



We want to dedicate this newsletter to the memory of Kristosser A. Jernighan. Our beloved Kris was suddenly called home on May 9th. His gentle, giving spirit and his servant's heart continue to inspire all of us who were close to him. The department was well-represented at his funeral on May 20 in his hometown of Amory, Mississippi. As you'd expect, the service was lovely and exemplified the class, taste, and impeccable sensibilities of our dearly departed friend. We'd like to express gratitude to everyone who has reached out with condolences and shared their memories of Kris. We look forward to finding

ways to commemorate the precious, powerful, and purposeful life that Kris lived so well and shared with us all.



Certificate of Honor and Remembrance

Whereas, our department, upon meeting Kristoffer Jernighan, knew we were in the presence of the most gentle, kind, considerate, and compassionate public servant; and

Whereas, Mr. Jernighan proved himself to be adept and excellent in his duties conducting himself and representing the department at all times with utmost professionalism; and

Whereas, Mr. Jernighan's calm spirit and peaceful demeanor created an atmosphere of solace and support for his teammates during challenging times; and

Whereas, Mr. Jernighan graciously lent his impeccable sense of style, taste, and creativity to all department gatherings in which he participated; and

Whereas, Mr. Jernighan left an indelible mark on his teammates and everyone he met; and

Whereas, we will endeavor as a team to emulate his God-centered work striving to the highest and best purpose as Kris lived his life every day; and

Whereas, no one can ever replace our dearly departed Kris;

We hereby issue this certificate of honor and remembrance in memory of the indelible spirit and timeless impact of

Kristoffer Andrew Jernighan



On this twentieth day of May 2023.

Maria J. Sallas
Commissioner

[Click this link or the image above to read the certificate of Honor and Remembrance presented by the department to Kris's family.](#)

Mental Health Awareness Month



Click this link or the image above to read Governor Bill Lee's proclamation for Mental Health Month.

One Employee's Journey of Mental Wellness



Latonya Brewster works at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. She reached out to share her story for mental health awareness month. Here's her

Back in 2009, I was fresh out of high school. I had my whole life planned out and so many goals. I finished cosmetology school and had my mind set on working in beauty and eventually attending college. Unfortunately, that wasn't the how my life panned out. One day, a dark cloud of depression came over me. In this moment, I had no idea what was wrong with me. A day of darkness turned into a month , then a year, and so many years after that. I can't fully explain the torture in my mind, the voices in my head, all the darkness that I saw and pain that I felt. I had to check myself into a mental institution in West Tennessee, where I was diagnosed with depression, bipolar, and schizophrenia.

I thought my life was over. How could this be my life? God had a different story for me. After discharge, thought I was all right, but everything had gotten worse. I was so discouraged and so hopeless. I so badly wanted to end my life, but a small still voice whispered to me that day and said, if I stood up and continue to fight, that better days would come and peace would be mine.

I was admitted multiple times. I had multiple anxiety attacks, lost more than 40 pounds, and every inch of my life screamed darkness. I cried for 3 years straight. I couldn't work a full time job. Living a normal life felt like it was impossible. I just wanted to give up all together!

I told myself this was NOT my final story. I started to regain my strength and found hope and faith again. Even though this mental battle was not over, I never gave up on getting better. After a 14 year battle with depression, in and out of mental hospitals, I now work at MTMHI. How amazing is that?

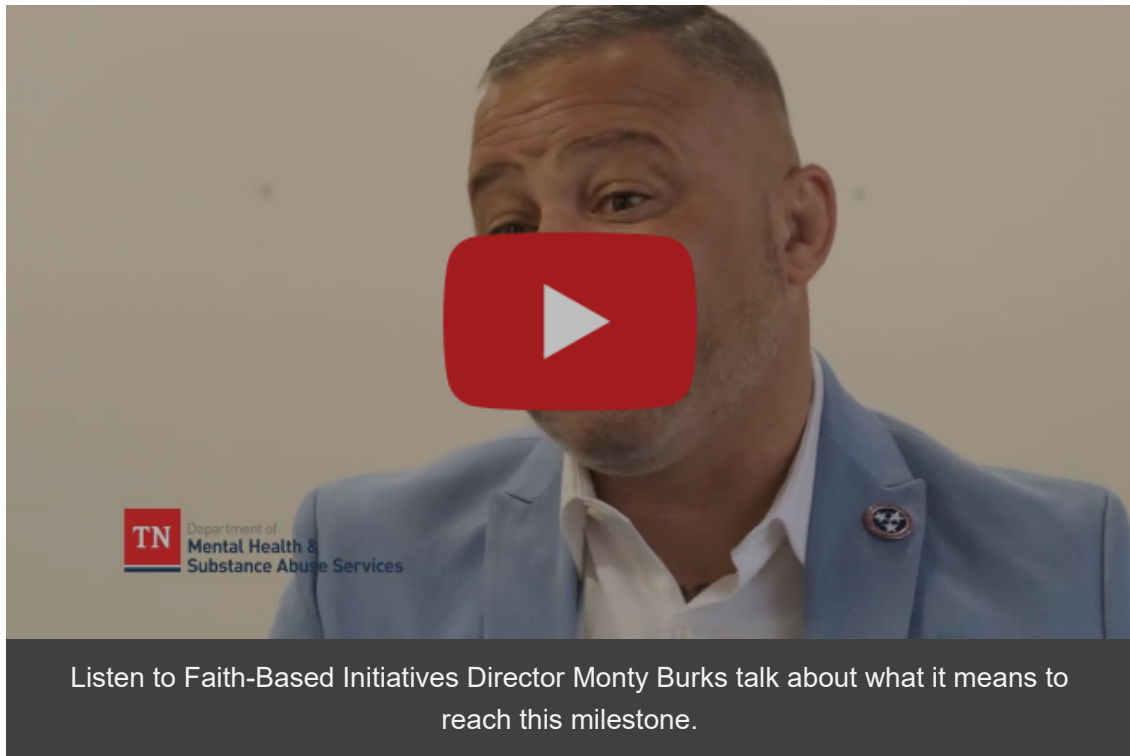
If you or a family member is experiencing or have experienced mental illness, I would like to encourage you today to never give up on getting better! Know that in the face of darkness, YOU WIN! Remember trouble doesn't last always. There's sunshine on the other side.

TDMHSAS Celebrates 1,000 Certified Recovery Congregations

TDMHSAS marked a milestone in its work to encourage, equip, and empower community partners to address mental health and addiction issues. The

department recently certified its 1,000th Recovery Congregation through its Faith-Based Initiative.

The certification process asks faith leaders to do just a few simple things: attend free trainings and learn more about the mental health and addiction challenges faced by people in the pews and in the community, view addiction as a treatable disease rather than a moral failing, and commit to finding ways to use resources, ministries, and time to support the behavioral health needs of the faithful and the community. [Read the full news release at this link](#) or watch the video below!



TDMHSAS Wellness Through Employment 2023 Statewide Conference



The annual Wellness Through Employment Statewide Conference was held May 11 and 12. Attendees both in-person and virtual, received valuable insights and created connections with leaders in the field and peers from across the state. Highlighted presentations included the keynote presented by originators of the IPS model, Bob Drake and Debbie Becker. Additional presentation topics included applying IPS to people living with and recovering from substance use disorder, the Eight Dimensions of Wellness, and more. A special highlight was a panel discussion on the second day of the conference looking back at ten years of IPS in Tennessee with the men and women who brought the model to the Volunteer State. [You can find more pictures from the conference at this link](#) and learn more about our employment and wellness initiatives at the links below.

[Individual Placement and Support \(IPS\) Supported Employment](#)

[My Health, My Choice, My Life wellness](#)

IPS Success Story Debuts at Conference



With the help of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment services offered through Frontier Health, John was able to access treatment and get a job he loves. John was so dedicated-- at one point, he was walking to work. Hear how his work family at Golden Corral helped him out and how he's giving back in this video.

Coalitions Spring Into Action

National Fentanyl Awareness Day was May 9



Metro Drug Coalition hosted a National Fentanyl Awareness Day Event that included proclamations from both the city and county mayors, a fentanyl basics training, and a community leadership panel that answered questions about fentanyl and its impacts on our community.

For National Fentanyl Awareness Day, the Hamilton County Coalition educated the community about the dangers associated with fentanyl. By hosting this event, the Coalition aimed to shed light on the risks of fentanyl and provide resources for prevention and support. The event fostered dialogue and effectively conveyed the importance of being informed about this deadly



Mental Health Awareness Month



The Cheatham County Community Enhancement Coalition visited three local middle schools during teen self-esteem month to provide resources and have an important conversation about mental health with youth. The Coalition provided students with self-esteem building brochures, origami fortune tellers, keychains, and bookmarks. In addition to teen self-esteem month, May is also Mental Health Awareness

Month, so the Coalition brought mental health tip cards. These cards covered topics such as talking with a friend about their mental health, healthy coping skills, and helplines for mental health crisis.

Monroe and Putnam Counties Launch Prom Promise Campaigns

Monroe County Prevention and Wellness Coalition launched a campaign for prom- Please Return On Monday (PROM). Drawing inspiration from another state, they created flyers and business cards for schools and businesses to display and give out. The faculty at each of the three high schools got involved by creating a "Please Return On Monday- we did" wall display that had the faculty members' prom pictures. They also had a banner at each school that the students signed as a pledge to make good choices.



Power of Putnam implemented activities across Putnam County high schools to educate youth on the consequences of drinking alcohol underage through a campaign called Prom Promise. Prom Promise provided a multifaceted approach to prom and graduation safety by providing students with information, resources, and hands-on learning experiences.

Renewal House Grand Opening



Congratulations to the team at Renewal House on opening their new location and soon-to-be finished residential housing option. The CHI 2.0 funded residence for mothers and children will have 21 beds when it opens soon in Nashville.

TDMHSAS HR Retreat



During the second week of May, the Central Office human resources staff hosted an HR Retreat for the hospital staff at Montgomery Bell State Park. More than 40 HR Directors, Assistant Directors, Trainers, Timekeepers, and Central Office staff gathered to learn and share. The amazing team pictured above is responsible for more than 1,850 amazing employees across the entire department!

Welcome to Team TDMHSAS



Alzena Bason has been hired as the System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) Director. Alzena will be providing leadership to the System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) Network and SOCAT TANF grants as well as providing support to the Family Support Specialist (FSS) Certification Program and Training and Technical Assistance Center. Alzena has twenty plus years of experience in working with children and youth and providing leadership to governmental programs.

TDMHSAS Promotion

Krystal Fortney has been promoted to the Director of Youth and Young Adult Initiatives, Krystal has been working as the Healthy Transitions Project Director with TDMHSAS since August 2021. Krystal will be providing leadership to the First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI) and the Clinical High Risk for Psychosis (CHR-P) as well as providing support for the Healthy Transitions (HT) staff. In addition, Krystal will provide oversight to the Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) program and Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC).



National Nurse Appreciation Week!



Thank you to all the hard-working nurses at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute, Moccasin Bend, Western Mental Health, and Memphis Mental Health Institute. The TDMHSAS family appreciates all you do.

Shout Out!

MMHI Awards Employee of the Year and Month



Please help Memphis Mental Health Institute in Congratulating Timothy Hegarty & Aiisha Williams-Dixon for being awarded Employee of the Year & Employee of the Month for the month of April.

Employee of the Year Timothy Hegarty has been with MMHI since 2000. Tim has been instrumental in the expansion of Forensic Services at MMHI during the past year.

Aiisha Williams-Dixon has been at MMHI since 2018. She has been the Social Services Director since 2020. Aiisha has shown commitment and dedication during her time and continues to remain positive and be an inspiration to her team.

MTMHI completes successful survey with The Joint Commission



Staff at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute exercised their inner Willy Wonka after their successful survey with The Joint Commission. Psychiatric Technicians, Lead Psych Techs, and Nurses all got golden tickets to reward their hard work. Everyone enjoyed the surprise, even some of the patients!

Western Mental Health Recognizes Green 3 for Unit of the Month

Congrats to Green 3 for being Unit of the Month at Western Mental Health Institute! Staff on Unit Green 3 go above and beyond for the patients because they are a family unit. Furthermore, Mona Yancey is the Treatment Team Coordinator from Unit Green 3. Whatever endeavors she may have going on she can maneuver around them and help out other units, sometimes 2-3 units all while maintaining her own unit. Mona is the true definition of Team Player.

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.

TennCare Renewal



If you work with people on TennCare, there's an important event happening that you should be aware of. You may receive a packet in the mail or an electronic notification with instructions on what to do and the deadline for submitting your renewal. To prepare for the renewal process, please make sure TennCare has your updated contact information and find your renewal date. You can do this online at TennCareConnect.TN.gov or by calling 855-259-0701. For information on completing a renewal visit: TN.gov/tcrenew

Save-the-Dates

Planning and Policy Council Meetings

2023 Statewide Planning & Policy Council

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. CST

Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

Conference Center

221 Stewarts Ferry Pike

Nashville, TN 37214

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

[Statewide & Committee Meeting Schedule \(tn.gov\)](https://tn.gov)

[Regional Council Meeting Schedule \(tn.gov\)](https://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.

10th Annual Suicide and the Black Church Conference

10TH NATIONAL SUICIDE AND THE BLACK CHURCH CONFERENCE
presents
ANCHORED IN HOPE
JUNE 14-15, 2023



Scan Here to Register
Jay Barnett
Former Professional Football Player
Author, Speaker, Survivor
Mental Health Expert & PhD student



Tamu Lewis, MBA,
Author, Speaker is the Co-Founder
and Board President of the LTY Foundation
Sister of the Actor Lee Thompson Young

SOME OF OUR PRESENTERS & PARTICIPANTS

 <p>Commissioner Marie Williams, LCSW, TDMHSAS</p>	 <p>Dianne Young, BA, MS Co-Founder Suicide & the Black Church Pastor The Healing Center</p>	 <p>Monty Burke, PhD, CFRP Director, Faith Based Initiatives TDMHSAS</p>
 <p>Clarence Davis, MD Internal Medicine Atlanta, GA</p>	 <p>Rev. Que English, PhD Director of the Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the U.S. DPHHS</p>	 <p>Cameron Cunningham, MEd Training & Technical Assistance Coordinator at the African American Behavioral Health Center of Excellence Atlanta, GA</p>
 <p>Theodore Lynas, II, Pharm D Shoife Clinical Director ADHA Immunization Trainer</p>	 <p>Tommie O'Connell, LCSW Army National Guard Washington, DC</p>	 <p>Harold J. Phillips, MPP, Director of the White House Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP)</p>
 <p>Shelley Rae Orr, MD University Clinical Health UTHSC</p>	 <p>Frieda Gudlaw, PhD, RN, APRN FAAN Executive Academic Consultant to the Ministry Fellowship Program at the American Nurses Association</p>	 <p>Frank D. Stevenson, PhD Associate Vice President TSU Pastor Friendship MBC Nashville, TN</p>
 <p>Latane J. Powell, MSSW, LCSW CEO Alliance Healthcare Services</p>	 <p>Oliver J. Williams, PhD Professor at the University of Minnesota in the School of Social Work</p>	 <p>Valerie Cordeiro, PhD Founder for Depression Awareness Co-Executive Director Nashville TN</p>
 <p>Dorcas Young Griffin Director, Division of Community Services at Shelby County Government</p>	 <p>Alexander Crosby, MD, MPH Dept of Community Health & Preventive Medicine Vanderbilt School of Medicine</p>	 <p>Christopher Davis, MEd, DMin Senior Pastor, St. Paul Baptist Church Associate Dean, Confidential Ministries, Memphis Theological Seminary</p>
 <p>Donna Barnes, PhD President, Co-Founder NoCCA</p>	 <p>Altha J. Stewart, MD President, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry UTHSC</p>	 <p>Dr. Gina Stewart Senior Pastor Chief Ministry Officer President of the Lola Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society</p>
 <p>Ausan Dalgo, MD, MPH Director, Center for Bioethics & Health Equity UTHSC</p>	 <p>Michael Torres, MD Psychiatrist Baltimore, MD</p>	 <p>Dr. Thomas L. Murray Senior Pastor Anointed Temple of Praise Outreach Ministry Memphis, TN</p>
 <p>Sherry Nobok, PhD, MDw Associate Professor, George Washington University</p>	 <p>Audrey Elton, PhD, MS Owner of Elton Management, Consulting Company Chair of the Tenn Suicide Prevention Network Statewide Advisory Council</p>	 <p>Clark Flett Executive Board Member President, The Jason Foundation</p>
 <p>Nichelle Foster, MFT, LADAC Health Manager in Behavioral Health and Wellness Unit</p>	 <p>Latane Means-Hill, MS Program Manager for the Adolescent and Child Health Division</p>	 <p>David Young, BA, MS Freedom Prep Charter School Family Therapist Co-Pastor The Healing Center</p>

"CONTINUING TO BUILD A NETWORK TO SAVE LIVES"

Resources

In the event of a mental health emergency ...

988
is here to help.

988
SUICIDE
& CRISIS
LIFELINE



Call, text, or
chat today.

For questions about addiction treatment/referrals ...

TN
REDLINE

1.800.889.9789

CALL OR TEXT

TN Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services
TAADAS
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>COMPASSIONATE AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: <i>The commitment to make effective decisions and inspire others through active listening and empathy.</i></p>
<p>INTEGRITY: <i>Honesty and truth in all we do.</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>INSPIRED PURPOSE: <i>The call to action in service of a cause greater than one's self.</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>
<p>EXCELLENCE: <i>The highest standards for services, efficiency, and conduct.</i></p>	

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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