

# TDMH Update

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

VOLUME 15, NO. 2

AUTUMN 2011

## Tennessee Joins Neighboring States to Fight Prescription Drug Abuse

In an effort to fight prescription drug abuse and misuse in Tennessee, representatives from the Governor's Office, Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and the Department of Mental Health attended the first meeting in August of the Interstate Prescription Drug Task Force in Ashland, Kentucky, thereby joining Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia in forming a multi-state alliance to fight prescription drug abuse on several fronts.

Law enforcement officials consider prescription drug abuse an increasing problem in Tennessee, which consistently ranks as one of the top states in the country for the use of prescribed medications. According to the Tennessee Drug Diversion Task Force, in 2009 Tennessee ranked second in the nation

with 17.3 retail prescriptions written per person compared with a national average of 12.0. Since 2008 the top three controlled substances prescribed in Tennessee have been the pain medications Hydrocodone, Alprazolam, and Oxycodone.

Another problem is Tennessee's close proximity to other states. Tennessee borders eight states, and five major interstates run through it, making it a major drug trafficking corridor.

Department of Safety and Homeland Security Commissioner Bill Gibbons believes it is imperative to join other states to fight prescription drug abuse. "This is a battle Tennessee can't fight by itself. We are seeing an increasing number of prescription drugs coming in

from other states on our interstates, especially I-75. We must join forces with neighboring states to fight this problem head on," Commissioner Gibbons said. Gibbons heads the Governor's public safety sub-cabinet working group which is developing a statewide plan to tackle several public safety concerns, including prescription drug abuse.

At the meeting, representatives from each state discussed prescription drug monitoring, treatment for addiction, educational strategies, and accurate data collection. Further meetings will include discussions on multi-state goals and initiatives to curb the influx of illegal prescription drugs as well as ways to better share information and resources between the states. ■

## CONSUMER CORNER

### A RIP Success Story

Susan and Ricky Hall were at their wit's end with their five-year-old grandchild, Charlie. The young boy, who they are raising, along with his six-year-old brother, Joe, had terrible temper tantrums that made everyday activities impossible.

"Life revolved around trying to deal with Charlie," says Susan. "A pediatrician told us that he was just being a boy, but I knew his behavior was something more."

*The Halls with grandsons,  
Charlie and Joe*



Charlie is a sweet child, but his outbursts could be triggered by almost anything – such as a trip in the family car or a torn coloring book page.

"His behavior was so sad and scary," recalls Susan. "I never wanted to give up, but something had to change."

Thankfully, Susan and Ricky learned about Centerstone's Regional Intervention Program (RIP) in Columbia. The program is sponsored by the United Way of Maury County and the Tennessee Department of Mental Health. RIP

*cont. page 7*

## COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

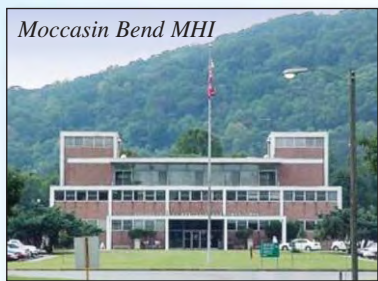
### Senator Rusty Crowe receives "Legislator of the Year" award from NAMI

The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) has named Senator Rusty Crowe (R-Johnson City) "Legislator of the Year" for 2011 "in recognition of his dedication to the health and mental health of the people of Tennessee." NAMI lauded Crowe for sponsoring legislation that calls for training for law enforcement to better respond to calls regarding persons with mental illness. The new law went into effect in April and requires annual training for police officers regarding how to properly respond to mentally ill persons.



State Senator  
Rusty Crowe

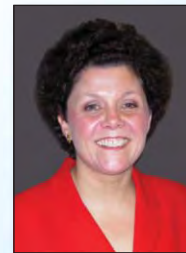
### Moccasin Bend Celebrates 50 Years



On October 12, 2011, Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute celebrated its 50 year anniversary. Among the speakers were Moccasin Bend CEO Bill Ventress and Commissioner Doug Varney.

### Marie Williams appointed Deputy Commissioner

In September, Marie Williams was named as the new Deputy Commissioner for the department. Prior to that appointment she served as the Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health Services. As such, she worked collaboratively to expand consumer-based recovery services focused on supports, employment, housing, recovery and resiliency services, crisis services, geriatric services, suicide prevention for children and adults, and transportation.



Marie has proven invaluable to the department and it an honor to have someone of Marie's caliber serve in this position. Please join us in congratulating Marie on her new appointment. Williams can be reached at [Marie.Williams@tn.gov](mailto:Marie.Williams@tn.gov).

### Heather Gunderson named Assistant Commissioner for Administrative Services

Heather has served as Director of the Office of Information Technology for the department over the past 5 years. Her responsibilities over all technology operations and experiences in a variety of hospital systems including administration and clinical applications give her invaluable insight into her new role as Assistant Commissioner of Administrative Services.

Please join us in congratulating Heather on her new position. Gunderson can be reached at [Heather.Gunderson@tn.gov](mailto:Heather.Gunderson@tn.gov). ■

## TENNESSEE Awarded Grant to Provide Services to Reduce Youth Suicide and Suicide Attempts

Tennessee Department of Mental Health (TDMH) Commissioner Doug Varney announced on August 16, 2011 that the department has received a grant of more than \$1.4 million over three years to help reduce suicide and suicide attempts by Tennessee youth.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for high school students and the second leading cause for college age youth in Tennessee. The grant, known as *Tennessee Lives Count* (TLC), was awarded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. It went into effect August 1 and will be used to implement strategies that will increase the skills of individuals that work with high-risk youth to recognize the signs of suicide and to learn how to intervene to save lives. TLC will also provide post crisis follow-up to youth seen in area emergency departments following a suicide attempt. The enhanced follow-up will assist youth in developing effective coping skills and

improving resiliency.

TLC is a statewide project that will impact over 12,000 Tennesseans through suicide gatekeeper training, which teaches individuals to recognize the signs of suicide and to know what to do to save a life. TLC will also provide suicide awareness training to emergency department staff. Additionally, TLC will provide training to 35 school system administrative staff on how to develop a plan for their school systems should a suicide or a suicide attempt occur.

"We are very excited about the potential of this project to reduce suicides and suicide attempts for our youth," Varney said. "Suicide is the most preventable form of death, and Tennessee is fortunate to be awarded this grant that will help TDMH and the

## Healing Arts Produces Annual Book of Writings

In celebration of *Mental Illness Awareness Week* in early October, the second edition of *Faith, Hope and Recovery in Letters*, was initially distributed during the annual Service of Hope. The booklet of writings by persons in recovery is sponsored by the Healing Arts Project, Inc., (HAPI), formerly the Middle Tennessee Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition, and was made possible by a grant from United Healthcare and in-kind support from Allegra Print & Imaging in Nashville.

The 2011 booklet contains the essays, poems and artworks from HAPI and TDMH sponsored artists who participate in peer center art classes and the annual *Art for Awareness* exhibition at the Legislative Plaza in May. The colorful cover art is the work of Kathy Tupper and the back cover features a dramatic quilt-like design by Pat Lipford. One of the works, "Recovery" by Natalie Denney, conveys the joy of recovering one's life.

The Healing Arts Project, Inc. promotes mental health recovery in the Middle Tennessee community by connecting those in recovery from mental illnesses and addictions to family, friends and neighbors. Showcasing their creative talents promotes understanding, acceptance and success. For copies of the booklet or for more information about the arts and recovery visit [www.creativeartsproject.org](http://www.creativeartsproject.org), call (615) 594-4642 or email [healingartsproject@gmail.com](mailto:healingartsproject@gmail.com). ■



### Recovery

Love heals all wounds  
 Recovery time under the moon  
 Releasing positive energy into nature's womb  
 Recovery teaches me love with a silver spoon  
 My life's a soap opera but I'm a cartoon  
 Crazy days ahead but I remain sane as a loon  
 I am not my disease, all will see soon  
 For recovery has been my path and love  
 Has been my room  
 There is no time to talk  
 Just hop in my Chevy and zoom, zoom, zoom  
 Recovery's cool, like when the bass goes boom  
 — Natalie Denney

## PEER SPECIALIST STATE CONFERENCE

Joe Rogers, Keynote Speaker

By Lisa Ragan, Director of Consumer Affairs and Peer Support Services

The TDMH Consumer Advisory Board partnered with the Tennessee Certified Peer Specialist Advisory Committee to host the inaugural statewide Peer Specialist Conference on October 10, 2011, in Murfreesboro. Total attendance was 169 Peer Specialists, Supervisors, and Tennesseans interested in becoming Peer Specialists.



The keynote speaker was Joe Rogers, founder and executive director of the National Mental Health Consumers' Self-Help Clearinghouse, a consumer-run national technical assistance center funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, and chief advocacy officer of the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania (MHASP). Mr. Rogers spoke about the Power of Peer Support.

Certified Peer Specialists were able to earn CEUs at the conference at breakout sessions that included Ethics and Boundaries, Documentation, and Self-Care and Stress Management. Donna DeStefano of the Tennessee Disability Coalition offered a session for supervisors on ADA Accommodations and Recruitment.

TDMH has been certifying Peer Specialists since 2007, and there are currently 127 certified Peer Specialists in the state. The provision of peer support services is a Medicaid-reimbursable service in Tennessee.

Plans are underway for the next Peer Specialist state conference next year. To learn more about the certification program, visit <http://tn.gov/mental/recovery/oca3.html>. ■

“SILENCING THE SILENT EPIDEMIC”

**Suicide and the African-American Faith Communities Conference**

An expansion and repeat of the AA conferences (held in March 2010 in Nashville and in Murfreesboro in May, 2011) to stop the spread of the “silent epidemic” of suicide in Tennessee, was held on October 17 at the St. James Missionary Baptist Church in Nashville. Pastors and mental health experts spoke and led workshops, sponsored by an advisory committee that includes Gwen Hamer of TDMH Division of Clinical Leadership, Angie Thompson of Metro Public Health, Scott Ridgeway of TSPN, Rev. George T. Brooks, Sr. of the St. James M.B. Church, Nashville, Watson Grove MBC, Nashville, and other state and local agencies and faith community leaders. The event was free to the general public and members of all faith communities.

For many generations, suicide was often not discussed or acknowledged within African-American communities, and especially within the faith communities. Now, families and friends of survivors and those who commit suicide will today find involved faith leaders offering front-line defense programs and compassion to defeat what has become known as the “silent epidemic” of stigma. The conference explored a number of issues, including the effect of suicide on families, depression in adults, depression and faith, teen suicide and mental health of the elderly, suicide prevention, and stress management.

According to Gwen Hamer, Director of Education and Development for the department’s Division of Clinical Leadership, “The success of the conference was apparent in how many first-time ministers and lay persons we had in attendance. The awareness of the suicide problem is growing in the African-American communities all across the state, so we hope for a better outcome for Tennesseans who are facing issues that affect their mental well-being.” ■



*Front Row: Gwen Hamer & Angie Thompson; Second Row: Dr. Howard Burley, Pastor Dianne Young, Dr. Sherry Molock, Scott Ridgeway & Bishop William Young.*



*Xaviar Lewis and Monica McClaurin, conference presenters, discuss conference materials during a break.*



*The Conference was well attended by first time participants. Seated at the table with a delegate is presenter and Presiding Elder of the South Nashville AMEC, Troy Merrit, and Carmencita Espada.*



*Rev. George T. Brooks, Sr., conference facilitator, speaks as Rev. Margaret Smithson, Barbara Gunn and Dr. Howard Burley listen intently.*

# My Health, My Choice, My Life is TDMH's Newest Program for Wellness

By Sue Karber, TDMH Division of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services

*My Health, My Choice, My Life* is a health promotion and wellness initiative for Tennesseans who live with mental health and substance use conditions. The holistic health initiative integrates a medical model with recovery and resiliency, resulting in an initiative that focuses on overcoming physical and mental health symptoms through strengths, personal empowerment and resiliency. It is led by individuals who have first hand, lived experience with psychiatric and/or co-occurring conditions.

*My Health, My Choice, My Life* provides individuals with self-directed tools, empowering them with the knowledge, skills and resources to improve their overall well-being and resiliency and live healthy and purposeful lives.

The health and wellness initiative consists of a workshop, weekly wellness related activities and wellness coaching. The workshop is the evidence-based Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, developed by the Stanford University Patient Education Center. The six session workshop assists individuals in gaining and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to manage the day-to-day realities of their physical and mental health symptoms. It is based on the principle that confident, knowledgeable individuals practicing self-management will be empowered to live a life of purpose and well-being.

The *My Health, My Choice, My Life* initiative embraces the Wellness Model developed by Dr. Peggy Swarbrick of the Collaborative Support Programs of New Jersey's Wellness and Recovery Institute. Dr. Swarbrick defines wellness as "a conscious, deliberate process that requires that a person become aware of and makes choices for a more satisfying lifestyle." The Wellness Model includes eight dimensions: emotional, financial, social, spiritual, occupational, physical, intellectual and environmental. Wellness Coaching will assist individuals in pursuing individually chosen wellness goals.

*My Health, My Choice, My Life* is a five year, \$3.6 million Mental Health Transformation grant from SAMHSA/CMHS and will be implemented by Peer Wellness Coaches and Peer Leaders throughout the state in Peer Support and



Addiction Recovery Centers. There will be seven Peer Wellness Coaches, one for each Mental Health Planning Region of the state, who will coordinate the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* program in their region. The program will be implemented in a tiered approach, beginning first in Middle, then in East, followed by West Tennessee.

## My Health, My Choice, My Life Launched With Activities

By Sue Karber, TDMH Division of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services

As part of the TDMH's new whole health initiative, *My Health, My Choice, My Life*, the department partnered with Amerigroup

Community Care, Centerstone, NAMI-Davidson County, NAMI-Tennessee, Tennessee Mental Health Consumer's Association, United Healthcare Community Plan, and Volunteer Behavioral Health to put on a Wellness Celebration on Tuesday, September 20th at Centennial Park in Nashville. There was an array of physical activities to participate in no matter what one's physical ability, such as kickball, volleyball, walking, lawn games, moving to the music, zumba and karaoke.



Members of Peer Support Centers of Middle Tennessee play kickball.



Shannone Thorne, NAMI-Cavidson County, Lisa Ragan, TDMH Mental Health Services, and Jennifer Jones, Centerstone, kick things off by leading the group at YMCA picnic.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) launched the first National Wellness Week as part of National Recovery Month. National Wellness Week was September 19-25, 2011, and promoted the many ways wellness can improve quality of life and increase life expectancy for Tennesseans who live with mental health and substance use conditions. During National Wellness Week, we aimed to inspire individuals to improve one physical health behavior while also exploring their talents, skills, interests, social connections, and environment in order to incorporate other dimensions of wellness.



Ed Rothstein leads the audience in Line Dancing for Wellness at the annual NAMI convention.

Also during National Wellness Week, NAMI-Tennessee hosted a Line Dance for Wellness activity during their annual conference. Line dancing spans generations and cultures while creating solidarity through repetitive motion. Ed Rothstein of Volunteer Behavioral Health led the audience in a line dance to Celebration by Kool and the Gang. ■

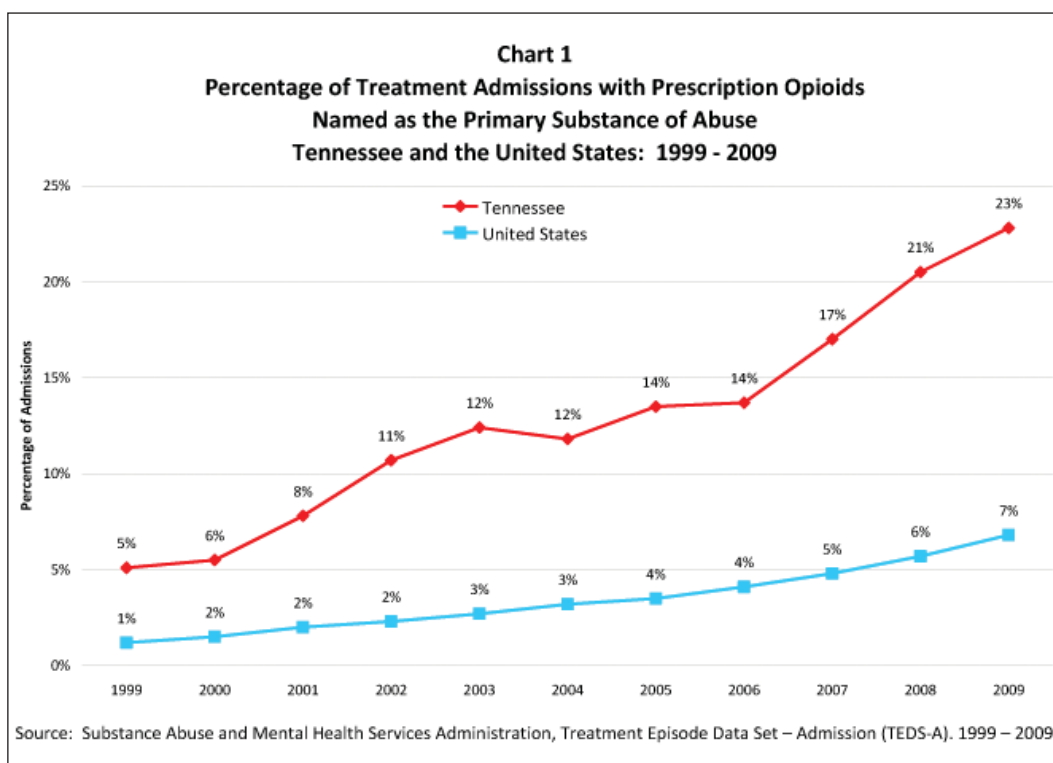
# Prescription Drug Abuse in Tennessee

By Karen Edwards Ph.D. and Anthony Jackson, TDMH Research Team

Abuse of prescription opioids (pain relievers) is the number one drug problem for Tennesseans receiving state-funded treatment services. As shown in Table 1, the ranking of the top three drugs named as a primary substance of abuse also changed dramatically from 1999 to 2009. In this population, the percentage of people (12 and older) identifying prescription opioids as their primary substance of abuse increased from 5% of treatment admissions in 1999 to 23% in 2009. Nationally, the number of treatment admissions for this population increased from 1% to 7% in this same time period.

Top 3 Drugs in Tennessee	Tennessee		United States	
	1999	2009	1999	2009
Prescription Opioids	5%	23%	1%	7%
Marijuana	14%	18%	14%	18%
Cocaine/Crack	28%	15%	14%	14%

Chart 1 shows admissions to treatment for prescription opioid abuse in Tennessee and the United States.<sup>2</sup> By 2012, the percentage of people seeking treatment for the abuse of prescription opioids, is projected to be 33% of all admissions to state-funded treatment, compared to 5% in 1999.



The abuse of prescription opioids is a problem, not only for indigent people seeking state-funded treatment, but also for Tennesseans in the general population. In 2009, almost 5% of Tennesseans older than 12 reported abuse of prescription opioids in the past year according the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. This percentage is more than double the percentage of Tennesseans who reported drug dependence (2.4%) using illegal substances (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, heroin) in the past year. The problem is especially acute for younger Tennesseans. Almost 13% of Tennesseans ages 18-25 reported abusing prescription opioids in the past year.<sup>3</sup>

Prescription drug abuse hits every profession and every

socioeconomic level. Among people admitted for state-funded drug treatment in Tennessee in 2010, people with at least a high school education, who are married and employed at least part-time are three times more likely to identify prescription drugs as their primary drug of choice than people who have less than a high school education, are unmarried and are unemployed.<sup>4</sup> ■

<sup>1</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set – Admission (TEDS-A). 1999 – 2009. National Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services, DASIS Series: S-56, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 11-46-46, Rockville, MD.

<sup>2</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set – Admission (TEDS-A). 1999 – 2009. National Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services, DASIS Series: S-56, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 11-46-46, Rockville, MD.

<sup>3</sup>SAMHSA State Estimates of Substance Use and Mental Disorders from the 2008-2009 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health, Office of Applied Studies, Health and Human Services. Rockville, MD.

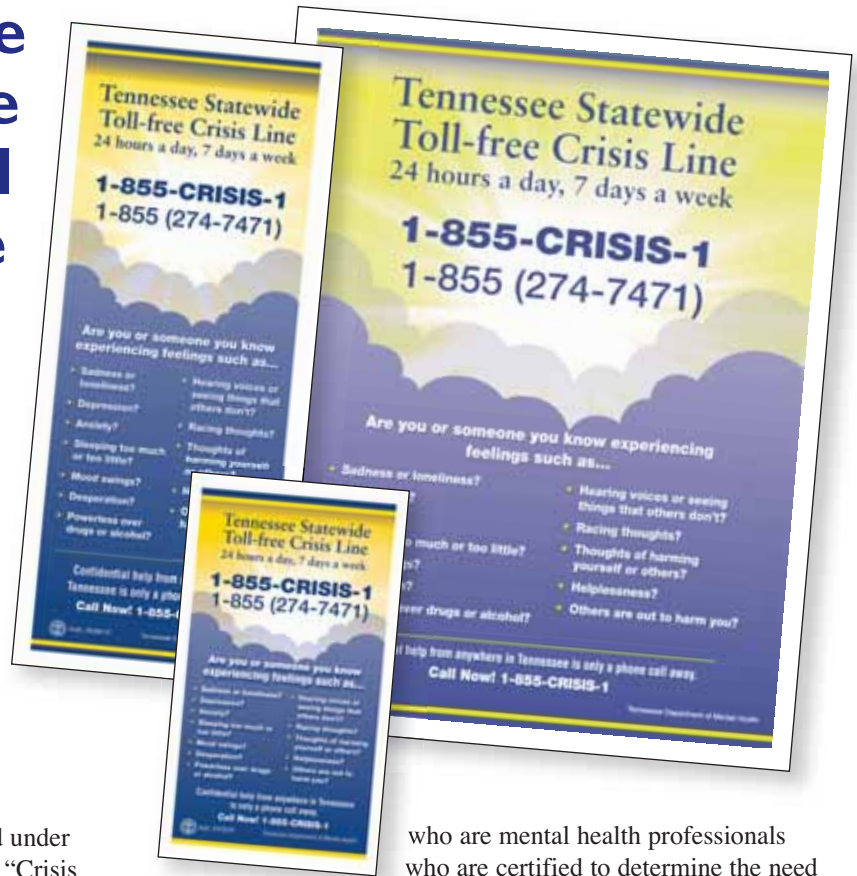
<sup>4</sup>Tennessee Department of Mental Health WITS Information System.

# Tennessee Statewide Toll-Free Crisis Line Offers Promotional Materials Online

The new Tennessee Statewide Toll-Free Crisis Line, 1-855-CRISIS-1 (1-855-274-7471) is in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Trained crisis specialists, help callers with questions about mental illness, substance abuse, and treatment services for themselves and their loved ones. Callers may be concerned about feelings of sadness, anxiety, depression, powerlessness over the use of drugs or alcohol, suicidal thoughts and mood swings. Calls to the line have steadily increased since 2010 as Tennesseans realize help is only a phone call away.

In order to reach more people, the Office of Communications has prepared a poster, a business-size palm card, and a rack card that you can print and distribute. Visit the department's website at [http://tn.gov/mental/recovery/crisis\\_serv\\_services.html](http://tn.gov/mental/recovery/crisis_serv_services.html) and under "Crisis Services Links" at the bottom of the page, click on "Crisis Line Publications" to view and download. We recommend you print these materials on 80# white card stock with a laser printer, or load to a CD and take to a commercial printer. If you have any questions concerning these materials and their use, contact the department's publications editor and web manager at (615) 253-4812 or email [Lorene.Lambert@tn.gov](mailto:Lorene.Lambert@tn.gov).

The TDMH Office of Crisis Services in the Division of Mental Health Services is holding training for Mandatory Pre-Screening Agents (MPA)



who are mental health professionals who are certified to determine the need and issue a certificate of need (CON) for emergency involuntary psychiatric hospitalization. The first training event was held in Nashville on September 14 and 18 people attended. Additional training will be held December 14, 2011 March 14, 2012 and June 12, 2012 at the Mental Health Cooperative, 109A Cumberland Bend Drive in Nashville. For additional information about the MPA program, contact mailto: [MPA.Info@tn.gov](mailto:MPA.Info@tn.gov) and visit [http://tn.gov/mental/recovery/crisis\\_serv\\_mpa.html](http://tn.gov/mental/recovery/crisis_serv_mpa.html). ■

## A RIP Success Story...cont.

offers parenting help for any family. Centerstone is one of Tennessee's largest not-for-profit provider of community-based mental health and addiction services.

RIP taught Susan and Ricky how to respond to Charlie's behavior by using more effective parenting strategies. The program also helped Joe, who was becoming reserved and the opposite of his brother, to come out of his shell and communicate more effectively. The program has made the entire family stronger and happier.

"We are continuing to learn so much at RIP," says Susan. "Before, Charlie's behavior would make for some really bad days. Now, we not only have hope, but we know that we'll be able to raise Charlie into the productive, wonderful person that God intends for him to be."

To learn more about the RIP program click on the TDMH Web site at [http://tn.gov/mental/specialpops/sp\\_child\\_RIP.html](http://tn.gov/mental/specialpops/sp_child_RIP.html) under the Office of Children & Youth Services, Division of Mental Health Services. ■

## Grant Awarded...cont.

TLC partners reduce suicides and suicide attempts in our youth."

This marks the third time that TDMH has been awarded the TLC grant, which has been recognized for its effectiveness nationally. The department will be working with TSPN, Youth Villages, the Mental Health Association of Middle Tennessee and Centerstone Research Institute to achieve the goals of this project. The grant is targeted toward the age group of 10 to 24 years.

For more information about the *Tennessee Lives Count* grant or mental health and substance use disorders please contact TDMH's Office of Communications at (615) 253-4812 or visit [www.tn.gov/mental](http://www.tn.gov/mental). ■

## Building Strong Families Grant Project Continues to Expand Regional Capacity in South Central Tennessee

By *Edwina Chappell, Principal Investigator,*  
*Research Team, TDMH Division of Planning, Research & Forensics*

Keeping children (at imminent risk of being placed into state custody because of their parents' methamphetamine or other substance abuse) safely in their homes is the primary aim of the *Building Strong Families in Rural Tennessee (BSF)* grant project. It also seeks to enhance regional partnership, expand service capacity, and

Department of Children's Services (DCS), anti-drug coalitions, community mental health centers, substance abuse treatment facilities, school districts, drug courts, health departments, juvenile courts, children's advocacy centers, family resource centers, hospitals, law enforcement, and various agencies that



*Commissioner Varney with Kristina Clark, Executive Director of the Coffee County Anti-Drug Coalition*

Commissioner Varney set the tone for the conference on Day 1 with his wit and forthrightness. His was a message about the state of mental health and substance use, as well as appreciation to drug coalitions for the work that they do in communities. Day 2's plenary message was delivered by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services Commissioner, Kathryn O'Day. She admonished participants to underscore the impact of adverse childhood experiences in their work. Delegates of the conference received information on a wide variety of topics relevant to the families we serve, from DCS mandated reporting laws to substance abuse prevention. Moreover, participants were very impressed that Commissioners Varney and O'Day took time from their busy schedules to share with and listen to local folks.

provide education and information to stakeholders in targeted counties. The project serves an eight-county region that includes Bedford, Cannon, Coffee, Franklin, Grundy, Lincoln, Moore, and Warren counties.

BSF made significant strides toward reaching its capacity-building goals when it sponsored the first major substance abuse/child welfare conference in the region last year. However, a second milestone was achieved with its *2nd Annual Building Strong Families Conference* on August 16-17, 2011. Held on the beautiful, bucolic campus of Motlow State College in Lynchburg, TN, the conference drew between 220 and 250 participants each day. They represented diverse entities, including persons from the Tennessee Department of Mental Health (TDMH), the Tennessee

work with young people. The Coffee County Anti-Drug Coalition was financial sponsor for the conference while BSF provided organizational and logistical expertise and manpower.

The BSF project began as a partnership among TDMH; DCS; the Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination (GOCCC); the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC); and Centerstone with a \$2.5 million grant award from the Administration of Children and Families in October 2007 for five years. Currently, the BSF partnership includes TDMH, DCS, AOC, Centerstone, and Centerstone Research Institute (CRI). Since its inception, TDMH has functioned as lead agency for the grant. For more information, contact [Edwina.Chappell@tn.gov](mailto:Edwina.Chappell@tn.gov). ■



### UPDATE

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