

Mississippi Profile

SPRING 2010

Information Publication from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health

Bill Changes Commitment Laws

The commitment process for individuals seeking mental health treatment has been a hot topic during the 2010 Legislative Session. Several bills were submitted to help improve the process in Mississippi including HB 1525 which is one of the first bills as a result of the Mental Health Study Committee.

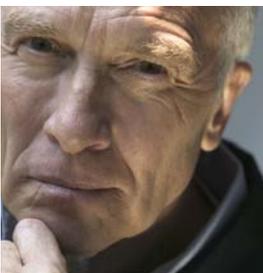
In March, HB 1525 was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. The bill helps to streamline mental health commitment laws and simplify the commitment process.

“We are very pleased with the passage of this bill because the commitment process to access services at a state hospital in Mississippi should be streamlined,” said Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director. “An individual who needs services should not encounter different commitment requirements based on where they live,” said LeGrand. “For example, in some counties an individual may be required to have an attorney while in other counties this isn't a requirement. The cost also varies, sometimes doubles, from one county to another.”

Some of the changes to the commitment process include:

- Costs to the person filing an affidavit seeking commitment for mental illness or substance abuse are capped at \$90 (\$75 filing fee, \$5 county and \$10 state assessments), unless it is an intentionally false or malicious affidavit.
- Commitment actions may be filed and heard in the county in which the individual is found. (Previously, it was in the county in which the individual resided)
- No Chancery Clerk may force an affiant to hire an attorney before filing.
- Fees charged to the patient are capped at \$400 and cannot be charged to indigent patients.
- A simple, one-page affidavit form will be provided by the Chancery Clerk to prospective affiants upon their request. DMH will participate in drafting this affidavit form.

Supporting a Better Tomorrow... Today



Executive Director's Message



Spring is officially here! One of the things I enjoy most about the beginning of Spring is our annual IDD Day at the Capitol.

This year, March 3 was set aside as a special day to encourage all Mississippians to learn more about individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It was also a day that we celebrated abilities and didn't focus on disabilities. We had an excellent turnout for the event and I deeply appreciate everyone's determination to make the day special.

Since January, DMH has been steadily working with the Mississippi State Legislature to ensure the health and safety of individuals with mental health needs are a top priority. We have had much success with the passage of some very important bills.

On the cover, you will read about HB 1525 which changes commitment laws to help simplify the process for the individuals we serve and their families.

With passage of HB 965, DMH began implementing the Crisis Intervention Center redesign project in April. The redesign will allow individuals to have access to services without going through the commitment process. We are very excited that the redesign will improve the efficiency and decrease the cost per day of operating the CIC.

We are grateful for the opportunities we have to speak to the Legislature. Our Department understands that we couldn't provide the level of services and supports to Mississippians without the efforts of our legislators. I appreciate the support we have received during the last few months. Your commitment to helping individuals with mental health needs in Mississippi is truly making an impact.

Sincerely yours,

Edwin C. LeGrand III
Executive Director

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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

DMH Receives Grant for Juvenile Mental Health Initiative

DMH's Division of Children & Youth Services received grant funding from the MS Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs, for a Juvenile Mental Health Initiative. The initiative will target juveniles in detention centers, who have Serious Emotional Disturbances (SED) and/or substance abuse issues.

This project will assist in providing early mental health assessments, identification, intervention and services for youth in the detention centers. Funds will provide for a state-level Juvenile Mental Health Coordinator; the development of a Juvenile Mental Health Task Force; a needs assessment for the 17 detention centers and Community Mental Health Centers; training for detention center and CMHC staff; the development of procedures and formal agreements detailing the CMHC and detention center responsibilities/commitments to each other; and for screenings, assessments, and therapeutic services to those juveniles in detention.

Objectives of the initiative include:

- 1) To improve communication & collaboration between the detention centers and CMHCs,
- 2) To increase access to mental health screenings, assessments, and interventions for youth in detention, and
- 3) To connect youth and families to community resources to after re-entry back into the community.



Ann Thames Retires After 34 Years of Service to DMH



After dedicating 34 years to the Department of Mental Health, Ann Thames will be retiring on April 30.

At a young age, Ann had a strong desire to be of service to others. She began her career at North Mississippi Regional Center (NMRC) in Oxford as a Payroll Clerk in 1976. While at NMRC, she also served as Regional Case Manager and Director of Grants and Community Services.

Ann spent more than 10 years at NMRC advancing the independence of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 1987, she was promoted to Director of Human Resources at DMH's Central Office and has served since then as a member of DMH's Legislative Team. In 2006, she was promoted to Director of the Bureau of Workforce Development and Training.

Ann was instrumental in the development and success of DMH's Accelerated Leadership Development Program, Focus. Because of her hard work, the program was selected as one of the top eight nominees for the Council of State Governments' 2009 'Innovations in Government Award.'

"I am most proud of having the opportunity through the years to help other employees realize their career goals," said Thames. "I believe the development of our employees is crucial to the quality of the service we provide. The process of identifying people through Focus who might not otherwise have had an opportunity to receive that kind of exposure has been so rewarding."

Ann was recognized in 2008 for her leadership by her peers in the Mississippi Association of Healthcare Executives as the recipients of the Bradley A. Sanders Excellence in Service Award. She was also selected as one of the Top 10 Mississippi Business Journal's 'Fifty Leading Business Women for 2009.'

We will miss Ann, but we wish her a Happy Retirement!

Paint Your Community Green in May



DMH, Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources, commUNITY cares, Mississippi Families as Allies, and Catholic Charities invite you to participate in the “Paint Your Community Green” Campaign during the Month of May in observance of National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week and

Mental Health Awareness Month.

Similar to the “Paint the Town Pink” in observance of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the campaign’s goal is to raise awareness for children mental health issues as well as treatment and services available in the community.

Each participating agency will be asked to coordinate with businesses, schools, local officials, child-serving agencies, etc, in their community by asking them to display a green ribbon in their window, on the door, around a lamp pole, around a tree, or any other place visible to the public.

Addressing the complex mental health needs of children, youth, and families is fundamental to the future of Mississippi. Nearly 35,000 of Mississippi’s children and youth have severe and persistent mental health needs which can impact every aspect of their lives. These children and youth come from

Mississippi’s cities, suburbs and rural areas; from wealthy, middle-class and poor families; and from every race and culture.

Mental health is important at every stage in life. A child’s mental health can affect their mood and behavior and the way they think and feel about themselves. The need for comprehensive, intensive mental health services coordinated with high quality services from education, health, Medicaid, foster care, juvenile justice and vocational rehabilitation agencies places upon our communities a critical responsibility to claim these children, youth and families as our own.

Families who need mental health services or support for their children may call DMH’s Division of Children and Youth Services at 601-359-1288.



DMH MISSION

Supporting a better tomorrow by making a difference in the lives of Mississippians with mental illness, substance abuse problems and intellectual or developmental disabilities one person at a time.

IDD Day at the Capitol Held March 3



The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) celebrated March as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Awareness Month during the annual IDD “Day at the Capitol” on March 3.

about intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director. “With the support of our partners, such as families, self-advocates and service providers, we look forward to a better tomorrow for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

The term IDD covers a broad range of disorders and syndromes, many of which are misunderstood by the general public. One of DMH’s goals is to reduce the stigma of disability and replace it with an understanding of ability. Individuals with IDD deserve the respect and support of all Mississippians.

The goal of this year’s theme, Inclusion, was to increase the public’s knowledge and awareness of individuals with IDD and how they participate in their communities.

“Day at the Capitol provides us with an opportunity to educate the public and our legislature

In FY 2009, approximately 1,500 children with IDD received early intervention services through DMH. In addition, more than 18,000 adolescents and adults with IDD were served in DMH facilities and community service programs.

Warren-Yazoo Hosts Ribbon Cutting

Warren-Yazoo Mental Health Services (WYMHS) held a ribbon cutting on April 1 for its Multi-flex Engraving and Screenprint.

Items for custom screen printing and engraving will be showcased in the store. The store will be operated by individuals in the Supported Employment Program and a job coach will support the individuals who work in the store.

“The ribbon cutting ceremony for Multi-flex Engraving and Screenprint marks the launch of a retail store to enhance the Pre-vocation program and to provide a showcase for selling custom products,” said Steve Roark, WYMHS Executive Director.

The Multi-flex Engraving and Screenprint is part of the work activity center called Yazoo Multi-flex

Industries which provides basic education, training in daily living skills, and paid employments to persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Through this program the individuals learn skills that can be transferred to many other types of jobs available in the community. Some of these skills include: custom design, receiving orders, distribution, financial skills, assembly of products and management of inventory.



DMH Hosts Underage Drinking Town Hall Meetings Across Mississippi

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH), Mississippi Office of Highway Safety, Mississippi National Guard and DREAM, Inc. are partnering to help spread the message about the risks of underage drinking from a state perspective. A series of Town Hall Meetings across the state began on March 22 and will continue throughout the month of April to coincide with April's Alcohol Awareness Month. A joint press conference was held at the Mississippi State Capitol on March 9 to kickoff the town hall meetings across the state.

Underage drinking is a major problem in Mississippi. You may think underage drinking doesn't affect you, but think again. Youth violence and traffic crashes related to alcohol use by underage youth in Mississippi represent the largest costs for the State. In 2007, underage drinking cost the citizens of Mississippi \$552 million. On average, youth start drinking alcohol in Mississippi at age 12, or the 6th grade. This is lower than the national average, which stands at 13.

DMH, in conjunction with the Mississippi Department of Education, has developed a Web site, www.snapshots.ms.gov, to show county, state and local data on substance abuse. For more information, contact DMH at 601-359-1288.



Pictured are (first row, l to r) Herb Loving, Melody Winston, Karen West, Caroline Newkirk, and Hilary Bounds; (second row, l to r) Daisy Carter, Vicki Mixon, Brandy Andrews, Anne Nelson, and Tammy Hudgens; (third row, l to r) Latonya Horne-Cook, Latonya Ramsey, Trisha Hinson, and Velesha Williams; (fourth row, l to r) Lee Williams, Sgt Cooper, Molly Portera, and Darius Dunn; (back row, l to r) Chuck Oliphant, Brendon Bell, Andre Conway, and Johnny Hansell.

Newspaper Shines Light on the Homeless

News & Updates

- Effective May 1, Cary Walt will be assuming the duties of the Bureau of Workforce Development and Training.
- The second quarterly report of the DMH Strategic Plan is available at www.dmh.ms.gov under Online Documents.
- In celebration of Children's Mental Health Week in May, a health fair will be held at the Jackson Medical Mall on May 3 at 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. A special program will start at 10 a.m. For more information, contact Wendy Mahoney at Mississippi Families As Allies for Children's Mental Health at 601-981-1618.
- DMH has added a new feature to its' statewide Helpline services which offers individuals the option of sending a text or online message to a member of the Helpline staff. Staff are available to provide help with mental health issues and suicide intervention around the clock. You can access the 'Talk About It' program by visiting www.dmh.ms.gov and clicking on the 'Talk About It' button on the home page.

"You can throw away a paper, but can you throw away a person?" This is the question asked by "The Throwaway," a new street newspaper and Web site geared toward public awareness and education about the homeless in Jackson and throughout the nation.



"The Throwaway" is the creation of technical advisors Heather Ivery, Ellen McLean and Linda Townes. Townes, who is director of the Stubbs Homeless PATH Program—part of the Community Services Division of Mississippi State Hospital—said she and the other advisors designed the newspaper as an avenue by which homeless persons could have a voice to tell personal stories and explore the issues which are pertinent to them in their struggle with homelessness. Some of these issues include mental illness, substance abuse, health care and permanent housing.

"The homeless are writing their own articles, poems and comments and are also helping us to circulate the paper around Jackson," said Townes. "Advocates and any people interested in homelessness issues are also welcome to contribute to the paper and the website."

The website was designed by Ivery, who said the format includes photos, a guestbook for comments, a poetry section, archives of articles since the paper's first hardcopy edition in December 2009, and an "In Memoriam" section.

"The 'In Memoriam' page is particularly important to us because it helps us remember our homeless friends who have died and gives us the opportunity to learn more about their lives," Ivery said.

"The establishment of the website also allows us to create public awareness about issues and events throughout a much wider audience," she added. "But the most important aspect of both the paper and the website is that we can help personalize the issues of people who are often simply ignored."

To learn more about "The Throwaway," contact Townes at (601) 351-8523 or visit the website at www.thethrowaway.webs.com. You may also access the site through a link on the MSH website.