that staff might have found to be more helpful.

Putting Peers to Work in Tennessee
CPRS work in their Support Centers, Crisis Stabilization Units, Psychiatric Hospitals, Community Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Agencies, Recovery Courts, Substance Abuse Treatment Centers, and Managed Care Organizations just to name a few!

1,018
Currently Certified (December 2022)

TN Department of **Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services**

Office of Peer Support Services
1000 West Tennessee Avenue
Nashville, TN 37203-0001
tncprsp@tn.gov

One Region, One Mind
2022-2023
www.tn.gov
www.tn.gov

this link: [TN.gov/behavioral-health/peers](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/peers) Click the image to download our onepager on peer support in Tennessee.

IPS Successes Celebrated at Capitol Event



IPS works! TDMHSAS was proud to highlight the successes of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment during the annual Expect Employment report presentation to Governor Bill Lee. This annual event is a highlight for the members of Tennessee's Employment First Task Force, and the report catalogs the task force members' progress toward increasing employment opportunities for Tennesseans with disabilities. In state fiscal year 2022, Tennessee's IPS providers increased their successful job placements by 25%, and they increased long-term employment (90 days or more) by more than 60%!

This year's Expect Employment event was the first to focus on IPS. Governor Lee got to meet Michael who was the very first IPS client at Dismas House of Nashville. Through the IPS process, Michael rediscovered his passion for working in the culinary world, landed a job at Audrey Nashville and went back to

school at Nashville State.

Learn more about IPS in Tennessee at [TN.gov/behavioral-health/ips](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/ips)



18th Annual Recovery Court Conference



The Tennessee Association of Recovery Court Professionals (TARCP) held its 18th annual recovery court conference in December. This year's theme was "Part of the Solution," where focus was on the recovery-oriented system of care concepts and processes that are evidence-based practices that move

individuals from suffering to thriving. The TARCP's three days of meetings kicked off with an encouraging and invigorating message from Governor Bill Lee. Department presenters including Assistant Commissioner Taryn Sloss and Director of Criminal Justice Programs Rebekah Provost-Emmons were also featured. The final day of the conference featured a packed house to learn more about the essential elements of a mental health court and what it takes to have a successful program.



Liz Ledbetter honored for her work over the years



TARCP recognized our friend and former coworker Liz Ledbetter with the first-ever Ellen L. Abbott vanguard award. Liz and Ellen were an amazing team that greatly expanded recovery courts across Tennessee.

Additional honorees at the TARCP Awards included:

- House Speaker Cameron Sexton was honored with the Rod Bragg Recovery Hero Award for his advocacy and work to expand mental health courts in Tennessee.

- Damien Nethery received the Christy Vernon Spirit Award for his two decades of service in recovery courts.
- Judges Gary Mckenzie and Jimmy Smith were honored for their work in their respective recovery courts.

Recovery Court Success Story



The 2022 TARCP Conference was all about success stories, and we were so pleased to share Kaitlynn's story. Her journey through recovery court, rebuilding relationships with her family, and getting her sons back is really something to be proud of. Click the image above to watch!

TAMHO Focuses on Worforce Development and Resiliency at Annual Conference



Quint Studer with Healthcare Plus Solutions Group delivers the keynote address at the 2022 TAMHO Conference. Studer's focus was on low cost/no cost ways to replenish team spirits.

The Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) held its annual conference in early December with a focus on workforce development and resiliency. Jennifer Armstrong with the TDMHSAS Office of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention contributed to a panel discussion on innovation in crisis services. Mary Shelton, Executive Director for Tennessee's Opioid Abatement Council also presented.

In keeping with the conference's theme on workforce, TAMHO presented awards to Governor Bill Lee, TDMHSAS, and TennCare for their support for massive investments in provider rate increases in the current fiscal year. Deputy Commissioner Matt Yancey was proud to receive the award on behalf of the department.

Opioid Abatement Council Holds Third Meeting



Tennessee's Opioid Abatement Council held its third meeting on December 5 in Jackson. Members spent a large portion of the meeting refining a proposal to guide the application process for groups wishing to pursue funding. The council also reviewed statutory requirements to receive input from outside parties and decided to regularly receive updates and information from the TDMHSAS Planning and Policy Council. The Council also made decisions around the disbursement process for the funds which will go directly to counties with the goal to have payments go out in the first quarter of 2023. More information about the Opioid Abatement Council including details on its next meeting is available at this link: tn.gov/behavioral-health/oac

The Council's December meeting date was also the first day on the job for Ella Reding who will serve as the council's Project Administrator. Ella's duties will focus on the fiscal, data and administrative aspects of the Council's operations. She is an experienced Program Manager with a demonstrated history of working in the Healthcare Management industry focused on our Senior population. Ella earned two degrees from Austin Peay State University including a Master's of Health Administration.



Final Planning and Policy Council Meeting of 2022



Commissioner Williams poses with Ben Dickey, Vice-Chair of the Region VII Planning and Policy Council at the last Statewide Council Meeting of 2022.

Members of the TDMHSAS Statewide Planning and Policy Council met for the final time this year on December 13. Members heard from presenters discussing data and resources for the regional needs assessments, Individual Placement and Support, and regional updates. Commissioner Williams also shared department updates including a discussion around the FY24 budget proposal to Governor Lee. If you'd like to get involved with your regional planning and policy council, [please find more information on the website at this link](#).

LEAD Tennessee Graduation



Congratulations to the Department's latest employees to participate in and graduate from LEAD Tennessee. Assistant Deputy Counsel Sam Boukli, Assistant Director of Strategic Initiatives Kaili Hardiman, and Associate General Counsel Michael Rogers graduated in the latest cohort on December 6. LEAD Tennessee is a pipeline of current and emerging leaders moving through 12 months of intense, high impact development in eight leadership core competencies, thus building bench strength within agencies and creating a pool of leadership talent for the state.

Shout Out!

Congratulations to Mark Raymer, Michael Widener, and William D. Farmer at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute. They submitted a cost savings idea to the Department of Finance and Administration's Employee Suggestion Award Program. The men designed and fabricated a panel that can be mounted to toilets to address patient ligature risks. With more than 100 replacement toilets needed at a cost of about \$1,100, the idea saved the state more than \$110,000, and thanks to their bright idea, Mark, Michael, and William got to keep a portion of the savings. Way to go, guys!



Happy Retirement Gayle White!



Pictured L to R: Melissa Sparks, Richard Zhu, Ty Thornton, Keye Blackmon, Gayle White, Laura Young, Mary Young, Kristen Connell

Congratulations to Gayle White on her retirement! Gayle served as Administrative Assistant to MBMHI CEO Mary Young since 2014, and before

that she worked in Health Information Management. All told, Gayle's time at Moccasin Bend spanned 22 dedicated years of service. Said Mary Young: "She will be sorely missed!"

If you'd like to "shout out" to a TDMHSAS colleague, please send an email to Kearston.Winrow@tn.gov. Tell us who you'd like to recognize and why.

Moccasin Bend Hosts Benefit Fair



Moccasin Bend recently hosted a benefits fair for employees where they had an opportunity to meet with all of the vendors who provide valuable services to them and their families. Employees were able to have important discussions prior to making their selections during the Annual Open Enrollment period, and they also had the opportunity to meet with a representative from Chattanooga State. Representatives from TSEA, Southeast Financial Credit Union, Optum, and Retire Ready also attended.

2023 State Holidays



2023 *Calendar*



- Monday, January 2 – **New Year's Day** (state offices will also be closed for New Year's Eve on Friday, December 30, 2022)
- Monday, January 16 – **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
- Monday, February 20 – **Presidents' Day**
- Friday, April 7 – **Good Friday**
- Monday, May 29 – **Memorial Day**
- Tuesday, July 4 – **Independence Day**
- Monday, September 4 – **Labor Day**
- Friday, November 10 – **Veterans Day**
- Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24 – **Thanksgiving**
- Friday, December 22 and Monday, December 25 – **Christmas**
- Friday, December 29 – **New Year's Eve** (state offices will also be closed for New Year's Day on Monday, January 1, 2024)

Save-the-Dates

Planning and Policy Council Meetings

Adult Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. CST

Region VI

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. CST

Region III

Thursday, January 12, 2023

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

Region VII

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. CST

To verify the schedule and plans for future meetings, please visit the department website at these links:

[Statewide & Committee Meeting Schedule \(tn.gov\)](#)

[Regional Council Meeting Schedule \(tn.gov\)](#)

TDMHSAS is committed to providing individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from TDMHSAS programs, activities, and services. To request reasonable accommodations or modifications, please contact Amy Holland at amy.holland@tn.gov at least 10 business days prior to the meeting. Requests for accommodations or modifications made after the deadline will be honored to the maximum extent feasible, but it may not be possible to fulfill them.

Resources

In the event of a mental health emergency ...

988 24/7 Crisis & Support



For questions about addiction treatment/referrals ...

**TN
REDLINE** 
1.800.889.9789
CALL OR TEXT 

  

TN Department of
Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services

TAADAS
Tennessee Association of
Addiction and Substance Abuse
Disorders

TN TOGETHER
ENDING THE OPIOID CRISIS

To talk with a TDMHSAS Consumer Advocate ...

Need help with mental health or substance use services?

Call the TDMHSAS Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services

HELPLINE

1-800-560-5767

We can help with:

- finding mental health and substance abuse resources in your area
- questions about insurance
- finding housing options
- communicating with mental health and substance abuse providers
- questions about the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program
- filing a complaint



We are available

- Monday through Friday
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CT
- Closed on state holidays



Department of
**Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**

OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov | [TN.gov/behavioral-health](https://tn.gov/behavioral-health)



Department of
**Mental Health &
 Substance Abuse Services**

OUR MISSION: CREATING
COLLABORATIVE PATHWAYS
 TO RESILIENCY, RECOVERY & INDEPENDENCE
 FOR TENNESSEANS LIVING
 WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND
 SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

OUR VISION:

A STATE OF RESILIENCY, RECOVERY, AND INDEPENDENCE
 IN WHICH TENNESSEANS
 LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS
 AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS **THRIVE**

AS A DEPARTMENT, WE VALUE:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>CUSTOMER FOCUSED:
 <i>An unwavering commitment to keep patients and those who serve them at the forefront of every decision.</i></p> <p>INTEGRITY:
 <i>Honesty and truth in all we do.</i></p> <p>INSPIRED PURPOSE:
 <i>The call to action in service of a cause greater than one's self.</i></p> <p>EXCELLENCE:
 <i>The highest standards for services, efficiency, and conduct.</i></p> | <p>COMPASSIONATE AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:
 <i>The commitment to make effective decisions and inspire others through active listening and empathy.</i></p> <p>SOLUTIONS AND OUTCOMES-ORIENTED:
 <i>The commitment to positive outcomes and meaningful changes in response to the critical needs of the Tennesseans we serve.</i></p> <p>PARTNERSHIP:
 <i>Beyond teamwork, collaboration based on mutual success to the benefit of the Tennesseans we are blessed to serve.</i></p> |
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*We hope you've enjoyed this issue of the Update!
 If you have news to share (a story idea, accomplishment,
 provider news, etc.) or if you'd like to be added to the
 distribution list, please email: the Office of
 Communications at OC.TDMHSAS@tn.gov.*

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