

Mississippi PROFILE

A Publication of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health

WINTER 2017

Board of Mental Health Vice Chair Shares His Family's Story at Legislative Luncheon

Friends of Mississippi State Hospital and Friends of Hudspeth Regional Center hosted their annual Legislative Appreciation Luncheon on Tuesday, Feb. 7. Members of these volunteer groups gathered to thank legislators for their support of the Department of Mental Health and share how that support has impacted Mississippians.



“As individuals, have you experienced a family member being in the hospital,” Mr. Landrum asked the crowd. “Having elderly parents, and also with our child, we’ve spent more than our share of time in the hospital. Twenty-four hours a day, you’re worried about your family member and what’s going to happen to them while they’re in there. Keep this in mind as we go through mine and Jennie’s journey today with our son, Josh.”

The annual meeting usually includes speakers who share their personal experiences with mental illness, substance use disorders, or intellectual/developmental disabilities. This year’s speaker, Robert Landrum, brought a unique viewpoint to the presentation.

His son, Josh, was diagnosed at a young age with an intellectual/developmental disability, and that diagnosis led Robert and his wife Jennie to become involved with the Parents and Family Program at Ellisville State School. That involvement expanded to the point where Robert was appointed to the Board of Mental Health by Governor Fordice in 1994. He has been reappointed by subsequent governors and is currently serving as Vice Chair of the Board.

Board of Mental Health Vice Chair Robert Landrum speaks while (seated left) Mike Harris, Director of Hudspeth Regional Center, and (seated right) James Chastain, Director of Mississippi State Hospital look on.

“This is what parents of children with severe disabilities deal with every day. It never leaves your mind. It never leaves your heart.”

He went on to tell the crowd, including 37 legislators who attended, how they had Josh in 1977. He seemed healthy, and he grew into a big, bouncy, happy baby who began walking early. But after some troubles as a young toddler, a doctor requested to run some tests. He had noticed a few things about little Josh Landrum.

“He said that Josh’s hair was coarse, and he had seen that in a children’s hospital in Birmingham,” Mr. Landrum said. “So we went to Tulane and Ocshner’s for a series of tests through their genetics clinic and the pediatricians at Ocshner’s.

continued on page 4

Supporting a *better* tomorrow...**TODAY!**



MISSISSIPPI PROFILE WINTER 2017

Mississippi Department of Mental Health

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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, intellectual/developmental disabilities, substance use, 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, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use, 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:

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

ATTN: Adam Moore
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
adam.moore@dmh.ms.gov

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to another issue of Mississippi Profile. I'd like to thank you for your willingness to learn more about the state's mental health system in Mississippi, and ask you to share what you learn from this newsletter with others. The struggles of people dealing with mental health, substance use disorders or intellectual and developmental disabilities often go unnoticed or unreported even though thousands of Mississippians are affected.



Sharing personal stories is often the best way for people to learn about mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our organizational mission and vision are vital, but they mean little apart from the story that explains why what we are doing is important in the first place. Several hundred people recently had the opportunity to hear firsthand from someone whose family had to face significant struggles for many years. Robert Landrum, who serves on the Board of Mental Health, spoke at a Legislative Appreciation Luncheon in February before an audience of legislators, volunteers and advocates, and DMH employees. His son, Josh, was diagnosed with a disability at a young age. I wish more people were aware of stories like his family's. You can read about their experience in this issue.

Another story in this issue is a conference the DMH Cultural Competency Committee hosted in December. The issues discussed at the conference are things all mental health providers need to be aware of, and I am glad there are DMH employees focused on them. We also have a story about disparities in health care for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The DETECT program at Hudspeth Regional Center has been raising awareness of those disparities and providing training to primary care providers with regards to their patients who have disabilities.

You will also see several other stories related to personnel changes in the department. We have new leadership at South Mississippi State Hospital, Boswell Regional Center, and at DMH Central Office. I truly believe we are seeing change within the state's mental health system because of the passion we all have to provide the services and supports needed to help people have a better quality of life. I thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Diana S. Mikula, Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Mental Health

STEVEN ALLEN NAMED DMH DEPUTY DIRECTOR



Steven Allen has been named the Deputy Executive Director of the Department of Mental Health, stepping into the role vacated by Matt Armstrong, who retired in November 2016.

Mr. Allen started with the agency in 1989 at East Mississippi State Hospital. In 1993, he transferred to Boswell Regional Center, where he worked in a variety of roles, including Assistant Director from 2005 to 2012. He was named Director of that program in 2012 and held that position until his move to the Department of Mental Health Central Office as Deputy Executive Director.

He held a wide variety of positions at Boswell Regional Center, and under his leadership, Boswell implemented and expanded a system that provides person-centered service and helps make dreams become a reality for people they serve.

Over his years of service, he has been the recipient of the James W. Park Academic Achievement Award from Belhaven College, is a graduate of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government, and the recipient of the Paul D. Cotton Leadership Award. He has been a member of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities since 1993.

“Steven showed excellent leadership during his time at Boswell Regional Center, and I have no doubt he will do the same in his new role as deputy director of the department,” DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula said. “His knowledge of the agency and compassion for the people we serve will make him an asset in this role. We are glad to have him join us in the DMH Central Office, and I am glad to know Mississippians have someone like him working on their behalf.”

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

Save^{the} Date
April 25-28, 2017
HATTIESBURG, MS
LAKE TERRACE CONVENTION CENTER

The
MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL for
ADDICTION PROFESSIONALS



WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Treatment Professionals & Service Providers, Educators, Nurses, Social Workers, Prevention Professionals, Law Enforcement, MH Therapists, Parents, Public Health Professionals, Peer Support Specialists, Students and Concerned Citizens

continued from page 1

“They determined that our child had a very rare syndrome named Sanfilippo syndrome. Only 10 cases of this syndrome were known in the world at the time.”

The syndrome meant that Josh’s soft tissue would be affected at some point in the future. He would eventually have trouble walking, and it would also manifest into a degenerative disease.

“But as he grew, we couldn’t see that,” Mr. Landrum said. “He was wide open. He loved cows. He loved sheep. He thought the grandest thing was to go to the barn.

“He was a normal little boy. We kept questioning this diagnosis and asked the doctor, ‘Are you sure?’ He said yes, at some point this will kick in.”

The point came when Josh contracted the flu just one week after his fifth birthday. After a severe fight with that illness, he was never the same. He didn’t know his alphabet anymore, or the Pledge of Allegiance, and his sleep schedule became very irregular. Eventually the Landrums had to consider placing him in Ellisville State School.

“We placed Josh in Ellisville State School when he was six years old. Folks, that is the most heartwrenching, most difficult decision that my wife and I ever made. I cannot tell you how many hours and days we cried over that,” Mr. Landrum said. “Because you know he’s not coming back. They don’t recover from these diseases.”

That was when his and Jennie’s involvement with the Parents Association at Ellisville State School began. They took part in fundraisers to help with recreational activities like swimming pools and for essential items like buying buses for transportation.



James Chastain, Director of Mississippi State Hospital, speaks to the crowd gathered at the Friends of Mississippi State Hospital and Friends of Hudspeth Regional Center Annual Legislative Appreciation Luncheon. The volunteer groups hosted the luncheon to thank legislators for their support of the public mental health system in Mississippi.

That was also when they realized the importance of the direct care workers in the Department of Mental Health. These employees assist people with their everyday life activities, taking care of people’s physical needs and providing other assistance whenever it is needed. These employees often have high turnover rates as well, and for people like Josh, that inconsistency with people so intimately involved in their everyday lives can be upsetting.

“As a parent or grandparent of a 14 or 15-year old, you may be concerned that your child or grandchild is going to get their driver’s license, or that they’ll get their new phone, and you’re preparing for them to go to college,” Mr. Landrum said.

“Jennie and I were concerned about our child having his diaper changed, or having his feeding tube changed by the new direct care worker who’s only been there two days.

“We were very fortunate at Ellisville State School. As time went on, Josh did get three ladies who had him and his room for their shifts around the clock. They took care of him and the other two boys who lived with him,” he said. Those direct care workers, along with the foster grandparents who volunteered at

Ellisville and the Landrums, were like family members for the three boys in that room. Throughout their years at Ellisville, where Josh lived for the rest of his life, the Landrums said they would stop by to visit at all hours of the day and night. They always found him well taken care of, with all of his needs met, thanks to the dedication of the three ladies who cared for him.

But no matter how well Josh was cared for, they always knew their time with him would be limited.

“We lost Josh in 2000. He was 23-years-old. His three direct care workers sat with the family at the funeral. That’s how important they were to us,” Mr. Landrum said.

The Landrums’ involvement with the Department of Mental Health and its programs have not ended since they lost Josh. Robert has been an active member of the Board of Mental Health over the years. He and Jennie have advocated for people in need of services, as well as the DMH employees who provide care; they have never forgotten the challenges faced by direct care workers, but also remember the profound difference those workers can make in someone’s life.

Mr. Landrum thanked legislators for their support, and asked them to remember the families who depend on DMH services, and to remember all of the families, including other DMH board members, who will never be able to hold their loved ones again.

“This is what parents of children with severe disabilities deal with every day,” he said. “It never leaves your mind. It never leaves your heart.”

DETECT PROGRAM REACHES MORE THAN 200 CLINICIANS IN MISSISSIPPI

The DETECT program – the Developmental Evaluation, Training, and Evaluation Consultative Team – has made significant strides in the two-plus years it has been operating in Mississippi.

Operated from its central location at Hudspeth Regional Center, the program offers training and consultation for physicians and other medical professionals who have begun treating people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, whose unique needs may represent challenges for professionals who are untrained or inexperienced in those areas. The program also offers a way for families to find community-based healthcare providers who are suited for their needs.

DETECT Clinical Director Dr. Craig Escude and DETECT Program Evaluator Dr. John Bartkowski recently provided an update on DETECT to the Board of Mental Health, showing the need Mississippi has for just such a program.

“To provide a big picture for IDD in the US, Americans with an intellectual or developmental disability constitute about five to nine million Americans. That’s roughly one and a half to three percent of all citizens,” Dr. Bartkowski said.

“There’s a reduced life expectancy for people with IDD, to the point that they have twenty percent fewer years of life. In terms of the prevalence of IDD in Mississippi, Mississippi is among the states with the greatest levels of IDD related health disparities.”

There are elevated risks for obesity, smoking, low earnings, unemployment, and underemployment, and there are pronounced issues related to self-care.



DETECT

Developmental Evaluation, Training and
Educational Consultative Team of Mississippi

Significantly fewer percentages of people with IDD receive standard physical exams, as well as hearing, eye, and dental exams.

“Historically, people with IDD have been underserved here in Mississippi,” Dr. Bartkowski said.

What DETECT has done is create an infrastructure that is working to change those disparities. It includes a referral network of more than 200 medical providers and more than 40 dentists statewide. It has also worked to include relevant information related to IDD in courses at the University of Mississippi and William Carey University.

“This results in a sea change, because you’re targeting the career pipeline of medical professionals,” Dr. Bartkowski said.

Medical students now make on-site visits to the DETECT clinic at Hudspeth Regional Center, and the program is making professional publications available to students and medical professionals. It has had more than 1,700 people attend more than 20 educational seminars. Dr. Escude has been asked to speak at seminars or training workshops in North

Carolina, Florida, Georgia, and California.

“Mississippi is now seen as a leader in IDD-related physician education,” Dr. Bartkowski said. “Mississippi is

**“We plan to
continue teaching,
and we plan to
continue our
consultations. We
have reached out
to more than 200
clinicians throughout
the state, and they
know that we are
here to work with
them.”**

continued on page 8

Clint Ashley Named Director of Boswell Regional Center



University of Southern Mississippi and is a 2003 graduate of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government. He completed the Mississippi State Certified Public Managers Program in 2002 and was awarded the National Askew Award for best model project.

Mr. Ashley is also a 2009 graduate of the DMH "Focus" Accelerated Leadership Development Program. His undergraduate degrees

include a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Administration from The University of Mississippi, an Associate of Arts Degree from Copiah-Lincoln Community College, and an Associate of Science Degree in Information Systems Technology from Jones County Junior College.

The move to BRC represents a change for Mr. Ashley from guiding a program focused on mental health services to one focused on intellectual and developmental disability (IDD)

services. BRC is one of five regional facilities in the state established to treat those with IDD. It provides comprehensive care for people in need of IDD services, while at the same time helping them achieve the most independent, productive and satisfying lives possible in the setting of their choice.

"Clint has guided South Mississippi State Hospital for a number of years, and he has shown he will provide the same outstanding leadership at Boswell Regional Center," DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula said. "We appreciate the hard work and dedication Clint has shown to patients over the years, and look forward to him continuing to work for the benefit of Mississippians in need."

Clint Ashley has been named Director of Boswell Regional Center, stepping into the role left vacant when Steven Allen was named Deputy Executive Director of the Department of Mental Health.

Mr. Ashley began his tenure at South Mississippi State Hospital on February 1, 2000. Through the years, he has served as Risk Management Director, Director of the SMSH Crisis Intervention Center in Laurel and as Clinical Support Director. In 2011, he was appointed as the second director of SMSH and served in that capacity until January, when he moved to Boswell Regional Center (BRC).

He holds a Master of Science Degree in Workforce Training and Development from The



Clint has guided South Mississippi State Hospital for a number of years, and he has shown he will provide the same outstanding leadership at Boswell Regional Center.



ALZHEIMER'S ADVOCACY DAY RECOGNIZED AT THE CAPITOL



Alzheimer's Advocacy Day at the Capitol was held on January 18, and the Alzheimer's Division of the Department of Mental Health was there for the recognition, along with other members of the Dementia Care Network.

During the day, they had opportunities to speak with state legislators, staffers, and others at the Capitol about the services offered by each organization. The University of Mississippi Medical Center put together a video highlighting the recognition and the need for awareness and support for Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

That video is available by clicking here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8GAPMV3Frk> or you can find the video by searching "Alzheimer's Advocacy at Mississippi's State Capitol" on YouTube.

Pictured are members of the Department of Mental Health, the Dementia Care Network, Alzheimer's Mississippi, the Alzheimer's Association Mississippi Chapter, the UMMC MIND Center, Division of Aging and Adult Services' MAC Center and others who came out to support the event. Thanks to all for their support

continued from page 5

actually a stringent test for a program like DETECT, because there are such health disparities in the state, and there is also a physician shortage as well.”

That education has shown to be effective in the surveys that have taken place at the seminars and workshops. Surveys showed 95 percent of respondents said they would change their treatment modalities because of the information they learned, and a full 100 percent said the seminars increased their awareness of IDD issues. Another 98 percent said they would recommend the seminars to their colleagues, and 97 percent said the educational seminars were effective.

Providers at seminars have also been asked to score themselves on their effectiveness in delivering medical care to a patient with IDD. The average score before the seminars was a 56 out of 100. Afterwards, their scores showed a proportional gain in their scores of 29 percent.

“There’s a big diamond, if you will, in the way I see community support for people with disabilities, and there are many facets that make up that diamond,” Dr. Escude said. “Medical care is certainly one of those facets, and we are all working in a lot of ways to create the perfect community support for people with IDD, and I’m thankful for the opportunity and the support we have had.”

The federal grant that has funded DETECT from its inception in the fall of 2014 will be ending later this year, but the program will be able to continue thanks to the efforts and the infrastructure that have already been put in place.

“We plan to continue teaching, and we plan to continue our consultations. We have reached out to more than 200 clinicians throughout the state, and they know that we are here to work with them,” Dr. Escude said.

SABRINA YOUNG NAMED SMSH DIRECTOR



Sabrina Young was appointed Director of South Mississippi State Hospital (SMSH) in Purvis by the Mississippi Board of Mental Health on January 19, 2017. She is taking over the position previously held by Clint Ashley.

Ms. Young has been employed with the hospital since January 2000, just prior to the facility’s opening in May of that year.

She will be the third director since the hospital opened. At the time of her appointment to the director position, Ms. Young was serving as the hospital’s Administrative Support Director. She served as Director of Information Systems at SSMH before being named Administrative Support Director and has continued to serve in that capacity, filling a dual role.

She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science from The University of Southern Mississippi and is a 2004 graduate of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government. She completed the Mississippi State Certified Public Managers Program in 2008 and graduated from the Department of Mental Health’s Accelerated Leadership Development Program in 2009.

Before becoming part of the management team at SSMH, Ms. Young spent 11 years at Puckett Laboratory, where she worked in various departments including Information Systems as the Chief Information Officer.

She is a member of the Friends of South Mississippi State Hospital organization and the Mississippi Society of Certified Public Managers.

“For 17 years Ms. Young has served as an integral part of the leadership of South Mississippi State Hospital,” said Dr. Marc Lewis, Bureau of Mental Health Director for the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. “I am very pleased that Sabrina was appointed by the Board of Mental Health as the director of SSMH. I know she will be an outstanding leader and advocate for the patients, staff, and the community.”

DMH CULTURAL COMPETENCY CONFERENCE BRINGS PARTICIPANTS FROM THROUGHOUT MISSISSIPPI

The Department of Mental Health's Multicultural Task Force hosted a Cultural Competency Conference in December, bringing in attendees and speakers from throughout the state.

Presenters included Dr. Clyde E. Glenn of Rehoboth Behavioral Health, the first presenter of the conference. He spoke about some of the various disparities that exist in health care with a presentation titled "Minorities, Mental Health, and the Masses."

He discussed three different definitions of disparities: the first based on disease factors or adverse health complications; the second related to demographics such as gender, race, ethnicity, education, or income; and the third based on issues related to racial and ethnic differences in the quality of health care.

"When we consider the problem of disparities, racial and ethnic minority groups typically receive lesser quality mental health services for a variety of reasons," Dr. Glenn said. "Minority patients tend to present later and present with more disabling conditions. There is greater impairment in functioning due to the fact that they have a tendency to wait before they seek out care. Then there are greater levels of psychosocial problems in and of themselves."

Clinicians may not notice the nuances related to signs and symptoms displayed by someone of a different racial or ethnic group, while a patient may also not feel a connection with a physician of another group and may be more likely to share information with a physician who looks or acts like them.

If you've worked in mental health for any period of time, you know the stigma associated with mental illness is a real barrier for treatment.

"There are responsibilities we have as professionals to observe what's going on with the patient, but it's really not for us to have these preconceived notions and assume we already know what the patient is going to share with us," Dr. Glenn said.

He pointed out that it can even be difficult to identify some of the disparities that exist because minorities are less likely to be the subjects of studies, with the first significant study of disparities not taking place until 1985. Over a 50 year period, there were only about 95 studies done in the United States related to minorities. Of

those studies, almost fully half of them were focused on African Americans, and the rest were focused on Latino, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and other groups.

"This is a real area of concern," he said.

However, he said recent years have brought changes, such as the fact that not only are more Hispanic people seeking treatment, but they are proactively bringing interpreters when they are needed so they can ensure fewer barriers in communication.

While studies have shown that there are not always large differences in the prevalence of mental illness between different ethnic and racial groups, there can be differences in the availability of services or how long different groups remain in treatment. For instance, he said it is estimated that only around one out of every three African Americans who needs services receives it.

Dr. Glenn said African American groups are more likely to stop treatment early, and also less likely to receive follow up care.

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Pictured are (l to r) Dr. Bradford Smith, Lacy Ritter, Frances Ellmo, Don Brown, Dr. Joy Hogge, Toniya Lay, Dr. Clyde E. Glenn. Not pictured are Dr. Sheila V. Morris-Francis and Jewell Hillery.

“Many of us are guilty of this, not just for mental health services but for health services in general,” he said. “We feel a little better, we think everything is good. The pain is gone, but you’re not really connecting with the fact that it’s gone because of that therapy you had or the medication you’re taking.

“It’s important for us to maintain therapy and continue on with treatment as well. This is a real problem when it comes to mental health services.”

Economic issues can also be a significant barrier for many people seeking mental health treatment, with some more serious illnesses having much higher costs to maintain treatment. There are also socio-cultural barriers that many people have in common.

“If you’ve worked in mental health for any period of time, you know the stigma associated with mental illness is a real barrier for treatment,” Dr. Glenn said.

“Individuals do not want to be considered ‘crazy.’ I tell my clients no one knows they’re coming to see me except me and them. The crazy thing would be if you didn’t seek help.”

Other speakers at the conference included Toniya Lay of Choctaw Behavioral Health, Dr. Bradford Smith with Belhaven University, Dr. Joy Hogge with Families As Allies, reporter Jewell Hillery, and Dr. Sherrill Morris-Francis of Mississippi Valley State University. Another presentation featured three professionals from the University of Memphis, Lacy Ritter, Lisa Mintz, and Frances Ellmo.

The speakers’ presentations engaged attendees in several topics all related to cultural competency and diversity, ranging from identifying and defining disparities in the healthcare system to connecting faith with mental health treatment. Attendees were active and participating throughout the conference.

“The conference committee goals were to have diverse speakers and presentations related to mental health and culturally-competent services and supports to equip the participants with information they can use. The conference participants stated that we accomplished that goal,” said Albertstein Johnson-Pickett with the Department of Mental Health’s Division of Children and Youth.

One attendee shared an evaluation form stating she was a Licensed Professional Counselor who will be using the information she gained in the conference to address issues she faces with clients in the proper cultural context. It was important for her to be culturally competent for several reasons, including the fact that it is part of the ACA Code of Ethics she is mandated to follow.

“Learning new information on cultural competency will also help me look at my own biases and use culturally relevant facts and information when intervening skillfully and bringing about positive change through counseling,” she said.

2016 MH/IDD Awards

Representatives from throughout Mississippi's public mental health system gathered for the annual MH/IDD Conference in October, taking part in the sessions and workshops, but also gathering to recognize several of their own for outstanding work throughout the years.

Six people were recognized by committees of their peers who decided on the following awards:

Bradley A. Sanders Service Award



Pictured are (l to r) Bradley Sanders and Dr. Robert Maddux.

The Bradley A. Sanders Service Award honors a person who has made outstanding contributions in the field of behavioral healthcare management in Mississippi. The award is named for Mr. Bradley Sanders, who worked within state government for more than thirty years, much of it in the field of mental health services.

The 2016 recipient of the Bradley A. Sanders Service Award is Dr. Robert Maddux.

Dr. Maddux began his career at Mississippi State Hospital as a staff psychiatrist before moving on to hold several different positions at providers in the community.

He spent more than 20 years as clinical and medical director for Millcreek Psychiatric Residential Treatment Center in Magee. He returned to Mississippi State Hospital in 2008 as a staff psychiatrist on Oak Circle Center, the hospital's child and adolescent unit. He remains on the cutting edge in his field and works to constantly promote and implement best and promising practices throughout Mississippi. He has supported and promoted the development and implementation of programs that have improved treatment and care of patients and clients statewide.

He is now serving in several roles simultaneously. He is a consulting psychiatrist for Region 8, a staff psychiatrist at Mississippi State Hospital's male receiving unit, and serves as both Clinical Director for the hospital and as the Medical Director for the Department of Mental Health. The 28 years of service and his commitment to serve in numerous roles simultaneously are testaments to the dedication he has to improving the lives of people who have mental illness and intellectual or developmental disabilities. He is respected by his peers for his knowledge, experience, and the support he shares.

Congratulations to Dr. Maddux.

Paul D. Cotten Leadership Award



Pictured are (l to r) Scott Sumrall and DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula.

The Paul D. Cotten Leadership Award is presented to a Mississippian who has demonstrated exemplary leadership in the field of services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The award recipient is selected from the membership of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities based upon nominations from the members. The award is named for Paul D. Cotten, Ph.D. Dr. Cotten is a noted pioneer in the provision of services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Mississippi.

The 2016 recipient of the 2016 Paul D. Cotten Leadership Award is Scott Sumrall.

Sumrall began his career in the mental health field in 2001 as a mental health technician at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. He joined the Department of Mental Health in 2003 as a program planner and evaluator within the Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. He moved on to hold positions in the Bureau of Administration and in the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Services. He has worked tirelessly to expand community-based IDD services, and currently serves as the Clinical Compliance Director at Region 8 Community Mental Health Services. In addition to a Master of Health Service Administration, he has completed his Doctorate of Science in Health Systems Management and has also achieved numerous certifications throughout his career in mental health. His work and accomplishments have led to a knowledge and understanding of Mississippi's public mental health system, which has led to his successful career.

Congratulations to Mr. Sumrall.

Kinloch Gill Memorial Award



Pictured are (l to r) DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula, Thad Williams, and DMH Bureau Director for Community Services Jake Hutchins.

The Kinloch Gill Memorial Award is bestowed upon a person who exemplifies a commitment to excellence in the field of community mental health and intellectual and developmental disability services. The award is named in memory of Dr. Kinloch Gill. Dr. Gill was a leader among the founding generation of professionals who established the community mental health system in Mississippi.

The 2016 recipient of the Kinloch Gill Memorial Award is Mr. Thad Williams.

Williams worked in the mental health field for 30 years, beginning at Warren-Yazoo Mental Health Services. He went on to work at Mississippi State Hospital, where he served for almost a decade. For the past 16 years, he worked at the Department of Mental Health Central Office as a program planner in the Adult Services Division of the Bureau of Community Services. For the past several years, he oversaw the Supported Employment program for people with serious mental illness. He oversaw this program's implementation of four pilot sites in four different CMHC regions. These sites have made thousands of contacts with potential employers in a variety of job positions. Under his watch, more than 100 people achieved employment in the past year. As the state's public mental health system moves to a community-based system of care, the work he has undertaken in developing these supported employment programs will be essential in enabling recovery for the people served by the state.

Congratulations to Mr. Williams, who retired from the Department of Mental Health in 2016.

James C. Stubbs Volunteer Award



Pictured are (l to r) Mississippi State Hospital Director James Chastain and Bridget Lowery.

The James C. Stubbs Volunteer Award honors a person who has demonstrated a continuing interest and effort in providing volunteer and advocacy services to citizens of Mississippi with mental health needs and/or intellectual or developmental disabilities. The award is named in memory of Mr. James "Jimmy" Carlton Stubbs. Mr. Stubbs' career in mental health began in 1950, when he served as staff assistant for the Board of Trustees of Mental Institutions, the state's predecessor to the Mississippi Department of Mental Health.

The 2016 recipient of the James C. Stubbs Volunteer Award is Ms. Bridget Lowery.

Ms. Lowery is a Vice President at BankPlus and serves as the Branch Manager of the Downtown Brandon office. She is also a board member for both the Pearl Chamber of Commerce and the Rankin County Chamber of Commerce. She became involved with Mississippi State Hospital through the Rankin County Chamber of Commerce Leadership program in 2007. When hearing about the Department of Mental Health's "What a Difference a Friend Makes" campaign, she became an advocate for mental health. Her leadership group made the campaign their project for the Leadership program. This effort also evolved into statewide PSA's featuring local drama students as well as continuing efforts to promote the Shatter the Silence campaign.

Since 2008, she has continued to be an avid supporter of Mississippi State Hospital and Friends of Mississippi State Hospital. She was named Volunteer of the Year in 2012, has served for the past two years as President of Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, and has served as a board member of that group for three years. She is very active in the Christmas program at the hospital, and each year solicits patient gift drives through her community and schools. As a member of the Rankin County Chamber, she also continues

to encourage active involvement of the Adult and Youth Leadership classes at Mississippi State Hospital.

Through her efforts, hundreds of youth and adults have had the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge about how to help someone they love who may be experiencing problems, as well as learn about services offered by Mississippi State Hospital and the Department of Mental Health.

Congratulations to Ms. Lowery.

Albert Randel Hendrix Leadership Award



Pictured are (l to r) DMH Bureau Director for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Renee Brett, Ashley Lacoste, and DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula.

The Albert Randel Hendrix Leadership Award is presented to a Mississippian who has demonstrated exemplary leadership in the field of services for persons with mental illness and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This award is named in memory of Dr. Albert Randel Hendrix. Dr. Hendrix began his professional career with the Department of Mental Health at Ellisville State School in 1971. He served as Executive Director of the Department of Mental Health from 1986 until 2007 when he retired.

The recipient of the 2016 Albert Randel Hendrix Leadership Award is Ms. Ashley Lacoste.

Ms. Lacoste began her employment with the Department of Mental Health in 1989. Even when she spent moved to the Mississippi Department of Education, she focused on special education and serving people who had special needs. She rejoined DMH to oversee the Division of Home and Community Based Services, and the responsibilities of that position are still with her today. Her work ethic and compassion for serving people with special needs has been never ending, and she has spent countless hours working alongside the Division of Medicaid to build the ID/DD Waiver program from the ground up. That program serves more than 2,500 people today. She is recognized throughout Mississippi for her knowledge of this program. She has dedicated the past 20 years to cultivating the Waiver program to provide the necessary supports and services to citizens of our state who have needs related to intellectual and developmental disabilities.

She was challenged by Dr. Hendrix to help develop and lead the Waiver program. He was well-known for building teams of people that could accomplish the agency's mission and goals, and he would be proud of the progress she has made in this challenge.

Congratulations to Ms. Lacoste.

Troy Holliday Memorial Commissioners' Service Award



Pictured are (l to r) Region 14 Singing River Mental Health Commissioner Wayne Brown and Judy Pharr Ramey.

The Troy Holliday Memorial Commissioners' Service Award was established to recognize a local mental health commissioner or member of the State Board of Mental Health who demonstrates outstanding care, compassion and dedication to the clients or patients he or she serves.

The award recognizes an individual who is actively involved in not only local activities, but who also takes an active role in helping to improve services statewide. The recipient of the award is elected by other members of the Commissioners Group, which is composed of mental health commissioners from throughout Mississippi.

The Award is named in honor of Troy Holliday, a native of the Mitchell community in north Mississippi who made numerous contributions to his community and the services available there. Mr. Holliday served as a principal, teacher, and coach during his career, as well as a county superintendent of education, and he served on the Mississippi and the National Associations of Community College Trustees. He was president and founding member of the organization that established the first school in Tippah County for children and teens with special needs, which opened in 1962. Mr. Holliday served as the Tippah County commissioner for many years, and was instrumental in the development of Region 4 Mental Health Services from its establishment in 1969.

The recipient of the 2016 Troy Holliday Memorial Commissioners' Service Award is Ms. Judy Pharr Ramey.

Ms. Ramsey was born and raised in Prentiss County, Mississippi and has served others throughout her entire career. After graduating from Northeast Mississippi Community College with a degree in nursing, she began her career as a nurse at Northeast Mississippi Hospital in Booneville. She later returned to school and received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of North Alabama, and then her Master of Business Administration from Crescent City Christian College.

In her 40 year nursing career, she has served as Director of Nursing for Magnolia Regional Health Center in Corinth and Baptist Memorial Hospital in Booneville. She was also the first female mayor elected to that position in the city of Marietta, a position she has continued to hold since 1997. She has served since 1999 as a commissioner for Region IV Mental Health Services, and continues to serve others through several other boards and commissions in the area.

Congratulations to Ms. Ramey.

TONI JOHNSON NAMED BUREAU DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES



Maria "Toni" Johnson has been named the Director of the Bureau of Human Resources in the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, joining the DMH Central Office in February.

"I have a passion for service and I am committed to assuring that the people DMH serves receive the best the agency has to offer. My mission in HR is to value, encourage and support a diverse workforce so the goals of the agency can be achieved," Ms. Johnson said.

She has worked with the Department of Mental Health for 19 years at Hudspeth Regional Center. During her time there, Ms. Johnson worked as an Academic Teacher, Group Home Director, and as Human Resources Director. She was serving in that latter role before joining the DMH Central Office.

She is an AA Licensed Educator, Licensed DMH Administrator, Certified Public Manager, DMH Focus graduate, and has completed the Human Resources Certification Program offered through the Mississippi State Personnel Board. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Special Education and a Master of Education from the University of Southern Mississippi.

"Toni has proved her commitment to the people served by the Department of Mental Health for nearly 20 years at Hudspeth Regional Center," DMH Executive Director Diana Mikula said. "She is exceptionally qualified for this role, and I have no doubt she will serve our patients and clients as well as our employees exceptionally. We welcome her in her new role."

2017 CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST AMBASSADORS



Certified Peer Support Specialist Ambassadors completed their 2017 certification at the Department of Mental Health in February.

Certified Peer Support Ambassadors, selected through a strenuous application process, will be at the forefront in educating individuals receiving services, family members, DMH Certified Providers and interested stakeholders. Their roles will include education on implementation and sustainability of person-centered, recovery and resiliency concepts, as well as focusing on the engagement of a full partnership with individuals who are receiving services.

Pictured are CPSS Ambassadors Beverly Pettigrew, Monica Walker-Kline, Marshia Moody, Stephanie Stout, Denika Poole, Thomas Larson, Sandra Caron, Aurora Baugh with the DMH Division of Recovery and Resiliency, Lori Hodges, Ekoko Onema, Lakita Glenn, and Carnette Hudson. Not pictured are CPSS Ambassadors Melody Worsham and Elerie Crawley.