

• *Strategic Plan Highlights* •

DMH Launches Mental Health Mississippi Web Site to Aid in Finding Services Statewide

FY 20 Third Quarter

Goal 3, Objective 3.2 — Outcome: Increase public knowledge about availability and accessibility of services and supports

In March, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health announced the launch of Mental Health Mississippi, a web site designed to help people search for mental health services near them.

DMH formally launched the web site with a press conference on Wednesday, March 11, also recognized as Mental Health Day at the Capitol, which was held in conjunction with NAMI Mississippi and the Mental Health Association of South Mississippi. It featured several speakers sharing their personal experiences with mental illness and recovery, helping impress upon attendees the importance of maintaining our mental health.

As the web site tells visitors, good mental health and good physical health go hand-in-hand. Contacting our primary care physician comes naturally to us when we have a problem with our physical health. However, reaching out for services to help with mental health problems like depression or anxiety may not come as easily.

Mental Health Mississippi, found online at www.mentalhealthms.com, was developed to make the process of reaching out easier and to serve as a hub of information for mental health resources available in our state.

The site presents a simple menu that offers options for finding services - clicking the Find

Services menu will take visitors to a page where they can click on their county in a map of the state and see which providers are available near them.

The directory includes programs that are DMH Certified Providers, and also includes providers that are independently owned and operated and have not sought DMH certification.

Similarly, an option for Crisis Services provides contact information for Mobile Crisis Response Teams and Crisis Stabilization Units.

Also included is a video that highlights how these crisis services function - Mobile Crisis Response Teams are multidisciplinary groups that are available 24 hours a day and will report to the location of someone experiencing a mental health crisis, while Crisis Stabilization Units are facilities that accept voluntary and involuntary admissions for a short-term basis, usually less than 14 days.

The site also features videos detailing the civil commitment and alcohol and drug commitment processes, as well as personal stories of recovery from people with lived experiences in mental illness.

**Find Mental Health Mississippi
online at www.mentalhealthms.com.**



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Partnership with Department of Public Safety Distributes Information on Suicide Prevention

FY 20 Third Quarter

Goal 3, Strategy 3.6.4 — Educate on the critical need for responsible gun ownership and safety concepts related to suicide prevention through state and community partnerships

In January, the Department of Mental Health shared 2,000 informational cards focused on responsible gun safety to the Department of Public Safety, which the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation is distributing with each gun permit issued.

DMH and DPS have partnered to distribute these cards in order to educate gun owners about the steps they can take to save lives—particularly by reducing the risk of deaths by suicide in Mississippi.

In Mississippi, approximately two thirds of those who die by suicide do so with a gun—that's compared to approximately 50 percent throughout the nation. In our state, that amounts to nearly 300 people each year.

This partnership is an effort to decrease those numbers by educating responsible gun owners how their firearms may be used by others in their households or communities, and urging them to take the appropriate steps.

The informational cards include awareness information and warning signs of suicide, such as:

- Statements like “things won’t ever get better” or “no one would miss me if I’m gone.”
- Recent problems with health, relationships, work, school, or legal problems.
- Symptoms of depression, like withdrawal and isolation from friends and families.

Ultimately, the goal of the cards is to help people realize that they can save lives simply by following standard gun safety tips and putting distance between a suicidal person and a gun.

The informational card is one component of a gun safety campaign for suicide prevention that DMH plans to fully launch in 2020.

