

# Mississippi Profile

WINTER 2011

Information Publication from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health

## 2011 Legislative Session Begins

The 2011 Mississippi Legislative session began Tuesday, January 4. There are several bills which will bring attention to mental health issues over the next few months including DMH's appropriation bill. In December, DMH received a copy of the Legislative Budget Recommendation in which DMH is recommended for a \$5 million cut in FY12 below current funding levels.

"This cut would have to come from services and facilities, however we do not know at this time how these cuts will be made and what exactly will be affected," said Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director. "It is evident from the Legislative Budget Recommendation that it is the Legislature's intent for DMH to continue providing existing services."

Of concern is that the recommendation doesn't include \$20 million to pay the state's share of Medicaid match for Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs). More than 100,000 individuals who are served each year by the CMHCs will be impacted if the Legislature is unable to fund the state's expected share of Medicaid match which is 50% of the total match required for the program. The CMHCs help prevent individuals from needing lengthy inpatient care and serve patients who are discharged from private and public hospitals to ensure they do not need to return to a hospital for additional lengthy inpatient care.

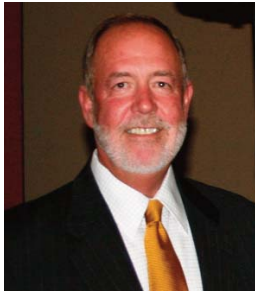
After receiving budget cuts the last two years, DMH has had to make tough economic decisions which have resulted in programs and services enduring substantial cuts and/or eliminations. If the public mental health system is forced to eliminate and/or reduce existing services, the impact will affect the entire public mental health system and thousands of Mississippians. The results will be far-reaching and devastating for many of the people depending on the public mental health system for services.

This is not a one city or one county problem – this will impact the entire state including your local community. You can help by contacting your local legislator and ask them to support funding for the public mental health system.

Supporting a Better Tomorrow... Today



# Executive Director's Message



As we begin a new year, it is hard to believe 2010 is over. We have shared many great experiences over the past year and I look forward to working with you in 2011.

DMH is beginning 2011 with the leadership of Dr. Lydia Weisser as our agency's Medical Director. We are proud that Dr. Weisser will be providing clinical guidance to programs of the public mental health system. This edition of *Mississippi Profile* includes a feature article on Dr. Weisser and her accomplishments.

As a new year begins, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to take a look at DMH's Strategic Plan. Our agency and partners from across the state have worked long and hard to develop a comprehensive plan to guide the future of the public mental health system. You can view the Plan at [www.dmh.ms.gov](http://www.dmh.ms.gov) under Public Information - Online Documents. I know our agency will continue to strive to meet the goals set forth in the DMH Strategic Plan in order to provide a more effective and efficient public mental health system. We must all work together in order to ensure Mississippians mental health needs are met.

If you keep up with the media, I'm sure you have heard about the budget situation for Mississippi's public mental health system. In Mississippi, the public mental health system is made up of programs operated by DMH, the 15 Community Mental Health Centers, and non-profit community mental health providers who receive funding from the state. The failure of the legislature to minimally fund any of the three components will dramatically impact the entire public mental health system.

I encourage you to visit our Web site at [www.dmh.ms.gov](http://www.dmh.ms.gov) and click on the Support Your Public Mental Health System button on the home page to learn more. I thank you for your continued support.

Edwin C. LeGrand III  
Executive Director

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Winter 2011

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Edwin C. LeGrand III  
Executive Director

Wendy D. Bailey, Editor

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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.

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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.

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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:

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# DMH Awards Grant Funding for Oil Spill

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) recently awarded 14 grants to provide behavioral health services to individuals impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Coast oil spill.

Through the grant funding, a wide range of services will be provided such as substance abuse prevention and treatment, employment assistance for individuals with a mental illness, coping skills for families and children dealing with stress, anxiety and/or depression, domestic violence prevention and intervention, as well as general psychiatric interventions for those who have been affected by the oil spill.

Grants were awarded to the following providers:

- Gulf Coast Mental Health Center
- Singing River Services
- NAMI-MS
- Dream Inc.
- Gulf Coast Women's Center for Nonviolence
- Lutheran Episcopal Services
- The ARC
- Mental Health Association of Mississippi (received two grants)
- Mississippi Coast Collaborative Partnership
- MS Families as Allies for Children's Mental Health
- Mississippi Children's Home Services
- South Mississippi State Hospital
- Gulf Coast Family Counseling

"Our goal is to use the funds from this initial contribution by BP to provide comprehensive behavioral

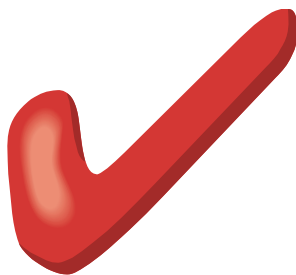
health services on the MS Gulf Coast to as many individuals that have been affected by the oil spill as possible," said Scott Sumrall, DMH Director of Disaster Preparedness and Response. "We reviewed many grant proposals from all types of programs and for all types of services to ensure the behavioral health needs of these residents are met."

In October, Gulf Coast residents had a chance to share their mental health and environmental needs and concerns with state and federal officials during a household survey to measure how residents are reacting to the oil spill. DMH, the Mississippi State Department of Health's Office of Epidemiology (DOH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) conducted 173 interviews for a behavioral health needs assessment in Jackson, Harrison and Hancock counties. The assessment found that 24.5% of respondents reported one or more symptoms of depression and 31.5 % of respondents reported one or more symptoms of anxiety. Decreased income since the oil spill was reported by 35.7% of households.

BP provided \$12 million to DMH to support its efforts to help Mississippi residents in the coastal communities access appropriate behavioral health services. The funding will help residents link up with support that is available through providers in their communities.

For more information about services available in your area, contact the Oil Spill Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990.

*For information and upcoming events...*



*Check out our Web site at [www.dmh.ms.gov](http://www.dmh.ms.gov)*

# Dr. Weisser Serves as DMH Medical Director

Dr. Lydia Weisser of Whitfield recently assumed responsibility as Medical Director for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH). Dr. Weisser has spent her professional career working with individuals who have a mental illness. She also serves as the chief psychiatrist and administrator of psychiatric and medical care for Mississippi State Hospital. Dr. Weisser joined Mississippi State Hospital in 2007.

“It is evident that Dr. Weisser’s knowledge and contributions have significantly improved the delivery of mental health services at Mississippi State Hospital and I know she will do the same for the entire agency,” said Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director. “She is an effective leader who embraces new ideas. She has been a strong advocate of our agency’s strategic plan and is helping us support a brighter future for mental health services in Mississippi by mapping a course for a better tomorrow.”

Dr. Weisser is certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, for whom she has also served as a board examiner. She has additional certification in Psychiatric Administration and Management. She is a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a member of the American Association of Psychiatric Administrators, and a delegate to the APA Committee on Psychiatric Administration and Management.

Before her career with DMH, Dr. Weisser served as Clinical Director for East Central Regional Hospital in Augusta, Ga. and Clinical Director for West Central Georgia Regional Hospital in Columbus, Ga. She

obtained her medical degree from West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, where she was an honor graduate, Board of Regent’s scholar, and member of Psi Sigma Alpha honor society.

Dr. Weisser completed her residency in psychiatry at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) where she served as Chief Resident. During her tenure at UAB, Dr. Weisser was recipient of the Upjohn Achievement Award and Pfizer Award for Psychiatry Resident of the Year. She began her employment as Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Medical College of Georgia in 1997, where she was twice named Department of Psychiatry and Health Behavior Clinical Supervisor of the Year and also received the Educational Excellence Award. She completed the Georgia Department of Human Resources Leadership Development Institute in 2003 and also received her Master’s Degree in Business Administration from Troy State University in 2004.

She is also a graduate of the Mississippi Certified Public Manager Program, Stennis Institute of Government and the DMH Focus Program.



## **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.***



## Manda Griffin Appointed to Board



Manda Griffin of Houlika was recently appointed to the Mississippi Board of Mental Health as a lay representative for the second congressional district.

"We appreciate the Governor appointing such a talented and up-standing individual to

the Board. Manda brings with her a wealth of knowledge and we are excited to welcome her

back to the Board," said Ed LeGrand, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH).

Ms. Griffin is a registered respiratory therapist, a licensed social worker, registered nurse, and a board certified family nurse practitioner. She received her bachelor's degree from Mississippi University for Women and her master's degree from Alcorn State University. Ms. Griffin and her husband, Rondal, live in Houlika with their two children.

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## MS National Guard Honors DMH and MSH



The Mississippi National Guard presented Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) and the MS Department of Mental Health (DMH) with the Minuteman Award for creating the military mental health awareness campaign *Operation Resiliency*. The Minuteman Award recognizes exceptional achievement or an outstanding contribution to the National Guard.

DMH and MSH teamed up with the Mississippi National Guard's Joint Behavioral Health Task Force to launch *Operation Resiliency* in September 2010 during National Suicide Prevention Week. *Operation Resiliency* aims to dispel the stigma associated with mental illness, educate about mental health and stress, recognize signs of duress and share knowledge about available resources. Posters, brochures and resource guides were distributed at units across the state.

Pictured are Diana Mikula, DMH Director of the Bureau of Mental Health; Wendy Bailey, DMH Director of Public Relations; Kathy Denton, MSH Director of Public Relations; Colonel Bert Gilmore, Director of Personnel, MS National Guard; David Buck, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, MS National Guard; Shelia Shows, Friends of MSH Board member; and Jessica Cole, Director of Psychological Health, MS National Guard.

# Governor Barbour Signs Silver Alert Bill



When a loved one is missing, fear and anxiety can take over. Family members and friends now have a new system in place to notify the public if a loved one who is believed to have dementia or other cognitive impairments is missing. The Silver Alert System, which is similar to the Amber Alert System for children, is designed to help spread the message about a missing person in hopes to locate the person as quickly as possible. The Silver Alert System is a product of House Bill 664 which provided for the creation of a statewide rapid response system. Governor Haley Barbour held a bill signing ceremony in December.

“Only about one-half of the states have a system similar to Silver Alert in place,” said Kathy VanCleave, Mississippi Department of Mental Health’s Division of Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementia. “We are excited that Mississippi has developed a system which will help protect our state’s most vulnerable adults. The goal is to increase public awareness on preparation, prevention and response to wandering behaviors.”

After a family member or caregiver files a missing persons report with local law enforcement, information will be entered into the National Crime Information Center and the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Public Safety. After evaluation, an activation of the statewide Silver Alert can be done. If the person missing is believed to be in a vehicle, information and photos can be sent to statewide communication systems, news media and other public communication resources.

The Silver Alert Training Initiative is collaborative effort between the Mississippi Department of Public Safety (DPS), Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH), Alzheimer’s Association Mississippi Chapter and Mississippi Nurses Association (MNA).

Pictured are (l to r) Patty Dunn, Executive Director, Alzheimer’s Association, Mississippi Chapter; Ricky Garrett, Ph.D. Executive Director, MS Nurses Association; Governor Haley Barbour; Gayle Harrell, NP-C, CWCN, President, MS Nurses Association Board of Directors; Kathy Van Cleave, LMSW, LCMHT, Director, Division of Alzheimer’s, MS Dept. of Mental Health; and Major Rusty Barnes, MS Department of Public Safety.



## MSH Employee Honored for 60 Years of Service



Mary Crossman, Director of Health Information at Mississippi State Hospital (MSH), was honored by the Mississippi Legislature on Thursday, Jan. 27 for her 60 years of service the hospital.

Crossman gathered in the Senate gallery along with her fellow hospital staff and other Department of Mental Health employees, smiling and waving as Sen. Dean Kirby noted her accomplishment. Now director of Health Information Services at MSH, Crossman joined the hospital on January 9, 1951. Kirby sponsored Senate Concurrent Resolution 568, which noted that not only has Crossman served 60 years, but she is the longest-serving state employee in Mississippi.

She began working as a typing clerk straight out of college, but was named Director of Medical Records only six months later and has held that position ever since. She has studied at East Central Junior College, University Medical Center, the University of Georgia, the University of North Carolina and the University of Oklahoma. She acquired additional studies in bio statistics and epidemiology at Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, and has also served as a consultant for several health care facilities, as well as serving as a clinical instructor for the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Health Related Professionals.

*Pictured are (l to r) Kelly Breland, MSH Director of Support Services; Dr. Duncan Stone, MSH Chief of Medical Staff; Diana Mikula, DMH Director of the Bureau of Mental Health; James G. Chastain, Director of MSH; Mary Crossman, MSH Director of Health Information; Sen. Dean Kirby; and Dr. Lydia Weisser, MSH Director of Clinical Services and DMH Clinical Director.*

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## IDD Day at the Capitol Set for March 22

Join the Mississippi Department of Mental Health in celebrating March as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Awareness Month at the annual IDD "Day at the Capitol" on March 22 at 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the State Capitol.

The goal of the event is to increase the public's knowledge and awareness of individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and how they participate in their communities. Service providers will be available at the event to provide additional information.

One of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health's (DMH) goals is to increase the understanding of ability and decrease the stigma of disability.

A diagnosis of an intellectual and developmental disability is characterized by limitations in intellectual functioning and difficulties with certain daily living skills. The term IDD covers a broad range of disorders and syndromes, many of which are misunderstood by the general public. One in 10 families in the United States has a family member with IDD. 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.

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.

# Public Meetings Address Mental Health Concerns

## News & Updates

- Central Mississippi Residential Center has a new Web site. Check out the new look at [www.cmrc.state.ms.us](http://www.cmrc.state.ms.us).
- The FY11 Second Quarter Progress Report for the DMH Strategic Plan was presented to the Board of Mental Health in January. Visit DMH's Web site at [www.dmh.ms.gov](http://www.dmh.ms.gov) to view the report. Go to Public Information - Online Documents.
- Mississippians who need help dealing with the oil spill crisis can now contact the Oil Spill Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or visit [www.samhsa.gov/oilspilldistress](http://www.samhsa.gov/oilspilldistress). DMH's Office of Constituency Services is serving as the call center for Mississippi.
- Mark Your Calendars! The MS School for Addictions Professionals will be held April 5-8 at the Hattiesburg Convention Center. For more information, visit [www.themsschool.ms](http://www.themsschool.ms).

Concern regarding Mississippi's mental health budget situation resulted in two of DMH's facilities participating in public meetings to help educate Mississippians about the public mental health system. Central Mississippi Residential Center (CMRC) in Newton and North Mississippi State Hospital (NMSH) in Tupelo participated in public meetings in October and November.

On October 19, Friends of CMRC hosted a public meeting at the Newton High School Auditorium. More than 950 individuals were in attendance with representation from all ten counties comprising CMRC's catchment area. The crowd was enthusiastic in their response to each of the speakers who endorsed the need for the programs and services of the Department of Mental Health. Speakers included Representative Johnny Stringer and Senator Terry Burton, DMH Executive Director, Ed LeGrand, as well as CMRC staff and clients and others.

Despite the stormy weather, nearly 400 people attended the public meeting on mental health in North Mississippi on November 29. Included in that number were fifteen state legislators. U.S. Congressman Travis Childers returned from Washington to speak about the need from his previous experience as the Chancery Clerk in Prentiss County. The program included presentations by DMH Executive Director Ed LeGrand, Lee County Chancery Clerk Bill Benson, Lee County Sheriff Jim Johnson, two family members of recipients of mental health services, and a former patient at NMSH.

The meetings were a strong indication of how the community has come together and rallied to support mental health services in Mississippi. Members of the audience shared personal stories of the impact of mental illness in their lives and the need to adequately fund mental health services in Mississippi.



*Pictured is Paul Callens, Ph.D., Director of North Mississippi State Hospital, speaking at a public meeting on mental health on Nov. 29.*