

Mississippi Profile

WINTER 2012

Information Publication from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health

CSU Redesign Improves Access to Care

One of the main barriers for people in need of mental health services in Mississippi is access to care, especially during crisis situations. Over the last three years, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) has been working to improve access to crisis services by redesigning the Crisis Stabilization Units to allow treatment on a voluntary basis.

During the 2009 Legislative session, DMH sought and received permission to contract with Life Help Community Mental Health Center for the operation of the Grenada Crisis stabilization Unit (CSU). The pilot program began with the purpose of studying the potential for increased efficiencies and improved access to services without being involuntarily committed.

After the pilot program proved successful, DMH once again sought permission from the Legislature to transfer the operation of the CSUs to Community Mental Health Centers across the state. The redesign was completed in FY11.

“Since the redesign, we have more than doubled our number of admissions,” said Elon Epsy, PMHNP, FNP, Director of the Crisis Stabilization Unit in Newton. “We are now able to help people in the middle of a crisis rather than wait for the court process to get a commitment order. It has made such a difference to deal with a crisis when its happening rather than waiting for someone to decompensate and need commitment. We are able to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

In FY10, a total of 1,512 individuals received services at Mississippi’s seven CSUs. In FY11, that number increased to 2,460. Allowing access on a voluntary basis, diverted 89% of all admissions from a DMH psychiatric facility. A total of 59% of admissions to the CSUs were voluntary and 40% were involuntary during FY11. The average length of stay was 9.99 days.

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Supporting a Better Tomorrow... Today



Executive Director's Message



In the Winter edition of *Mississippi Profile*, our focus is to provide you with updates on several topics. First, you will find an article on the success of the Crisis Stabilization Units. By redesigning the CSUs, individuals can now receive services on a voluntary basis which reduces the need for inpatient treatment. This has been a very successful project which has benefited Mississippians

across our state.

In this edition of *Mississippi Profile*, you will also find an update on the Department of Justice's investigation of Mississippi's public mental health system. In December, Mississippi received a findings letter from DOJ. Our main concern about DOJ's involvement is that the State's system will be required to reconfigure services and supports for people who are currently involved in our programs at the expense of people who are currently underserved or who are not receiving any services at all. We will keep you up-to-date as we move forward with DOJ's concerns.

Last year, DMH received funding from BP to address behavioral and mental health needs related to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. DMH was able to award grants to community service providers in areas of the State affected by the spill. The initial contribution provided by BP has allowed DMH to fund 25 separate programs including five suicide prevention programs to assist those affected by the spill.

This month, DMH sent a request for an additional \$30 million from BP. Continued funding will allow for a continuation of these services for those still in need, as well as focusing services on those that may not have been adequately reached yet, such as ethnic minorities, disaster responders, fisherman, and youth. To date, the funds have provided tens of thousands of hours of therapeutic services, hundreds of community trainings, and reached thousands through outreach efforts.

Sincerely yours,

Edwin C. LeGrand III
Executive Director

Mississippi Profile



Winter 2012

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The Mississippi Profile is devoted to providing the public with information about services provided or administered by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. It also strives to increase public awareness and knowledge about mental illness, mental retardation/developmental disabilities, substance abuse, and Alzheimer's disease and other dementia to improve health and quality of life.

This publication is free of charge to persons interested in mental health, mental retardation/developmental disabilities, substance abuse, Alzheimer's disease and other dementia, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, or the individuals it serves. It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health to comply with federal and state laws assuring equal opportunities of employment and services.

The editor reserves the right to edit all materials printed in this publication. Send requests for items to be included in the newsletter and other inquiries to:

Division of Public Information
ATTN: Wendy Bailey
MS Department of Mental Health
1101 Robert E. Lee Building
239 North Lamar Street
Jackson, MS 39201
Phone: (601) 359-1288
TDD: (601) 359-6230
FAX: (601) 359-6295
wendy.bailey@dmh.state.ms.us

Mississippi Receives DOJ Findings Letter

On December 22, 2011, the State of Mississippi received a Findings Letter from the United States Department of Justice outlining their investigation of the State's Mental Health System for Persons with Mental Illness and Developmental Disabilities.

During the investigation, the Department of Justice (DOJ) assessed the State's compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, as interpreted in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527. U.S. 581 (1999), requiring individuals with disabilities, including mental illness and developmental disabilities, receive services and supports in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. DOJ concluded that the State of Mississippi fails to provide services to qualified individuals with disabilities, including mental illness and developmental disabilities, in the most integrated settings appropriate to the needs, in violation of the ADA.

DOJ hopes to reach a written, enforceable, settlement agreement with the State of Mississippi that would set forth remedial actions to be taken within a specified period of time to address each outstanding area. If a settlement is not reached with the DOJ, then a lawsuit may be initiated against the State to assure compliance with the ADA.

Mississippi has been proactively making efforts to increase the capacity of community-based services in order to decrease the need for inpatient care. However, this is not just a matter of shifting resources.

"We must increase community-capacity before we move people into the community," said Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director. "Additional funding is needed to build community-capacity while at the same time ensuring the health and welfare of people currently being served. If we close facilities in order to shift resources, the capacity will not be available in the community immediately. This will only shift the burden of providing care to the county with no place to send people."

Serving more people in community-based services is a priority for DMH, but it is NOT a cheaper service model. According to DOJ it costs \$110,000 to provide 24-hour inpatient care to an individual in one of our IDD facilities and only about \$27,000 to serve the individual in the community through the Waiver

program. The State will not be able to serve roughly four persons with IDD in the community for every one currently served in an institution. If a person requires 24-hour care, the cost will be different for a person who requires six hours of care each day. It is important we compare apples to apples and realize there is no one-size fits all solution.

In an effort to move the Mississippi's public mental health system forward and place even more individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness in their communities, DMH has requested additional funding in the appropriation for Fiscal Year 2013. These additional funds will help the State move forward with more community placement of individuals through expanding services provided by community service providers. In addition, the funds will be used to enroll more individuals on the IDD waiver program, which would allow individuals to receive services in their communities. These have been goals since the inception of DMH's Strategic Plan in 2009 and are highlighted in the current year's Plan.

CSU Redesign continued from page 1

The CSU redesign accomplished four main goals:

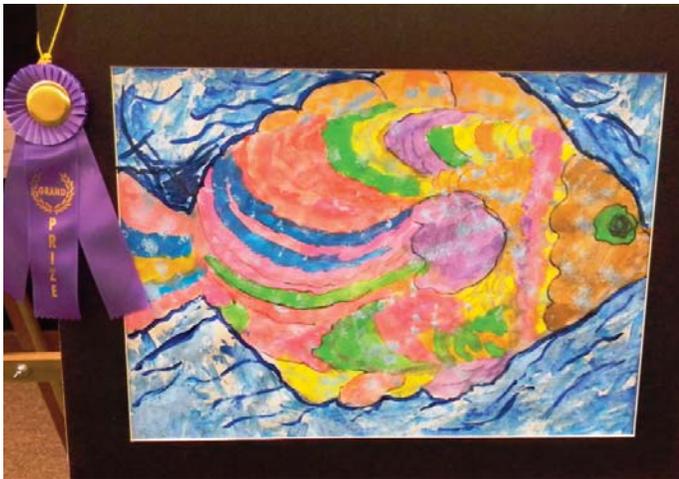
- 1) Individuals with serious mental illnesses are now able to access the psychiatric services they need on a voluntary basis before they decompensate to the point of meeting involuntary commitment criteria.
- 2) Improved the efficiency and decreased the cost per day of operation.
- 3) Provided psychiatric services to individuals awaiting pre-evaluation screening prior to involuntary commitment.
- 4) Individuals stay connected to their community mental health provider while psychiatric stabilization services are provided.

"The majority of people who are now coming to the CSU are on a voluntary basis. These individuals want treatment and are willing to seek help before they are at the point of needing a state psychiatric hospital," said Epsy. "It's exciting to see people successfully return to the community - to their families, jobs and their life - after a crisis situation is resolved."

Boswell Offers Art Program for Clients

Individuals at Boswell Regional Center (BRC) have embarked on a new journey with the establishment of an Expressive Arts Department.

Directed by Claire Bevell and assisted by staff members Robin Moss, Brenda Blakeney, Jacob Ware, and Jarrod Lee, this Department is a veritable bee hive of creativity, active treatment, and therapeutic arts activities. Students may choose from lessons in piano, guitar, voice, or recorder; art classes or music classes; musical chair aerobics, and chapel choir rehearsals. The program is available to all those who live on campus as well as those who live in the community.



Within this larger program, for the past two years individuals at BRC have been able to create paintings to exhibit and sell. All of the artists are able to experience art on a level they can best enjoy, whether hand over hand or with slight assistance, following sequential instructions or painting and drawing independently with advice from the staff. At one recent art exhibit, the artists made more than \$1,400 in sales.

Utilizing the skills of carpenters and artists on staff, the Expressive Arts Department has been able to engage in large projects such as scenery and mural painting. One of the recent joint projects in which many talented artists from the staff and living units participated was the painting of four 5x8' murals which are the beautiful centerpieces of the lobbies in the four new living units on Boswell's campus. Boswell artists

who participated in the projects are proud of their contribution to their new homes.

Currently, the Expressive Arts Department is planning a joint project with Vocational Services to produce and package greeting cards and calendars featuring the art of Boswell artists. Everyone expects this project to be meaningful and profitable work for the artists as well as a contribution to society.

During the past two years, the Boswell Regional Center Chapel Choir has also experienced growth on many levels. Directed by Claire Bevell and accompanied by Jacob Ware on piano and Jarrod Lee on guitar, the choir membership has grown to 43 choir members plus a number of staff who enjoy traveling and singing with them on their trips to area churches once or twice a month. The choir, with a slate of officers who perform weekly duties, serves the Boswell Chapel Services program also each Sunday morning.

The choir has progressed from singing basic traditional hymns to arrangements sung in canon or with descants or partner songs. Two-part harmony, once thought too difficult and even impossible for the choir, thrills every audience. Though diction is a challenge and memorization of words is difficult for many, the choir has shown remarkable progress in communicating their message clearly.

"Boswell Regional Center's Expressive Arts Department hopes to provide a significant measure of therapy, wholeness, and healing through the arts for mental illness and to achieve behavioral objectives in expressive arts that transfer directly to attainment of training objectives for those with intellectual disability," said Claire Bevell, Director of the Expressive Arts Department. "We all need joy and purpose in our lives."

Boswell artists and musicians, as well as their staff, are finding that joy and purpose in many ways, especially through their special brand of Expressive Arts.

DMH Requests Additional Funds from BP

Over the last seven years, residents of the Mississippi Gulf Coast have learned the true definition of resiliency. After surviving Hurricane Katrina in 2005, residents were forced to deal with a man-made disaster in 2010 when the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill occurred in the Gulf Coast.

While Mississippians are resilient, everyone needs help sometimes. Over the last year, many needs have been met with behavioral health funding provided by British Petroleum to the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH). However, data shows that there is still a long road ahead.

That is why DMH is requesting an additional \$30 million from British Petroleum (BP) to administer grants over the next five years to public and private mental health providers in the areas impacted by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

The Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence is one of 25 programs that received grant funding in 2010. Serving as the oldest and largest non-violence shelter for women in Mississippi, the Center was able to establish a satellite shelter in Pascagoula with the grant funding. Since opening in October 2011, the satellite shelter has been at capacity.

"If it wasn't for the Oil Spill Recovery grant funding we received through the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, we would not have been able to open the shelter," said Sandra Morrison, Executive Director of the Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence. "The grant funding has made a very big difference for the victims of domestic violence that we serve."

According to Morrison, there has been an increase in domestic violence victims seeking counseling and court services. In 2011, the Center served approximately 631 women and children through their shelter, non-residential counseling program and traditional housing program. In addition, more than 2,890 women were served through the courts program which provides a court advocate to review domestic violence charges and provide intervention to the victims.

In addition to the satellite shelter, the Center has been able to restore services that had been cut due to lack of funding and provide supplies for the shelter.

Preliminary analyses of data provided by individuals seeking mental health services funded by the initial grant indicate that the negative effects of the oil spill are associated with significant stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For example, researchers at the University of Mississippi have documented that of those adults receiving services through the programs funded to provide oil spill response, approximately 52.5% report severe or extremely severe stress, 53.9% report severe or extremely severe depression, 64.3% report severe or extremely severe anxiety, and 39.8% meet clinical criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

"Continued funding for services would benefit the people of Mississippi in a variety of ways," said Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director. "Services funded through this program will address the more serious, pervasive mental health effects by providing intensive services for those most affected by the spill, particularly those who may have lost their employment in relation to the spill."

"Additionally, continued services will meet the needs of individuals who were affected by the spill, but were reluctant to seek help initially due to lack of accessibility of services, stigma, or other barriers. Funds will also be made available to organizations that provide prevention programs that strengthen the resilience of Gulf Coast residents who are at especially high risk of mental health problems."

A community survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in October 2011 also found high rates of mental health symptoms among Mississippians affected by the spill. Given the negative long-term mental health effects observed following other technological disasters, such as the North Sea Oil Rig Disaster and Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, it is clear that the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill will continue to affect Mississippi Gulf Coast residents for years to come.

"As with any crisis in the community, stressors go up," said Morrison. "By having additional funding, we have been able to better meet the needs of the women and children in the six coastal counties we serve."

Mental Health Advocates Tell Their Story

With the help of willing patients, clients and others who have received services through the Department of Mental Health, Mississippians over the past year have gotten a chance to hear first-hand how the state's public mental health system of care has provided for those in need.

The Department began around this time last year producing a series of advocacy videos that were eventually posted online on the popular video sharing site YouTube, letting former patients, clients and those served through the community speak about their own experiences in dealing with mental illnesses and intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD).

"This is a way we can give a voice to those individuals who are so often not heard," Mississippi State Hospital Public Relations Director Kathy Denton said. "It's not just an opportunity to share information about our services, but it's an outlet for some people to share how they have overcome the unique challenges they have faced in their lives."

That includes not just patients and clients, but their family members who have had to deal with difficulties themselves in providing for their loved ones. In addition to Mississippians living with mental illness and IDD, the series of videos also included interviews with those who have struggled to overcome substance abuse addiction.

Mississippi State Hospital Public Relations Department staff travelled across the state last year to interview and record these unique stories. They were placed online throughout the winter and spring – a crucial time to bring awareness to the Department of Mental Health as the Mississippi Legislature was crafting a difficult state budget in a time of declining revenues and available funds.

The same can be said this year, as lawmakers once again will face difficult choices as they work to create a budget that meets the needs of all state agencies. During this time, it is important for those individuals who

have been impacted by the public mental health system to share their stories.

The stories shared on Mississippi State Hospital's YouTube channel feature different people talking about their specific situations – substance abuse, IDD or families caring for a loved one who struggled with mental illness or IDD.

"Our son was diagnosed with a mental illness at the age of 21," says Debbie Waller in one video. "We thought we could take care of him. We did this for four years." Now, though, she mentions how her son is living in the community, in a group home with an independent setting. She asks viewers to help protect Mississippi's Public Mental Health System by calling their legislators and voicing their support.

With a large number of freshman legislators, it will be important to make sure those who aren't aware are able to develop a good understanding of what a significant impact readily-available mental health services can make in the lives of those who need them.

"Twelve years ago, I was a patient at North Mississippi State Hospital, where I received care for crippling depression and overwhelming anxiety," says Lori Dickerson of Tupelo in one video.

"As a result of the care I received at that hospital, and continue to receive from the Region 3 Mental Health Center and the Batesville Crisis Center, I have been able to return to my career as a registered nurse working in a local hospital. I have been able to take my life back from the grips of the crippling depression that was so dark that surrounded me. Because of the services of the public mental health system in Mississippi, I was able to return to my life, and it feels great," Dickerson said.

The rest of the advocacy videos can be viewed by visiting <http://www.youtube.com/user/MissStateHospital>.

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DMH Partners with Army OneSource

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health is partnering with Army OneSource and the Citizen Soldier Support Program to build awareness of a growing public health issue relating to military service.

Our service members and their families face unique and often unprecedented challenges associated with active duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

DMH is partnering with Army OneSource to offer free online behavioral health trainings for all DMH staff and the Community Mental Health Centers which includes three CEs. The DMH Continuing Education Advisory Board reviewed planning forms submitted by Army OneSource for continuing education credit and approved the request for the following disciplines: Continuing Medical Education, Mental Health Therapist, IDD Therapist, Case Management Professional, Social Work, Nurse, Counselor, and Psychology credit. DMH will begin promoting the courses at all facilities and CMHCs in January.

“More and more service members and their families are struggling with behavioral health issues,” said Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director. “It is vital that we take this opportunity to educate our staff on the many challenges facing these men and women when they return home.”

According to Army OneSource, 38% of Soldiers and 31% of Marines report psychological symptoms. Among members of the National Guard, the figure rises to 49%. Psychological concerns are significantly higher among those with repeated deployments.

The “Treating the Invisible Wounds of War” courses include: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Brain Injury, Issues of Women Returning from Combat, and A Primary Care Approach.

For more information, contact DMH’s Division of Professional Development at 601-359-1288.



Join Us for IDD Day at the Capitol March 14, 2012 1 - 4 p.m.

The goal of the event is to increase the public’s knowledge and awareness of individuals with IDD, and how they participate in their communities through their employment settings, community involvement, and early intervention programs.

RP White Named Top Nursing Home



Anytime that you are rated # 2, the only thing to strive for is # 1. For East Mississippi State Hospital (EMSH), having its nursing home division, the Reginald P. White Nursing Facility (RPWNF), just named U.S. News and World Report's best nursing home in Mississippi for 2012 means that a set goal has been attained.

In 2011, RPWNF was ranked #2 by U.S. News. Receiving 5 stars out of a possible 5 stars in every category measured - health inspections, nurse staffing, and measures of medical-care quality, EMSH's nursing home, which is a state government facility, was one of 39 in the entire country to receive a perfect 5 star status.

According to Avery Comarow of U.S. News, "One in seven Americans age 65 and older will spend time in one of the nation's 16,000 nursing homes this year and

for those 85 and older, the chances are more than one in five. The numbers add up to about 3.3 million Americans. How will those millions of people and their families find a source of good care? To help them out, U.S. News displays data about nearly every nursing facility in the United States, updating the information every quarter and using it to rate and rank the homes."

Data from Nursing Home Compare, a consumer Web site run by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, is used to provide the information that U.S. News publishes annually. Regular health inspections carried out by state agencies and from the homes themselves submit the data to Nursing Home Compare.

"It has long been questioned whether a state psychiatric hospital should be in the nursing home business. I think that this first place rating says it all," said Charles Carlisle, Director of EMSH. "The staff makes the difference and the credit should go to them. Our heartfelt thanks goes out to the Mississippi Legislature, the Board of Mental Health, and the Executive Director of the Department of Mental Health for the insight they had to push for and fully fund our Nursing Home Division with a state of the art facility which, since its opening in 2006, has met or exceeded all of our expectations."

EMSH's R.P. White Nursing Facility is located on North Lakeland Drive, just beyond the Soccer Complex on Old 8th Street Road in west Meridian.

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*The National Association of FASIR Professionals and the Older Persons Division of NASW/MSD will hold annual meetings in conjunction with this event.

Legislative Breakfast Spotlights Journeys to Recovery

About 200 people gathered at Galloway United Methodist Church on Tuesday, Feb. 7 to thank Mississippi Legislators for their support of the Department of the Mental Health.

Forty-six legislators attended the annual Legislative Appreciation Breakfast, hosted by Friends of Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) and Friends of Hudspeth Center. The volunteer organizations are composed of employees, family members of those served, and community leaders who work to improve awareness of and raise funds for their respective facilities. With a large number of new legislators taking office for the first time, the breakfast, now in its 24th year, also gave those individuals a chance to share how they had been personally impacted by the services offered through the department.

MSH Director James G. Chastain thanked the legislators on behalf of two groups of people – the staff members who work at the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and the families who are in need of mental health, substance abuse and intellectual and developmental disability services.

“I can assure you that all of those individuals and their families are very appreciative of the support you give our services as members of the legislature,” Chastain said. “They appreciate it more than they’re able to say.”

Chastain then introduced one of two guest speakers for the breakfast, Chris Marcell. President of the Gulf Coast affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Marcell spoke about how his life had changed after being diagnosed with mental illness.

“There was a time when I could not take care of myself or sort out sound directions in life,” Marcell said. “During the severe stages of mental illness that I have experienced, I could not have found the journey of recovery without family encouragement, spiritual faith, and state-funded medical residential treatment.”

Marcell said he at first resisted treatment, not understanding he was sick. But he also said he ended up greatly benefiting from the inpatient and residential treatment he eventually received.

“Having a bed available when I needed it most was crucial,” he said. “In this case, God has done for me



what I could not do myself. I have a correct diagnosis and effective medication through the state system.”

The next guest speaker was Wes Miller, whose son Micah was served through the Early Intervention Program at Hudspeth Regional Center as a young child. Wes painted for the legislators and other guests a picture of his son, now a young man, and how his family began noticing developmental delays when he was just a toddler. Many doctors told the Millers many different things, including that Micah would never be able to socialize.

His family took Micah to Hudspeth Regional Center, the intermediate care facility for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that is located near Pearl in Rankin County. There he also received services through the Community Services Program.

“Without the assistance of Hudspeth Center, we wouldn’t have had a son who got a job at age 16, or who became an Eagle Scout at age 17,” Wes Miller said.

Micah has gone on to earn the very first occupational diploma from Jackson Public Schools, buy his own car, graduate from Hinds Community College twice, become a blue belt in karate, study photography and become a homeowner, among other accomplishments.

Micah shared a few sentiments himself before the event was over. “My life might have been very different if I had not received assistance from organizations like the Department of Mental Health,” Micah said. “I thank God every day and don’t take my blessings for granted.”

Romine Retires After 35 Years with DMH

After 35 years with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH), Lisa Romine will be retiring in April. During her tenure, Romine has been instrumental in developing and managing projects for DMH especially for those impacting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the DMH Strategic Plan.

In 1977, Romine began her career with DMH as a Parent Educator for the Mississippi Deaf/Blind Program at Ellisville State School. She continued her work as a Parent Educator for North Mississippi Regional Center's Early Intervention Program, Project RUN in Oxford. She later served as the Training Specialist and then Director of Project RUN/Outreach.

Romine transferred to DMH's Central Office in 1984 to first serve as a Program Planner Evaluator for the Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. She was subsequently promoted to the position of Division Director for Community Mental Retardation Services.

Romine was in the first graduating class of Mississippi's new Certified Public Manager's Program in 1992. She then was the founding President of the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Managers. Romine also served on several committees of the American Academy of Certified Public Managers. She is a graduate of the John C. Stennis Institute - State Executive Development Institute of Mississippi, and is a Licensed DMH Administrator, Certified Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Therapist, and Certified Mental Health Therapist. Romine was appointed by Governor Barbour in 2008 to serve on Mississippi's Early Childhood Advisory Council.

In 2007, Romine was named Director of the Bureau of Interdisciplinary Programs where she spearheaded the development and management of the Department's very first Strategic Plan along with the Board of Mental Health's Strategic Planning Subcommittee. With her guidance, the Department developed an agency Strategic Plan that includes a vision, values, core competencies, goals, action plans and strategies to improve the effec-

tiveness and efficiency of the public mental health system and move the State toward a community-based system of care. During this process, she worked with staff from DMH, Community Mental Health Centers, non-profit programs, and other State agencies, as well as consumers and advocacy groups. Romine has been responsible for coordinating the subsequent Strategic Plans including development of quarterly and annual reports and continuing work with the Board's Strategic Planning Subcommittee for annual revisions.

"Lisa has been an indispensable asset to the strategic planning process," said Dr. Kea Cassada, Chair of the Board of Mental Health's Strategic Planning Subcommittee. "Her organization skills and extensive knowledge are going to be sorely missed as she sails off into retirement. On a personal note, I am going to miss her happy optimism which has made the process of steering the Department of Mental Health into the future seem like a pleasure cruise."

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