



A Message from Commissioner Williams

Dear friends, partners, colleagues, and advocates,

We want to begin this edition of our newsletter with a word about alcohol abuse. April is Alcohol Awareness Month, and in the time of COVID-19, awareness of alcohol and the role it plays in our lives has taken on new meaning. With the onset of the pandemic, many of us experienced new, different, or increased feelings including isolation, anxiety, and depression, and because of the prevalence and accessibility of alcohol, many people increased their use as a means to cope. Early research put increased use of alcohol and other substances at 12%, and it's not a stretch to imagine that number increased as the pandemic has continued.

So during this time of renewal and revival, I want to encourage you to take a look at your alcohol consumption, maybe document when and how much you drink over a week or two, and really take stock in what you find. If you find that alcohol consumption is affecting the things you enjoy or is affecting relationships with people in your life, please reach out for help. Whether it's a confidential call to the Employee Assistance Program through your job, talking with someone you know and trust, or reaching out to a counselor, help is available. And for those without resources to pay, our wonderful statewide provider network is available for support. Assistant Commissioner Taryn Sloss, her team, and our providers do an amazing job making the most of the state and federal funding we receive to help thousands of Tennesseans every year who need treatment for alcohol addiction. You can call or text the TN REDLINE 24/7/365 at 800-889-9789 or visit our website [TN.gov/behavioral-health](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health) to connect with services.

We know that treatment truly works and recovery is real. There are so many amazing stories of recovery all around us, and we are blessed to have so many inspiring individuals in recovery working in impactful programs across the state like our Lifeliners, Regional Overdose Prevention Specialists, TN Recovery Navigators, and Faith-Based Initiatives. We know that awareness is the first step, and it takes a lot of courage to move forward. Please, reach out and act now.

Blessings,

Marie

Tennesseans encouraged to participate in 20th National Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Biannual event promotes safe disposal of medication and protection of water resources

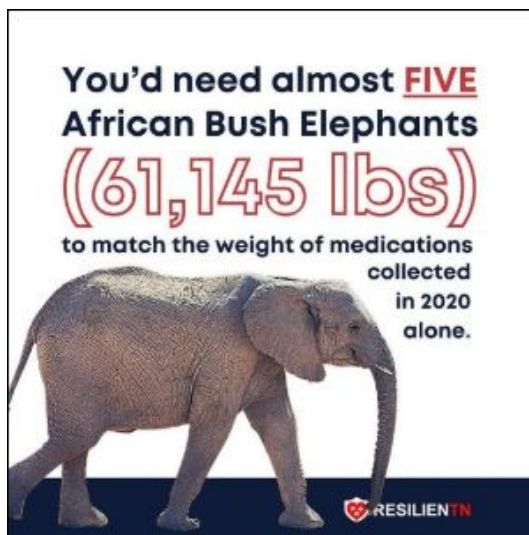
Tennesseans have a renewed opportunity to remove harmful and potentially-addictive prescription medication from their homes as a part of the upcoming 20th National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. The event is set for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 24, 2021.

On Take Back Day, [Substance Abuse Prevention Coalitions](#) and other

community groups team up with their local law enforcement to host events where anyone can safely and securely dispose of prescription medication that has expired or is no longer needed. In addition to preventing substance misuse, proper disposal of medication protects Tennessee's drinking water supply. Find a Take Back Day event in your area [by visiting this link on TNtogether.com](#).

This spring's event is particularly important because the April 2020 Take Back Day was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the amount of medication collected in Tennessee during the October 2020 Take Back Day was about one-third the amount collected in October 2019. Additionally, pandemic precautions may have limited access to permanent drop boxes which are normally available on-demand.

[Read the full news release at this link.](#)



TDMHSAS and our partners at the TN Department of Health and TnTogether.com are focusing on Take Back Day for our quarterly #ResilienTN partnership. This effort centers on reducing deaths from overdose and suicide prevention. Previous iterations of the campaign have focused on International Overdose Awareness Day and the winter holiday season.

For the spring #ResilienTN push, the partners created, collected, and centralized resources for all things take back on [TNtogether.com/takebackday](#). The goal is for these resources to serve people not just on Take Back Day but also year round.

Take Back Day isn't only about preventing substance misuse. It's also about

protecting our drinking water. For our partners at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, secure disposal of prescription medication, rather than flushing it down the toilet, is an important issue. We talked to TDEC for a short video to promote the environmental aspects of Take Back Day.



While much of the focus is on Take Back Day events, the #ResilienTN partners did organize a pair of Be the One suicide prevention trainings in the month of April. Conducted by Joanne Perley with the TDMHSAS Office of Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention, the two trainings totaled 218 participants with one participant from half a world away in New Zealand! If you want to learn more or want to schedule a training, reach out to Joanne at betheone.info@tn.gov.

218 People Trained

Schedule a Training: betheone.info@tn.gov

RESILIENT TN

Project Rural Recovery celebrates first year of service

Mobile health clinics serve 10 rural, distressed Tennessee Counties



Project Rural Recovery completed the first year of providing integrated care services in ten rural counties using two mobile health clinics. Project Rural Recovery is a five-year, federally funded project designed to provide mobile, integrated primary care, behavioral healthcare, and substance abuse services in local communities to help eliminate access challenges and improve overall health outcomes. Services are free to individuals who do not have people or are unable to pay and all ages are welcome.

The two agencies contracted to provide these services, Buffalo Valley and McNabb Center, had a successful first year even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The first year included the purchase and design of two mobile health units, identification of ten service locations, building community partnerships, hiring staff for each unit, learning how to provide services in a mobile health unit, and most importantly, the provision of services to 326 patients.

Project Rural Recovery Counties Served

Buffalo Valley, Inc.



McNabb Center



Moving into year two of the project, the department and its partners will focus on increasing the number of visits at each location, evaluating and adjusting services provided, and ensuring each location is optimal for patients. We expect to provide services to at least 10 patients per day per mobile health unit.

Patients may be referred to the mobile health unit by having them call the number on the website or simply showing up during the hours of service. Walk in appointments are welcomed.

You can find the schedule for both mobile health units, contact information, and more at this link on our website: [TN.gov/behavioral-health/ruralrecovery](https://www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/ruralrecovery).



Take a video tour with Debbie Hillin of Buffalo Valley, Inc.

Emotional support line adds texting capability

Tennessee's Emotional Support Line for Pandemic Stress has a new method for people to reach out for help. The free and confidential line now has the capability to offer assistance via text message.

Tennessee healthcare workers, first responders, and all Tennesseans working in education, including educators and district and school administrators and staff, dealing with feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, or depression related to work can now call or text the Emotional Support Line at **888-642-7886** from 6 a.m.- 10 p.m. CT / 7 a.m.- 11 p.m. ET daily.

[Read the full news release at this link.](#)

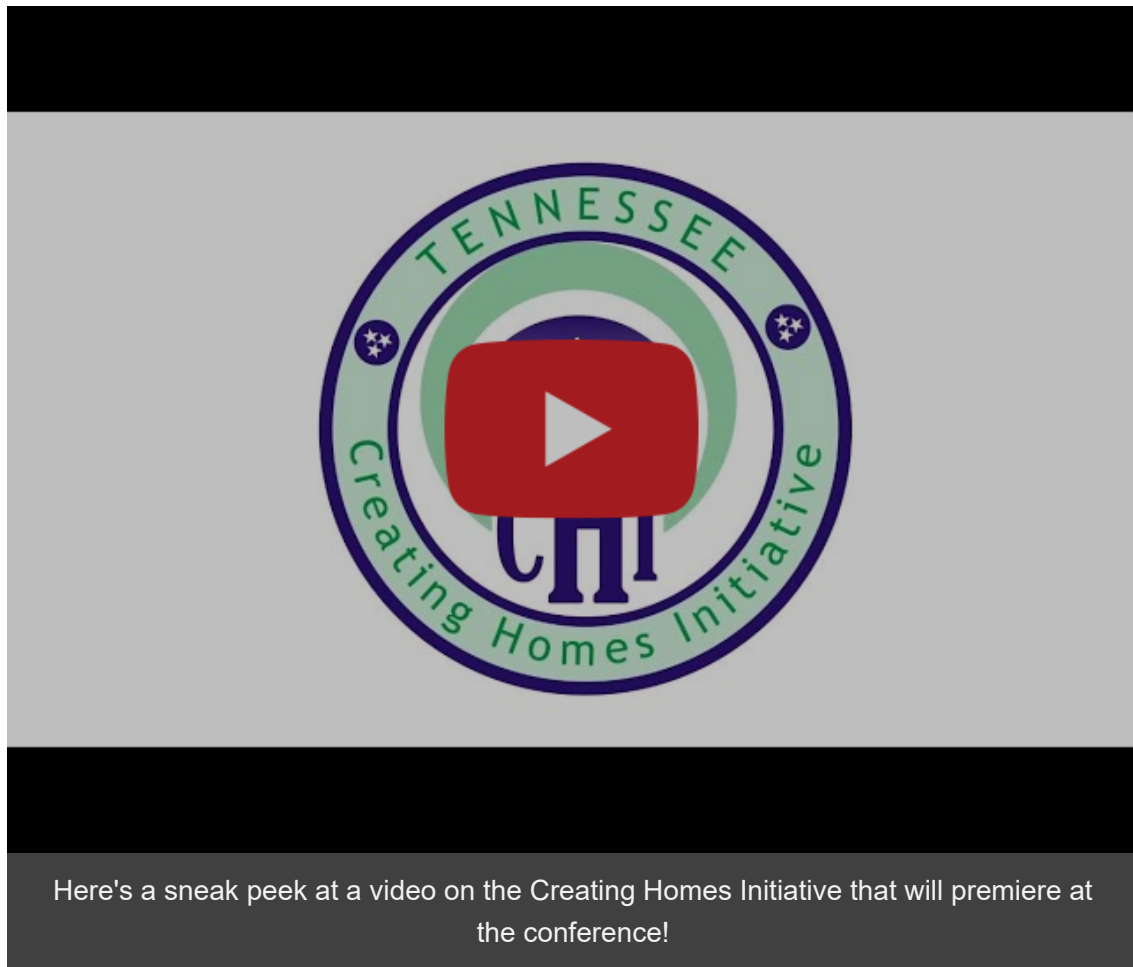


TDMHSAS holds first-ever housing and homeless services conference

The department is holding its first-ever housing conference on April 23. The conference, entitled "On Our Way Home: The PATH to Resiliency, Recovery, and Independence", focuses on those three pillars that underpin the

department's mission and vision and also our philosophy in developing safe, stable, quality, affordable housing for people living with mental health, substance use, and co-occurring disorders.

[Click this link to register for this free conference.](#)



Gov. Lee announces FY22 budget amendment

Previously announced Mental Health Trust fund included at \$250 million

As is customary in the state budget process, the Lee Administration released its budget amendment on April 13. The previously-announced Mental Health Trust Fund was among the items included in the amendment, and it was funded at the full \$250 million amount. The full amendment accounts for \$580 million in

available funds. [Read more and find a link to the full budget amendment in the Governor's news release.](#)

TARCP Conference Wrap

TDMHSAS and the Tennessee Association of Recovery Court Professionals hosted the 16th Annual Recovery Court Conference March 30 – April 1. The Pandemic Pivot 2021 TARCP Conference was held virtually and included opening remarks from Governor Bill Lee and Commissioner Marie Williams.

More than four hundred people registered for the event which included a ceremony to celebrate the life and remember the work of Ellen L. Abbott. The remembrance ceremony included the announcement of an award to be established in her memory.

Featured speakers included professionals from the TDMHSAS, National Association of Drug Court Professionals, National Drug Court Institute, Justice for Vets, and the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts, among others. The 17th Annual Recovery Court Conference will be held December 2021 in Murfreesboro.



Collegiate Recovery Initiative continues to grow

University of Memphis earns first "Recovery Friendly Campus" honor



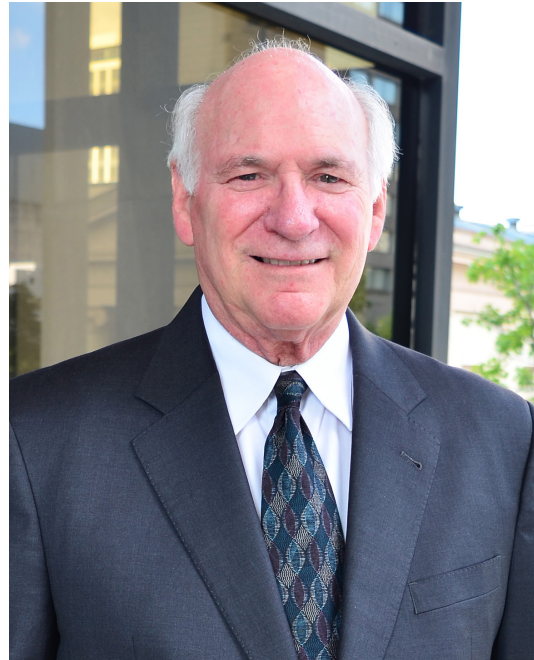
Big shout out to University of Memphis and Britney Bryson! With the help of Britney, there are now more than 35 recovery allies, both faculty and students, trained on U of M's campus. This earns university of Memphis recognition as a Recovery Friendly campus! The Recovery Ally training is a 2-hour training that equips its participants with the knowledge to better support those in recovery on their campus and refer those in need of help. To bring the Collegiate Recovery Initiative to your campus, reach out to Nathan Payne: lifelineoftennessee@gmail.com.



Dr. Herman receives national award

Congratulations are in order for Dr. Sandy Herman! He recently received the 2021 Council Meritorious Service Award from the American College of Emergency Physicians. From the ACEP's website:

The Council Meritorious Service Award is presented to a member of the College who has served as a councillor for at least three years and who, in that capacity has made consistent contributions to the growth and maturation of the ACEP Council. The ACEP Council is the forum in which chapter and section of membership representatives both elect and provide guidance to the Board of Directors.



Dr. Herman proudly serves TDMHSAS as the Medical Director at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute.

TDMHSAS Employee Honors

While COVID-19 has thrown off the normal cycle of honoring our employee service milestones and exceptional employee awards, we wanted to collect some of the recent honors and share them with you in this edition of the newsletter. Congratulations to all who celebrated a milestone in their state service or received an award in recent months! [You can find a list of employees who celebrated service awards in 2020 on our website at this link.](#)

Memphis Mental Health Institute Employee of the Year

Congratulations to MMHI's 2020 Employee of the Year: Juanita Holland. Ms.

Holland serves as MMHI's Nurse Educator and Infection Control Nurse. In her nomination of Ms. Holland, Dr. Taylor Williams, wrote, "During this year she has risen to the unprecedented challenge of managing hospital-wide infection control measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. She managed the roll-out of hospital-wide COVID-19 testing for patients and staff. She managed the COVID-19 vaccination program for staff. Any one of these accomplishments would be worthy of highest praise, and she managed all three." Additional finalists for MMHI Employee of the year included Cathy Toledo and James Thornton.



Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute Employee Award Winners



These exceptional employees were given the Leadership, CEO, or Employee of the Year awards at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute. Winners are chosen by coworkers, department heads, and the CEO. During a trying year, these employees led the Bend through the pandemic with grace, determination, and empathy. Winners pictured with MBMHI CEO, Mary Young and TDMHSAS Chief of Staff, Ty Thornton are: Corey Weldon, Dr. Quentin Fannin, John-David Shafer, Nicole Copeny, Brandi Humphrey, Denny Farmer, Ryan Beckett, Deanna Wooden, Elizabeth Bickel, and Tiffany Jones.

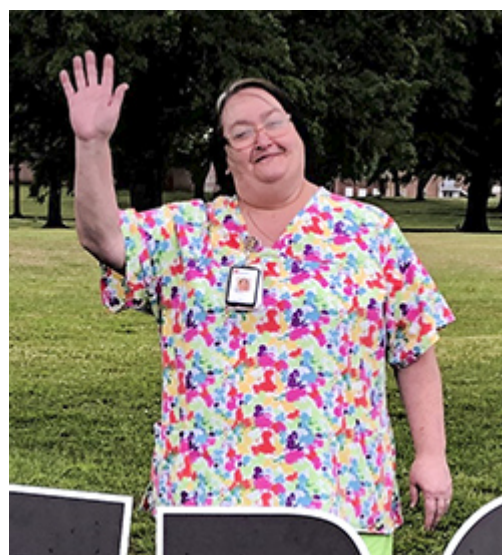
Western Mental Health Institute Employees of the Year

With their 2020 Employee of the Year award, the team at WMHI honored the memories of a pair of dear colleagues who are no longer with us.



Tracy Bowers was a dedicated employee at WMHI for more than 21 years. As a Telephone Operator and later a Clerk assigned to Reception/Switchboard, Tracy was the first point of contact for visitors, contractors, and many employees upon entering the facility. He greeted people with a friendly and positive attitude. Tracy worked hard to build relationships with fellow staff and with the community.

Patricia Watson worked hard to lead the night shift nursing staff at WMHI. When the pandemic began, Patricia saw a need for masks at WMHI and took it upon herself to make cloth masks to distribute to WMHI staff. In all, she made more than 1,400 masks for the facility. Patricia recognized a problem and came up with a solution to keep herself and fellow staff members safer during a very difficult time.



Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute Employee of the Year

Congrats to Vincy Cherian from Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. COVID couldn't keep her from celebrating as she was named MTMHI's 2019 Employee of the Year! Vincy is a Registered Nurse 3 at MTMHI. She juggles a schedule for more than 300 nursing staff, and she's also the liaison for onboarding



of contract agency nurses and technicians.

Shout Out!

Support Services Dept. - Middle TN Mental Health Institute

Our Support Services department has been tasked with asking a series of COVID-19 screening questions and completing temperature checks on all individuals entering our hospital. Our Support Services team has executed this task daily for more than a year now and has done so with smiles on their faces. MTMHI would like to recognize our Support Services team in their efforts in keeping our patients and staff safe. Your hard work has **NOT** gone unnoticed. THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU DO!!!

- Eric Doxy, MTMHI Psychiatric Hospital Administrator



Dedicated members of MTMHI's Support Services Team pictured above (L to R): Preston Vann, Beverly Aleywine, Terence Bronaugh, Julianne Patel, and Charles Hendricks.

Teammates not pictured: Linda Pritchett, Tracey Chandler, Alfred Garner, Richard Cole, Karen Richardson, Jaqueline Culver and Van Wilhite.

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

Save-the-Dates

Planning & Policy Council meetings

Mark your calendar: The next meeting of the TDMHSAS Planning and Policy Council is set for Tuesday, June 8, 2021. Details on how you can attend will be published soon.

Pursuant to Governor Bill Lee's Executive Order 78, which extends Executive Order 71, Planning & Policy Council meetings, where noted, will be open to the public and held via electronic means (conference call). Please call in to the conference line number listed next to the meeting you wish to participate in and follow instructions given by the individual leading the meeting. [Please check the TDMHSAS Website for instructions on how to connect to the meetings](#). The recordings will be posted to the department website within two business days.

Region VII Planning and Policy Council

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. CDT

WebEx Information: Toll-Free: 415-655-0003 / Meeting number (access code):
185 606 1922

Region VI Planning and Policy Council

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. CDT

Children's Committee

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. CDT

Conference Numbers:

615-253-5786 866-249-0567

Region V Planning and Policy Council

Thursday, May 6, 2021

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. CST

Region I Planning and Policy Council

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. EDT

Region II Planning and Policy Council

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. EDT

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week (May 2-8)



Awareness Week is nearly here! Mark your calendar, get out your favorite green clothes, and fire up your Facebook page to celebrate. Learn more about the campaign organized by the [National Federation of Families at this link.](#)

You Hold the Keys!



No matter where life may take you, remember YOU HOLD THE KEYS! Thanks to Joann Page from Moccasin Bend for sharing this creative display and helpful reminder.

Talkin' Basketball



March Madness may be a distant memory, but don't tell that to Patricia Harris! She has bragging rights until the next tourney because she won the Wellness Council's 2021 March Madness Bracket Challenge. In addition to reminding her colleagues of her superior skills in bracketology, Patricia will savor the sweet taste of victory when she uses her Dunkin' Donuts gift card. Congrats Patricia!

Resources

COVID-19 counseling services for Tennesseans

HELP IS AVAILABLE

HOPE

IS REAL



If you're feeling overwhelmed, disconnected, hopeless, or just sad—you're not alone. Please know that help is available. Hope is real.

COVID-19 Counseling resources are available in every Tennessee County.
[Find the contact for your area on our website.](#)

Hope Line: Support for Tennesseans 60+



**TN HOPE
LINE**

Connect with compassionate,
trained, and loving listeners for
help, hope, & encouragement.

**ARE YOU
LONELY?
AGE 60+?**

M-F 9-3CT

844-600-8262

A partnership of The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives,
Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, and Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability

Emotional support for healthcare workers ...

COVID-19 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT LINE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Need to talk to someone about feelings of stress, anxiety, sadness, or depression related to work? The COVID-19 Emotional Support Line for healthcare workers can help.



888-642-7886

Calltakers are available: 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. (CT), 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. (ET)



And support for teachers ...

COVID-19 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT LINE NOW OPEN TO TENNESSEE EDUCATORS

CALL: 888-MHART-TN
or 888-642-7886

HOURS: 6 am - 10 pm CT
7 am - 11 pm ET



In the event of a mental health emergency ...

STATEWIDE
CRISIS LINE
HELP IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS
855-CRISIS-1 TN.gov/CrisisLine
855-274-7471 

For questions about addiction treatment/referrals ...



TN
REDLINE
1.800.889.9789
CALL OR TEXT

To talk with a TDMHSAS Consumer Advocate ...



Office of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services

HELPLINE

1-800-560-5767

OCA.TDMHSAS@tn.gov

We can help with

- finding mental health and substance abuse resources in your area
- questions about insurance
- where to find 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 am to 4:30 pm
- Closed on state holidays

If we cannot answer your question, we will work with you to find the appropriate resource.

www.tn.gov/behavioral-health

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:

CUSTOMER FOCUSED:

An unwavering commitment to keep patients and those who serve them at the forefront of every decision.

INTEGRITY:

Honesty and truth in all we do.

INSPIRED PURPOSE:

The call to action in service of a cause greater than one's self.

EXCELLENCE:

The highest standards for services, efficiency, and conduct.

COMPASSIONATE

AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

The commitment to make effective decisions and inspire others through active listening and empathy.

SOLUTIONS AND OUTCOMES-ORIENTED:

The commitment to positive outcomes and meaningful changes in response to the critical needs of the Tennesseans we serve.

PARTNERSHIP:

Beyond teamwork, collaboration based on mutual success to the benefit of the Tennesseans we are blessed to serve.

*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.*

And please connect with us on social media!



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Thanks to our [Facebook family](#) for "liking" us and sharing our posts!



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Instagram



LinkedIn