

The logo for the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network is a dark blue silhouette of the state of Tennessee. Inside the silhouette, the words "Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network" are written in a white, serif font. The text is arranged in three lines: "Tennessee Suicide" on the top line, "Prevention Network" on the middle line, and "Network" on the bottom line.

Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

"Saving Lives in Tennessee"

TSPN Advisory Council Meeting
Community Room, Metro Nashville Hermitage Precinct
3701 James Kay Lane
Hermitage, Tennessee
Wednesday, February 13, 2008
12 PM

Advisory Council Members and Alternates Present

Bernard G. Barton, MA, Pastor, Pleasant Hill Church of Christ
Sam Bernard, PhD, Bernard & Associates (Advisory Council Chair)
Carol Burroughs, MSCPS, Henderson County School System (Rural West Regional Chair)
Karyl Chastain Beal, M.Ed., CT, Retired/Community Advocate
Laura T. Harrill, MS, Director, Community Outreach, Blount Memorial Hospital
Benjamin T. Harrington, Mental Health Association of East Tennessee
Anne Henning-Rowan, MS, Jackson-Madison County School System, District 1
Harold Leonard, MA, LPC-MHSP, Indian Path Pavilion (Northeast Regional Chair)
Michael LaBonte, Family Services of the Mid-South
The Hon. Carl Moore, Carl R. Moore Government Relations
Cindy P. McCroskey, McCallie Middle School
Linda Moran, Dale Hollow Mental Health Center
Sandy N. Smith, M.Ed, Hamilton County Department of Education
Tim Tatum, MA, Bradford Health Services (Southeast Regional Chair)
Ken Tullis, MD, The Psychological Trauma & Wellness Center, Primacy Oaks
(Memphis/Shelby County Regional Chair, Strategies/Outcomes/Evaluation/
Committee Chair)
Madge Tullis, SPAN-USA (Advisory Council Co-Chair)
Patty K. Wright, MS, Lincoln Medical Center
Anne Young, MS, CAS, Director, Business Development (East Tennessee Regional Chair)
Peninsula Behavioral Health Bishop William M. Young, MFT, CPT, Senior Pastor,
Healing Center Full Gospel Baptist Church

Intra-State Departmental Representatives Present

Tommy L. Brame, Mental Health Specialist, Department of Children's Services
Pam Brown, MSSW, Director, KIDS COUNT, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
Nicole Cobb, Director of School Counseling, Tennessee Department of Education
Gwen Hamer, MA, Office of the Medical Director, Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities

Yvette Mack, Director, Adolescent Health & Asthma Programs, Tennessee
Department of Health
Thom Roberts, Executive Director, Tennessee Council for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing,
Tennessee Department of Human Services
Angie Thompson, MA, Executive Director, Mental Health Association of Middle
Tennessee
Sterling van der Spuy, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Lygia Williams, MA, Office of Special Populations, Tennessee Department of Mental
Health & Developmental Disabilities

Guests

Virginia Trotter Betts, MSN, RN, JD, FAAN, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of
Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
Pastor Jimmy H. Burroughs, Pine Grove Baptist Church
Laurie Cribb, Interpreter, League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreting
Program
Bruce Levy, Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Tennessee
Sarah Lingo, Assistant Director of Policy for Special Projects, and Angie McKinney,
Director of Prevention for Alcohol and Drug Services
Beth Moss, Interpreter, League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreting
Program
Felicia Reed, Intern, League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreting Program
Anna Shugart, Director of the Emotional Health and Recovery Center, Blount
Memorial Hospital
Eric Workman, Interpreter, League for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreting
Program

Advisory Council Members and Alternates Absent

Pam Arnell, MA, Arnell's Counseling Service (South Central Regional Chair)
Stephanie Brooks Barger, MTS, Crisis Services Manager, Family and Children's
Services
Jodi Bartlett, Ed.S, MCRT Director, Northern Region, Volunteer Behavioral Health
Care Services
Elizabeth Haren, LPC-MHSP, Camelot Schools
Jennifer Harris, MS, Hickman Community Hospital (Advisory Council Secretary)
Judith Johnson, AAS, CC, Advocate/Consumer
Kim Rush, M. Ed., Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System
Pam Willis, MS, LCSW, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, James H. Quillen VA Medical
Center
Joe T. Wood, ADM, SUPV, Director, Lexington City Schools
Misty Yarbrough, BBA, BSW, TeenScreen Case Manager, Tennessee Voices for
Children

Intra-State Departmental Representatives Absent

Rose Boyd, Public Health Educator, Integrated Core Injury Surveillance, Prevention,
and Control Program, Division of Emergency Medical Services, Tennessee
Department of Health
Laura M. Gatrell, MA, LEAP, Director, Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program
Mike Herrmann, Director of School Safety and Learning Support Programs,
Tennessee Department of Education
Jeanine C. Miller, PhD, PE, Director of Mental Health, Tennessee Department of
Correction

Kimberly A. Moore, Program Specialist, Adult Protective Services, Tennessee
Frank Stevenson, MA, Office of Minority Health, Tennessee Department of Health
Pam Townsend, Consumer Advocate, Office of Consumer Affairs, Tennessee
Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

TSPN/TLC Staff Present

Vladimir Enlow, Executive Assistant, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network
Dustin Keller, LPC-MHSP, NCC, TLC Project Coordinator, Tennessee Lives Count
Project/ Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network
Scott Ridgway, MS, Executive Director, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

- The meeting convened at 12:49 PM following a presentation from Dr. Levy on the reporting and tracking of suicide deaths by his office.

Remarks by Dr. Levy

- Levy provided the Council with general information on the process of reporting, recording, and tracking suicide deaths in Tennessee. His office also provides consultation to community activists, as he did for David Gilliam prior to the formation of the Blount County task force, and sponsors regular forensic seminars.
- He provided information regarding a statewide online death certificate database which would be available to public health officials, district attorneys, and law enforcement personnel. The database is tentatively scheduled for launch this year. Levy stressed that confidentiality will be of the utmost importance; the database is intended expressly for use by local agencies to inform decision-making.
- Levy also addressed the state suicide rate rankings recently published by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS). Tennessee's rate of 14.4 deaths per 100,000 equates to the 13th-highest rate in the country; last year, the state came in at 18th with 13.4 per 100,000. He cautioned that a one-year fluctuation in the rate does not necessarily indicate a developing trend, and that the rankings could easily be influenced by a normal statistical fluctuation.
- Also, comparative rates may be distorted by changes in states' individual reporting procedures. As an example, Levy referenced the recent drop in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). While part of the decrease was clearly the result of the "Back to Sleep" campaign, the definitions used to classify SIDS deaths changed as well. Several incidents that might have originally attributed to SIDS were listed as "undetermined" due to additional circumstances of the deaths.
- Classifying suicide deaths often comes down to a question of intent: did the deceased truly intend to die? Levy referenced the recent death of Heath Ledger as an example of the problem of intent.
- Reporting of suicide within Tennessee has steadily improved compared to other states. While the end result may compromise the state's standing in the AAS rankings, state officials and agencies can at least count on having more accurate data.
- A Q&A session followed Levy's presentation, during which Levy elaborated on the intent issue. Forensic clues are often used to identify suicides. For example, in the case of a car that has crashed into a barrier, his office might check to see if the car accelerated before impact or whether there was any evidence of braking. Toxicological information from the autopsy would also be considered, including any possible evidence of prescription drug

interference. Levy noted that the Tennessee Highway Patrol is particularly thorough in its accident scene investigations.

- Levy also fielded a question on the murder-suicide phenomenon. In such an instance, the records of the victims and attacker are linked in the database so that the complete circumstances of the deaths are recorded.
- In regards to a question about the suicide exclusion in life insurance policies, many people do not realize that the exclusion is typically limited to two years after the policy is purchased. However, Levy noted that many companies investigate suicide deaths independently, and their findings may not necessarily match those of his office.

Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

- Members reviewed minutes from the meeting held on September 12. Two major corrections were noted:
 - Brown observed that the Advocate newsletter is a production of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY), not the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (TDMHDD) as was noted in the minutes.
 - Also, Young is incorrectly listed as absent from the last meeting in the minutes.
- Harrington motioned for approval of the corrected minutes; K. Tullis seconded and the minutes were ratified without objection.

10-Tenn Challenge

- K. Tullis referenced the approaching August 15 deadline for submission of regional reports to the independent panel of judges. He also noted the outline of regional 10-Tenn challenge goals supplied in the meeting folders. He offered representatives of each region the opportunity to expand on the summary provided and/or provide a progress report on their stated objectives:
 - **East Tennessee:** Focus on the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) community; this involves training of all staff and students at the Tennessee School for the Deaf and the University of Tennessee's Deaf Education Program, as well as other community leaders and supporters of this community.
 - A. Young reports that members of the region have trained faculty at the Tennessee School for the Deaf and is planning future training sessions.
 - **Memphis/Shelby County Region:** Distribution of resource directories and other suicide prevention and mental health resources to the general public, with emphasis on local emergency rooms and houses of worship.
 - K. Tullis explained that the summary as given only hints at the region's main emphasis: stigma reduction.
 - PSAs promoting Lakeside Behavioral Health alongside the Network have been in steady rotation since October and since they started running, Lakeside's numbers of consultations have tripled. K. Tullis appeared personally in these PSAs to provide survivor testimony. He strongly recommends replicating these PSAs within other regions.
 - Additionally, members continue to support and promote the Suicide Anonymous group. The regional resource directory has been revised, and the region has volunteered to assist the Jason

Foundation with circulation of the first draft of a workbook intended for houses of worship.

- **Mid-Cumberland Region:** Development of its proposed “Taking It to the Streets” project, which involves providing suicide prevention and mental health resources at public venues including but not limited to farmers’ markets, health fairs, and sporting events.
 - Thompson emphasized the value of bringing suicide prevention resources to non-traditional venues, which helps destigmatize the issue of suicide prevention and mental health.
- **Northeast Region:** Focus on veterans and their families, with outreach to area VA hospitals, outpatient clinics, homeless shelters, and other agencies serving this community.
 - Leonard announced that Pam Willis, the recently installed suicide prevention coordinator at the local VA hospital, had been recruited as a regular member and provided the region with valuable contacts. Members are currently considering alternatives focused on the families of soldiers and veterans.
- **Rural West Region:** Development of a lethality assessment protocol and corresponding promotional flyer to all primary care physicians in the region.
 - Henning-Rowan noted regional efforts to provide literature in waiting rooms, where people naturally have spare reading time. This location also has strategic importance, considering that many suicide victims, especially the older ones, see a primary care physician in the six months prior to their deaths.
- **South Central Region:** Focus on the elderly population; this involves providing suicide prevention and mental health resources to area nursing homes, retirement centers, assisted living facilities and senior centers.
 - Wright acknowledged making very good headway in regional efforts to organize QPR training sessions at the aforementioned locations.
- **Southeast Region:** Focus on substance abuse service providers; this involves providing suicide prevention and mental health resources to area Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous chapters and other providers of substance abuse services.
 - Tatum stated that when the region first selected substance abuse as its focus, members were unaware that Moccasin Bend was developing an outpatient recovery program for co-occurring substance abuse and mental health patients and had hired a program coordinator to oversee it. The region is organizing presentation for staff at this facility, as well as a “lunch and learn” presentation for all area substance abuse counselors.
- **Upper Cumberland Region:** Focus on building partnerships with the local Adult Abuse Coalition and county health councils to provide trainings and resources to these entities.
 - Moran recognized attempts by her region to organize training sessions with the aforementioned entities but could not provide details at this time.
- **Intra-State Departmental Group:** Focus on developing a protocol for state employees to refer suicidal or mentally distressed callers to crisis resources and provision of same to state employees for use at their workstations.

- Williams explained that while the ex-officio representatives originally planned to develop an original protocol, they ultimately decided to circulate the NSPL wallet cards, which already included recommendations for counseling and referring suicidal persons. The wallet cards will be distributed to all 46,000 employees of Tennessee's various state departments.

Regional Reports

Northeast Region

- Members of the region participated in three major postventions related to adult suicides in the Johnson City area during the last quarter.
- Leonard initiated an awareness training program for frontline staff at Indian Path Pavilion through which he has trained 16 medical professionals so far. Leonard noted that suicide is the second-leading sentinel event. (A sentinel event is a cause of patient harm currently being tracked and addressed by the Joint Commission, the accrediting body of many hospitals. Examples include falls and wrong site surgery in hospitals.) In other words, there have been enough suicides in medical hospital settings that the Joint Commission requires constituent hospitals to educate staff on the issue. The training sessions have not been as well attended as Leonard anticipated, but on the other hand the small numbers allowed for more intensive discussion of the subject matter.
- Frontier Health coordinated a CIT training session for 25 local law enforcement personnel in late October; members of the Network presented information on depression, mental illness, and suicide as part of the session. Leonard also noted inroads made regarding local law enforcement thanks to regional member Ed Jefferies, a retired police officer.
- 200 elder suicide prevention brochures were distributed to area senior centers during the month of October.
- At the local MHA town hall meeting in Johnson City on October 29, 70 teen brochures were distributed along with 10 TSPN pens.
- The region registered its National Survivors of Suicide Day event with AFSP, arranged for catering, promoted the event in local media outlets, and circulated a promotional flyer. The event itself took place on November 17 in Johnson City.
- 50 SOS brochures were distributed by the Tri-Cities Survivors of Suicide group, which has reported at least one additional member (Strategy 2b).
- Members promoted a town hall meeting on the subject of children's mental health on October 29 at the Johnson City Library. 15 strategy pamphlets and 12 SOS brochures were distributed.
- Members promoted "Mind, Body, and Soul", a lecture on mental health issues which took place at the library on November 30. Members developed promotional materials for the lecture and operated a booth at the event. 100 people were in attendance with each participant receiving a resource directory and a teen suicide prevention brochure.
- Members present at the October meeting discussed an article in the *Johnson City Press* on a public sex sting operation which included photos of the men arrested. One of the men had since died by suicide. Members are planning increased educational outreach to local law enforcement and media personnel during the next quarter.
- The November edition of *Thrive*, a health and wellness feature publication of the *Johnson City Press*, promoted the Northeast Chapter of the National

- Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The regional Network had encouraged inclusion of the promotion in the publication.
- Approximately 20 people participated in a suicide prevention training session for the First Tennessee Long-Term Care Coalition on November 15. Each participant received a resource directory.
 - At the November meeting, approximately 37 suicides have been reported in the Northeast region between January and July; the Executive Director has requested confirmation of these numbers.
 - 20 NSPL brochures and 19 NSPL posters have been distributed to the local VA hospital. Members plan to conduct research on suicide trends within the veteran community.
 - Literature holders including EDRT, NAMI, NSPL, and TSPN materials have been placed in the area hospitals managed by the Mountain State Health Alliance (each holder contained 30 copies of the EDRT brochures as well as the elder, SOS, and teen brochures) (Strategy 5a):
 - The Children's Hospital at Johnson City Medical Center
 - Indian Path Medical Center
 - Indian Path Pavilion
 - Johnson County Community Hospital
 - Johnson City Medical Center proper
 - Johnson City Specialty Hospital
 - North Side Hospital
 - Sycamore Shoals Hospital
 - 120 students at Dobyns-Bennett High participated in a weeklong Jason Foundation seminar administered by Network members during the first and second weeks of December.
 - Contact-Concern of Johnson City staged a crisis intervention training session for the general public on December 5 and promoted it through television advertisements and billboards.
 - Regional members operated a display booth at a December 25 gathering for local homeless and other isolated individuals at Central Baptist Church in Kingsport.
 - The regional meetings are advertised in the *Johnson City Press*. Additionally, the Tri-Cities Survivors of Suicide group is promoted in both the *Kingsport Times-News* and the *Tomahawk* out of Mountain City approximately once a month.
 - 29 church bulletin inserts were distributed at this quarter's regional TCCY meeting, in addition to 57 ribbon cards and 10 regional resource directories.
 - 10 wallet cards and 10 regional resource directories were provided to the Adolescent Evaluation and Observation Center in Johnson City, as well as 1 strategy pamphlet.
 - 100 senior brochures were distributed between the Johnson City and Unicoi County Libraries.
 - The following materials were provided by various Greene County agencies, specifically the Greene County Department of Human Services, the Greene County Library, and the Robey Senior Center (Strategies 1a and 1b):
 - 100 each of the senior, SOS, and teen brochures
 - 114 strategy brochures
 - 22 TSPN ink pens
 - Appointments have been made by the Governor's office for this region. Leonard and Moore were reappointed, and the region needs one new appointment and one person to serve as alternate.

- Referencing Levy's earlier presentation, Leonard mentioned that the region had established contact with several local medical examiners who were providing them with updated suicide data.

East Tennessee Region

- Young introduced herself to those present, noting that while she was a longtime TSPN member, she was a newcomer to the Council and this was the first Council meeting she had ever attended.
- Young has personally provided suicide risk assessment materials to the Knoxville and Knox County police departments, teachers in Sevier County schools, and Sevier County hospitals. Additionally, she recently led a seminar for 125 Roane County High School students and another for teenage girls in Peninsula's residential treatment program.
- The region has produced a promotional PSA which is being provided to all local TV stations.
- During the October meeting, Young presented the Red Flags substance abuse and suicide prevention curriculum done in conjunction with Metro Drug Council and currently being implemented in all Knox County middle schools. Since then, participants in the program scripted and produced a short film, DVDs of which were provided to every middle and high school in the district, as well as schools in Blount, Roane, and Sevier Counties. Pre- and post-tests from the program show significant changes in students' attitudes towards prescription drug abuse and their perceptions of suicide risk.
- 25,000 Peninsula wallet cards listing with the Lifeline, Hopeline numbers and the TSPN website were distributed to all students within Knox County high schools.
- Peninsula Behavioral Health has submitted an application to answer calls for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; the proposed area of service would cover the eastern part of the state.
- During the previous quarter, the TeenScreen program conducted screenings in middle and high schools in Roane County.
- 100 Cleveland Middle School staff members received QPR training on October 12.
- 100 school staff and personnel were given a QPR suicide prevention presentation at the Tennessee School for the Deaf on December 7.
- On October 8-9 the University of Tennessee at Knoxville held VolAware 2007, which featured mental health screenings and QPR sessions open to entire UT and Knoxville community. Approximately 300 people have been trained to date on the UT-Knoxville campus. Young reports there is a strong movement on the campus to get all of its counselors trained in suicide prevention.
- Members continue to encourage school districts to arrange for TLC trainings in this region, with a particular focus on Knox County and Pigeon Forge Middle School.
- Members are working with Maryville College and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville to submit an application for an SAMHSA Campus Suicide Prevention Grant.
- Members presented at the Select Committee on Children and Youth's town hall meeting in this region; Network members were among the approximately 75 persons in attendance.

- Network members also attended and presented at the regional town hall meetings sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Tennessee held at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.
- Members attended the Recovery & Resiliency East Regional Forum 2007 on November 8-9, distributing TSPN brochures to attendees and referring several participants to Keller for possible TLC training sessions.
- A Jason Foundation presentation at Jefferson Middle School in November evolved out of a referral by regional members.
- 300 SOS brochures were distributed throughout the region over the course of the quarter to promote the Survivors of Suicide group.
- WATE-TV consulted regional members in the development of a series on mental health issues which ran in late October. The series consisted of an hour-long special and a series of complementary articles on its website.
- A revised regional resource directory was approved at the January meeting, and a list of veterans' resources will soon be added.
- Dianne Wilgen informed the Network of the shutdown of Contact as of December 31, but she intends to continue her service on the Council.
- In regards to Advisory Council appointments, Young has been appointed as chair, Harrill is now a formal member of the Council, and Wilgen and Beth Haren were reappointed.
- Harrill, Young and Holly Hunter have volunteered to participate in the trainer instruction segment of the new Tennessee Department of Health training initiative. They hope to recruit additional trainers as well.
- Regional members will submit a letter to Congressman Duncan acknowledging his role in reauthorization of the Garrett Lee Smith Act.
- The East Tennessee website's additional resources section is currently down, apparently removed by Karen Billingsley.
- Young will check with Peninsula regarding distribution of the ER brochures in its eight hospitals.
- Enlow will supply Young with a list of e-mail addresses for the region.
- Harrill will be consulted as to whether Maryville College submitted a SAMHSA campus grant application.
- Members discussed partnership with local medical examiners. Young will contact the medical examiner's office in Knoxville.
- The NSPL logo will be added to the regional suicide prevention PSA; a letter of support will be sent to Enlow for editing.
- Last week's *Knoxville News-Sentinel* featured a half-page profile of the region complete with a list of suicide risk factors.
- Harrill followed Young's report with an update on the Blount County Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Alliance. The group continues to meet on a monthly basis with roughly 20 people attending each meeting. Harrill described the Alliance members as "a passionate group of people" with a great deal of expertise in the mental and medical health fields. Dr. Gilliam, whose role in suicide tracking efforts Levy referenced in his earlier presentation, is still a regular participant.
- A suicide and depression presentation was given at Maryville College and several students spoke with the presenter after the presentation (Strategy 3b).
- The October meeting featured presentation of plaques to Major Greg Cooke of the Maryville Police Department; Holly Hatcher, Director of Community Policing for the Alcoa Police Department; and Deputy Jennifer Shudan, Victim Witness Coordinator for the Blount County Sheriff's Office. These three

- officers had been nominated as the East Tennessee region's Regional Suicide Prevention Award winners and had also received this year's Madge and Ken Tullis Suicide Prevention Award. The presentation was reported in the October 11 edition of the *Maryville Daily Times*.
- The *Maryville Daily Times* ran a feature for the local *Women's Times* on the issue of suicide among women in its November 25 edition; Blount County Survivors of Suicide facilitator Barbara Lasater was interviewed for this feature.
 - The group continues to review local suicide statistics at each meeting, as well as intake and assessment statistics from Youth Villages. There were two suicides in Blount County this quarter (15 total for 2007) and 21 reported attempts. Five suicides were recorded in January, a significant event considering the community only has about 10,000 residents. Harrill noted that all regional members hold to a confidentiality oath regarding the information imparted during the Alliance's statistical review segments.
 - A revised resource flyer for Blount County was completed in October.
 - Handouts distributed during the October meeting included a fact sheet from NAMI on mental illness facts; an issue of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) newsletter devoted to suicide prevention, an AP release on elder suicide risk, and the latest version of the SOS brochure.
 - The group is currently developing a checklist for elder suicide risk assessment for provision to area physicians.
 - At the October meeting, members discussed a recent incident regarding a patient with an appointment at Cherokee Mental Health Facility but no transportation who had walked to the Alcoa Police Department. The sheriff's office was willing to transport the patient, but was not authorized to transport existing patients. Ultimately the patient was transported to the facility by ETHRA. The incident highlighted existing transportation and adult protective services issues in local mental health care.
 - Blount Memorial Hospital's Emotional Health and Recovery Center served as the venue for a National Depression Screening Day on October 11.
 - At the November meeting, a SAFE-T assessment plan was distributed; it was the document associated with the September 17 conference "Suicide Prevention: Helping Your Organization and Your Community Reduce Mortality", call led by Douglas G. Jacobs, M.D. He is also working on a discharge-planning template for use following a mental health or suicide intervention crisis. A handout on the genetic link to suicidal thinking during antidepressant treatment was also distributed.
 - The *Maryville Daily Times* continues to promote the Blount County Survivors of Suicide group in its community events listings.

Upper Cumberland Region

- Moran reported that the Light of Hope event, held on September 25, was a great success.
- Moran reported that the region participated in the Mental Health Association of Tennessee's town hall meeting held October 17 in Cookeville (Strategy 8).
- The *Overton County News* out of Livingston ran an article on teen suicide in its October 24 edition.
- The region continues to promote the Crisis Stabilization Unit, a ten-bed adult drop-in facility in Cookeville.
- Members are working to coordinate VBHCS's partnership with the VA hospital in Murfreesboro's suicide prevention activities, as well as VBHCS's NSPL

- application. The region is still waiting to hear back regarding approval of this past; if approved the entire Upper Cumberland region will be covered.
- Members continue to promote the recently established Suicide Anonymous group through the distribution of brochures as appropriate (Strategy 2b). The *Cookeville Daily Herald* has promoted this group in its community events section (Strategy 1c).
 - The region installed 11 literature holders containing EDRT, NAMI, NSPL, and TSPN materials (30 EDRT kits and elder, SOS, teen brochures) within the following regional emergency rooms (Strategy 5a):.
 - Carthage General Hospital
 - Cookeville General Hospital
 - Cumberland Medical Center
 - DeKalb Hospital
 - Jamestown Regional Medical Center
 - Livingston Regional Hospital
 - River Park Hospital
 - Smith County Memorial Hospital
 - Stones River Hospital
 - University Medical Center
 - White County Hospital
 - Moran noted the need to reach corners of the region without a hospital in the immediate area.
 - The original copy of the survivors' brochure needs to be located in order to produce additional copies.
 - The region plans to install literature holders containing NAMI, NSPL, and TSPN materials within all regional emergency rooms by the end of the calendar year.
 - Representatives of Contact and the Tennessee Department of Children's Services and the local hospice will be invited to the next meeting.
 - The regional meetings have been shifted to the VBHCS headquarters since the last Advisory Council meeting.

Southeast Region

- Tatum began his report by stating how glad he was to be back on the Council after having resigned several years earlier due to other professional commitments.
- The date and venue of the regional meetings have shifted since the last Council meeting.
- Tatum reported the region was generating good media coverage, thanks to Bernard's recent local TV appearances, a recent *Chattanooga Times Free Press* article on suicide in the military, and a two-day front-page series on suicide prevention and awareness scheduled to run on February 17 and 18. For this latter, Bernard and other regional members worked closely with reporter Mary Fortune and her accompanying photographer.
- Gloria Hastings, facilitator of the Suicide Isn't the End (SITE) support group, had planned to attend this meeting to provide an update on the postvention team project, but was unable to attend due to health problems.
- 20 volunteers of Contact of Chattanooga were trained in QPR on October 4.
- A Jason Foundation representative out of Cumberland Hall provided a two-hour training session to guidance counselors within the Hamilton County school district.
- Regional members are attempting to coordinate a training session for local foster parents to be provided by TLC staff.

- 300 SOS brochures were provided to nine funeral homes across Meigs, McMinn and Rhea Counties.
- On December 11 a presentation was provided to students at Rhea County High School; it included survivor testimony and the distribution of 100 TLC wallet cards and teen brochures.
- Advisory Council chair and regional member Sam Bernard appeared on WTVC's December 11 "This N That" program to discuss suicide prevention and the military.
- 25 SOS brochures were given out at the most recent meeting of the Rhea County Health Council, which has requested a QPR training session in February.
- Bradford Health Services will finance brochure holders for 10 hospitals in the Southeast region. These brochures will be distributed this week. At the February meeting, members assembled ER brochure holders for six hospitals in Hamilton County. Each month the region will provide ER brochures to hospitals in a chosen county. Bradford Health Services has also donated a binder for the SE regional materials.
- At the December meeting, members reviewed the revised resource directory in preparation for posting on the website.
- On January 8 a presentation was provided to students at Rhea County High School; it included survivor testimony and the display board stocked with wallet cards and teen brochures.
- Members assembled ER brochure holders for 10 hospitals in the Southeast region at the February meeting.
- Members have reviewed the revised SE resource directory and approved its posting on the website.
- On February 8, a presentation was provided to ninth-grade students at Rhea County High School; it included a survivor testimony and the display board stocked with wallet cards and teen brochures (in accordance with Strategy 3b).
- TSPN had a display at the Southeast TCCY's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration Children's Rights Conference, held January 16 at Second Missionary Baptist Church in Chattanooga.
- Omni Vision Inc. and other foster care agencies have scheduled the TLC training for foster parents on March 19. Regional members may provide assistance as necessary.
- Regional members may assist in a TLC training session for foster parents sponsored by the Department of Children's Services.
- New member Aimee Venable has developed a well-developed memorial website and intends to start a youth SOS group in this area along with her daughter. Venable contacted the region after losing her husband and father-in-law in the same week.

Mid-Cumberland Region

- No Advisory Council members from this region were able to attend this meeting, so this regional report was skipped.

South Central Region and Giles County Suicide Task Force

- Wright provided reports on these groups on behalf of regional chair Arnell.
- The October meeting included a presentation from Regina Peery of the Cowboy Up program, an early intervention program for seventh-grade students in Maury County.

- 200 SOS brochures were distributed to funeral homes in the South Central region.
- A suicide prevention presentation was provided to the Coffee County Health Council on October 17. Approximately 40 people attended; each participant received a regional resource directory and TLC magnets.
- 12 members of NAMI's Lincoln County affiliate received training in QPR. Also in Lincoln County, a booth was set up at the county's Back to School Health Fair, with approximately 400 TLC wallet cards and 200 Suicide Prevention Awareness Month ribbon cards distributed to approximately 300 participants.
- A booth with TSPN materials was set up at the Perry County Senior Citizens Center during this quarter with 40 elder brochures given out. An interactive presentation on depression was staged at the Lewis County Senior Center, with approximately 20 people participating and 20 elder brochures given out.
- 50 TLC wallet cards were provided to the school resource officer at Conersville High School.
- On November 7, at least 50 each of the elder, teen and SOS brochures were distributed to members of the general public in Maury County.
- The region hosted a viewing of the AFSP National Survivors of Suicide Day teleconference at the Chastain Beal estate on November 17.
- The region's Friends and Families of Suicides support group is promoted in the community events section of the *Daily Herald* out of Columbia. Furthermore, the *Buffalo River Review* out of Linden and the *Wayne County News* out of Waynesboro both promote area crisis lines.
- Chastain Beal hosted a viewing session for the AFSP National Survivors of Suicide Day teleconference on November 17.
- At this point, Chastain Beal was offered the floor to provide information on two developing projects. The first involved a memorial website based on the International Suicide Memorial Wall. It represents a viable resource for people who cannot obtain the "Love Never Dies" quilt for their presentations. The site is divided up by states; the Tennessee section currently contains twelve panels.
- The second project is the Tennessee Suicide Grief Network (TSGN), an informal network of suicide support group facilitators which allows them to connect with each other, address frequently noted problems and concerns, and communicate regarding TSPN developments. The group is open to the facilitators of any support group that has survivors of suicide among its members.
- Members of the region have signed on to meet with Congressman Lincoln Davis during the SPAN USA event planned for February 26-28.
- Members continue to furnish hospitals participating in the ER brochure holder project with additional supplies as necessary.
- On May 4 a senior expo is planned for this region, projected to reach 500 people. The event will involve a display with 500 resource directories, as well as marathon QPR sessions for those in attendance. Harris plans to develop a Powerpoint presentation, while Williams will speak with members of the planning committee today to discuss TSPN's involvement.
- A list of regional groups which have already received the training will be developed for organizational purposes. Meanwhile, a list of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in thirteen South Central counties has been developed; members will check on the feasibility of QPR sessions for each of these venues.

- In regards to the Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force, the group has coordinated training sessions for 10 new staff at Magnolia Academy. Also, the Sheriff's Office continues to consult the Task Force for assistance.
- Arnell met with members of Ebenezer Church in Pulaski on October 6 to set a date for a regional conference for communities of faith (Strategy 1d). She also ran a QPR session for approximately 70 Wayne County High School students on November 5 and supplied 15 sets of pamphlets to Hillside Hospital. Arnell also submitted an article to the *Giles County Press* on the subject of suicide awareness in November. Finally, Arnell continues to provide suicide prevention training through her classes at Martin Methodist.
- Ridgway will have Enlow update the Giles County resource directory and develop one for Hickman County.
- Members continue to furnish hospitals participating in the ER brochure holder project with additional supplies as necessary.
- In regards to the Hickman County Suicide Prevention Task Force meetings in Centerville, 50 people attended the September 11 meeting of the United Methodist Laity Club at which the Task Force staged a presentation. A follow-up was provided to 22 members of the county's United Methodist youth group on October 7. 70 TLC wallet cards and resource directories were distributed.
- All five individuals screened at the National Depression Screening Day event held at the Civitan Car Show on October 6 were identified as high-risk and referred for outpatient counseling. The survivor's quilt was set up at this event and was considered a major drawing factor. The event was covered by the *Hickman County Times*.
- Additional screenings were conducted during a meeting of a regional diabetes education class; 12 individuals were screened with 7 referrals. Screenings were also conducted at Hickman Community Hospital on 30 October.
- 20 members of the Centerville United Methodist Youth Group participated in a DVD screening and discussion on depression on October 7, with Lifeline magnets, TLC wallet cards, TLC coozies, and copies of the TSPN teen brochure distributed.
- The annual "Moment of Remembrance" event took place on November 15 at First National Bank Community Room in Lyles. Several survivors provided testimony at the event. Also, the "Love Never Dies" quilt and memorial boards were set up, and bookmarks and journals were provided to participants. The event was covered by the *Buffalo River Review* out of Linden.
- Task Force meetings were regularly promoted in the regional calendar of the *Hickman County Times*, and a promotional article ran on October 22 and generated considerable feedback. Additional articles are planned for this publication and have been submitted to the *Buffalo River Review*, *Columbia Daily Herald*, *Dickson Herald*, and *Lewis County Herald*.
- PSAs were provided to the radio stations WNKX out of Centerville, WKRM/WKOM out of Columbia, WDKN out of Dickson, and WMLR out of Hohenwald.
- The November meeting included a presentation by Lisa Smith of Youth Villages regarding that agency's services.
- Doug Johnson, co-facilitator of the Friends and Families of Suicide group, has volunteered his assistance in starting a survivor's group in the Hickman County area.

Rural West Region

- Henning-Rowan gave this report on behalf of C. Burroughs, who had to leave the meeting early due to illness.
- During the month of October, the regional display board was set up at the Northwest Tennessee Social Worker's Conference in Jackson, and later at the Recovery Rally sponsored by Aspel Manor in that city. Approximately 85 people were present at both functions.
- Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamations were obtained from the mayors of Dyer, Fayette, Haywood, Henderson, Lauderdale, Shelby, and Tipton Counties. A collage was created using photos of each signing event as well as a newspaper article covering one of the proclamations.
- Regional chair Carol Burroughs was interviewed by the *Jackson Sun* as a representative of the Network for a October 2 piece on the recent rise in youth suicide.
- The region initiated its version of the hospital literature holders in November, with materials supplied to fifteen regional hospitals by the central office (30 EDRT kits in each holder along with 30 each of the elder, survivor, and teen brochures).
- Members worked to inform regional school districts of the free suicide prevention training offered by TSPN, TLC, the Jason Foundation, and community mental health agencies following the passage of the Jason Flatt Act of 2007, which takes effect with the beginning of the next school year. Several area schools are already implementing suicide prevention training for their staff. The Jason Foundation curriculum will be implemented within the Jackson-Madison County School System as part of this effort.
- Anyone interested in setting up the display board at an area function can obtain the board from Rodger Jowers. The TSPN display board was exhibited at the TCCY on November 2; 150 people were present at this function.
- Carol Burroughs has 3 QPR training sessions lined up; these include a guidance counselors' conference on February 11-12 at which 600 people are expected. The regional display board will be set up at this event.
- Members reviewed and approved the redesigned regional resource directory at the February meeting.

Memphis/Shelby County Region

- Regional members promoted and participated in the 20 October AFSP Out of the Darkness Community Walk held at the Botanic Gardens in Memphis. Approximately 110 people participated with 100 each of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month ribbon cards and resource directories distributed. Plans are already underway for the next walk, planned for October 18, 2008. K. Tullis, who gave the regional report, remarked that the walk is becoming something of an annual event.
- The Healing Hearts group, the region's new support group for survivors of suicide, continues to meet on a regular basis. Members have assisted with establishing another group across the state line in Southaven, Mississippi, operating out of the local library.
- AFSP will facilitate a two-day suicide prevention training session in Memphis on May 30-31.
- At the November meeting, members received literature holders featuring the Emergency Department Resource Toolkits (EDRTs) as well as Lifeline information; each literature holder contained 30 survivors and teen brochures as well as 30 copies of the three EDRT component brochures. These were supplied to nine regional medical centers.

- The region has updated its resource directory and printed off 1,575 copies in-house.
- Regional member Sally Afflick regularly operates a display table at regional events.
- The regional meeting venue has shifted to Family Services of the Mid-South, home of the local Crisis Center.
- Recent Advisory Council appointee LaBonte, supervisor at the Crisis Center, provided an update on the “revived” operations of the facility. In recent months, the Crisis Center has
 - Reapplied for United Way funding
 - Staged seven community outreach presentations, including one for law enforcement
 - Began staging monthly and quarterly in-service sessions, including three in-services
 - Trained 143 new volunteers for the Center
 - Partnered with the Memphis Safe Campus Consortium, which focuses on stalking and sexual assault, and provided the crisis number as a reference
 - Filmed of a commercial by a professional agency which handled the production *pro bono*
 - Began an in-depth review of data related to 500 area suicide interventions
- Additionally, Crisis Center volunteers will receive ASIST training courtesy of NSPL sometime after March.

Committee Reports

Advocacy Committee

- Tatum reported on the committee’s edits to language within the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamation. The final version will be submitted to the central office in a few days.

Strategies, Outcomes, and Evaluations Committee

- K. Tullis summarized members’ review of the evaluation plan for the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention, noting that the committee was only able to get through Strategy 7.
- In regards to Strategy 1c, the committee suggested designating a public relations spokesperson who would handle all media inquiries. The position should involve a careful selection process and the ideal candidate would have considerable experience dealing with media entities.
- In regards to Strategy 1d, the committee also proposed designating a ministerial contact using a similar selection process.
- K. Tullis conveyed the committee’s appreciation of the ambitious timelines set forth in the evaluation plan, but questioned the inclusion of two items:
- In regards to Strategy 5a, the committee decided while the Network could research screening tools and suggest protocols for consideration, an expert in emergency department screening tools should be consulted in selecting a preferred module. Committee members also recommended including cultural competency language in the objective.
- The committee had similar concerns regarding the safe storage protocols referenced in Strategy 5c.
- In response to an inquiry from Thompson, K. Tullis conceded that the language on what types of medications Strategy 5c covered was intentionally

- vague to cover multiple types of drugs. He referenced the role of restricted access to certain cold medicines in controlling methamphetamine abuse. He also noted that the language does not distinguish between safe storage in public settings or private residences and, as such, refers to both.
- K. Tullis explained that originally, Strategy 5c was limited only to keeping medication out of the reach of children. This was considered a “safer” option logistically and legally. However, the language was later broadened to cover the general public.

Special Activities Committee

- M. Tullis briefed those present on SPAN USA’s Field Liaison Program, in which an individual is commissioned to provide regular updates and feedback regarding suicide prevention and mental health to a designated member of Congress. M. Tullis reported that Barton, Chastain Beal, Leonard, Ridgway, and M. Tullis herself are currently registered as Field Liaisons for various Tennessee congressional districts.¹ The Field Liaisons serve as a link between the federal government and local suicide prevention activists.
- Chastain Beal, Leonard, and Ridgway are registered to attend the upcoming SPAN USA Legislative Institute in Washington later this month, along with Terrye Harris and Steven Malone.
- In regards to Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, the second 10-Tenn Challenge, and the ten-year anniversary of the Reno conference, the committee came up with the idea of a banquet at the Millennium Maxwell House (site of the 1999 Tennessee Suicide Prevention Conference), tentatively scheduled for September 9.
- Tentative schedule for this event:
 - 3 – 4 PM: Exhibitor set-up
 - 5 PM: Reception with cash bar
 - 6 PM: Awards banquet; this would include a dinner, entertainment and presentation of the Madge and Ken Tullis Suicide Prevention Award and the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamation. Former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher would be invited, along with Betts and Governor Phil Bredesen.
 - Wednesday morning: Presentation of the 10-Tenn Challenge reports, followed by breakout sessions. The committee would like to have Carol Graham, a survivor of suicide and who has also lost a son in Iraq. It was Bernard who originally suggested Graham.
- There would be a registration fee to cover costs. Hamer was asked to check for the availability of the hotel; other members will seek out sponsors, and appeal to Betts for partial coverage of the event.
- The event will be open to the public, and a special effort should be made to contact people who were active in the Network early on but who have since dropped contact. Delegates from other neighboring states should be invited. Contact hours should be available, but not CMEs or CEUs because of the logistics involved.
- Keller questioned whether the Network could support both the retreat in June and the banquet, and suggested scrubbing the former to pay for the latter. However, Ridgway pointed out that the two events occur in different fiscal years and no carryover is allowed.

¹ Redaction: Ridgway is listed on the SPAN USA website as a Lifekeeper Memory Quilt Organizer, but not as a Field Liaison. Additionally, Steven Malone is listed as a Field Liaison for Tennessee’s First Congressional District alongside Leonard.

- In response to an inquiry from Tatum, the date is not confirmed and may change depending on availability of the hotel.
- At this point, the agenda was suspended to accommodate remarks from Betts, who had just arrived.

Remarks from Commissioner Betts

- Prior to her address, Betts was briefed on Levy's presentation, specifically his office's plans a real-time database on mortality data and its possible use in psychological autopsies.
- Betts commented that this was the third or fourth meeting she had been to today, and all of them (including this one) had "incredible" turnout.
- Betts acknowledged the presence of those new to the Network and emphasized the importance of TSPN within the context of her department. She had mentioned the Network during a recent meeting of the National Association of State Mental Health Commissioners, of which she is president.
- As an aside, Betts explained that the group's nominating committee originally asked her to run, but declined citing her department's recent absorption of the Alcohol and Drug Council, and the related structural and programming challenges this move involves. She ended up elected vice-president, but then the president-elect resigned, forcing her to assume the position at the group's December meeting.
- She frequently references the Network in speaking with other commissioners, as they are all very concerned about the problem of suicide. Most of these mental health departments lack the passion to tackle the problem, or the close relationship with local grass-roots organizations. They fail to understand how community activists whose lives have been touched by suicide can contribute to their efforts. She is yet to find an entity more passionate about suicide prevention than TSPN's Advisory Council.
- Betts's primary focus at the moment involves timely delivery of services to people with substance abuse issues. The interaction between substance abuse and suicide is well-known, a point she planned to discuss in-depth with Bernard later.
- She was dismayed to learn that Tennessee is 50th in the nation in the amount of money invested in substance abuse services. One of the reasons is that no one has ever really pushed TennCare vendors to add such services to its repertoire... and 70% of Tennessee's health care needs are handled by TennCare.
- Her department is trying to engage vendors to provide suitable benefits, and in fact she had just come from a meeting with TADAS where this subject was addressed. While she admits that managed-care entities are generally averse to the prospect, TDMHDD should at least ensure basic services like detox and residential treatment—she is willing to consider intensive outpatient treatment as an alternative to the traditional 28-day inpatient regimen.
- She thanked the Network for "put(ing) a face on mental health" and requested the agency's help in ensuring appropriate mental health coverage for the people of Tennessee. She emphasized that suicide prevention is possible only if people have timely and "unstigmatized" access to mental health services.
- Betts was excited by the new 10-Tenn Challenge. She noted that Tennessee is only one of ten states in the country whose state suicide prevention agencies operate from a lifespan focus. Ridgway corroborated this point and noted that none of these seemed to have any plans for the Reno anniversary.

- M. Tullis provided Betts with a brief summary of regional 10-Tenn objectives, with an emphasis on the variety of objectives being pursued.
- Betts was especially intrigued by the Northeast Region's veteran outreach project. She commented that the National Academy of Sciences has a VA grant, and that the issue of armed services personnel returning from overseas deployments is a high-priority issue. She has volunteered for a panel on the subject of substance abuse and suicide prevention and plans to raise the issue with the express purpose of raising the veteran suicide issue. She reports that every state with a sizeable population of returning service personnel is "starting to see untoward events", referencing Ridgway's later report on TSPN's recent consultation by Fort Campbell.
- Of special concern are National Guard members, the "weekend warriors" who joined primarily for college benefits or part-time service and never foresaw being in a full-fledged combat situation. As a rule, these people are supposed to receive VA benefits packages, but only if the injury or medical problem is immediately diagnosed. But the effects of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) take some time to surface. Furthermore, many National Guard members have day jobs where acknowledgement of these problems could have professional repercussions (piloting, police work, etc).
- Betts pointed out that even mild TBI produces symptoms that mimic substance abuse addiction (erratic behavior, poor judgment, reduced impulse control) that poses public safety and legal problems.
- The commissioner has recommended an interagency task force overseen by Governor Bredesen to address the readjustment issue.
- During the meeting, Betts requested information on suicide and suicide attempt numbers among family members of service personnel on repeat deployments. Ridgway responded that neither TSPN nor the Department of Health had the ability to track this cohort. Betts suggested that an estimate could be extrapolated from the number of active-duty family members.
- On a separate note, Betts referenced a recent study out of the Harvard School of Public Health which traced factors in suicides and suicide attempts in countries as diverse as Nigeria, Japan, and Ukraine. All of the countries studied displayed the same fundamental risk factors, and the study also demonstrates the importance of access to mental health resources as well as the understanding of mental illness as a legitimate and treatable concern. The New Zealand mental health system is held up as a model in this study. Betts believes the study is relevant to TSPN because it demonstrates that suicide is actually a global problem with common features. It is an aspect of the human condition and that something can—and should—be done about it.
- Betts took a break from her address to introduce Sarah Lingo, Assistant Director of Policy for Special Projects, and Angie McKinney, Director of Prevention for Alcohol and Drug Services.
- In regards to the new TLC Project application, TDMHDD submitted the paperwork in January and Betts is uncertain as to when she will hear back from SAMHSA. However, the people who assembled the application did an excellent job capturing TLC's efforts. She congratulated the TLC staff for training 14,000 gatekeepers since the project started—a very difficult endeavor. The project has had visible effects on the community level, especially in forming bonds with at-risk youth. Betts sincerely hopes that the TLC Project is refunded.
- Another development is the hiring of Bruce Emery by the Alcohol and Drug Council's Assistant Commissioner. Emery is well-known for his prior work

- integrating state mental health and substance abuse programs, and he has expressed interest in the suicide aspect. Highly educated with a social work background, Emery comes highly recommended for his ability to engage key stakeholders and the larger community in state initiatives. Betts also referenced McKinney's ongoing interest in primary prevention despite her agency's stated focus on treatment.
- Betts mentioned that the General Assembly is in town, which always strains state departments. The Senate Finance Committee requested a budget hearing at which no requested TDMHDD improvements were approved. This is a very lean year for TDMHDD; the state's major investments were in education, specifically pre-kindergarten and higher education, attracting new jobs to the state, and environmental safety.
 - The hearing included much discussion on proposed changes to drunk-driving laws. TDMHDD is advising the House Judiciary Committee on proposed changes in licensure for persons convicted of DUI, possibly requirement of ignition interlock devices. It is Betts's personal belief that drunk driving is indicative of an alcohol addiction, and that habitual offenders simply don't care whether they have licenses or not. She believes the current rhetoric focuses too much on punishment and not enough on treatment.
 - Hence, Betts will submit a letter next week on investment in a credible prevention-oriented DUI education program with monitored attendance, screening for substance abuse problems, and a built-in referral system. If necessary, the program can be covered by offenders' health insurance. Betts emphasized that many people arrested for DUI do not even realize they have an addiction or the severity of the problem. She is seeking TSPN's cooperation in changing the tone of the debate and in connecting drunk drivers with substance abuse treatment.
 - In closing, the commissioner reiterated that she continues to be impressed by the work of the Advisory Council and hopes to meet with the TSPN delegation at the SPAN USA Legislative Institute later this month.
 - P. Brown thanked Betts for her attention to the substance abuse issue. In response, Betts shared that as a nurse she was shocked that substance abuse was not a part of most mental health programs, especially considering how many people are ultimately affected by it.
 - Barton commented on State Representative Rob Briley's highly publicized drunk driving and vandalism incident, which led to his treatment for a mental health concern. Barton believes the incident illustrates that mental illness can affect anyone. Betts observed that Briley's recovery is a testament to the power of mental health care.
 - In regards from a question from Roberts, Betts confirmed that deaf and hard-of-hearing issues were being incorporated into the cultural competency regulations for TennCare vendors.
 - A. Young cited the TennCare cap as the main barrier in substance abuse services. She pointed out that Briley's treatment regimen would not have been covered by TennCare. Betts explained that the cap is a \$30,000 lifetime limit, arrived at through consultation with numerous vendors. Given the current trend towards decreasing state and federal revenues, the cap is unlikely to increase any time soon; in fact, there is a real possibility of a cut in federal matching funds.
 - The result is that TennCare participants are typically limited to a one-time 28-day inpatient treatment program. Extending the level of care will cost, but everyone knows that relapse is common in substance abuse recovery and that not everyone responds to the same treatment regimen. If TDMHDD is to

branch out into residential treatment (which no carrier will support), the department must locate an alternative to federal block grants.

- Ideally, Betts would like to arrange for funding through the Access to Recovery program for screening and brief intervention programs administered by primary care physicians.

Intra-State Departmental Group

- Williams reported that the first of four gatekeeper QPR trainings for state employees took place on January 30. Additional sessions are scheduled for April 30, July 30, and October 29. Staff members at vocational rehabilitation centers will also receive special invitations.
- The ex-officio group welcomed two new members at the October meeting and another one in November. Members continue to seek out volunteers in various departments to fill vacant seats.
- A TSPN display will be set up at the Legislative Plaza on February 19.
- The TCCY *Advocate* article was widely read and circulated; Williams requests development of a framework for articles other departments can use.
- Williams referenced the group's 10-Tenn Challenge and plans to follow it up with a training session at the State Employee's Association of Clerical Workers Conference.

Other Business

Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Project

- Keller referenced Betts's earlier report, noting that the 14,000-trainee mark was reached one quarter into the final year of the project. TLC has met its overall goal of training 14,000, however Keller noted the need to train an additional 3000 to meet TLC's individual target group goals. He thanked the Advisory Council for their support.
- 16,000 TLC-branded mousepads are currently stored at the central office, awaiting delivery to every middle school and high school computer lab in the state.
- Keller has sent all members of the Advisory Council and intra-state departmental groups a needs assessment; he seeks feedback to inform the project's sustainability objectives.
- The WSMV PSA is still running and has been attributed to a 22% increase in Lifeline calls between October and December. The actors in the spot have been nominated for a local volunteer award.
- An extensive gatekeeper training session is planned for Juvenile Justice staff, using the ASIST method but incorporating material on anger management and life skills. The program is slated to begin October 1.
- The *Journal of Professional Psychology* is set to publish a summary of the project's results, written by Williams, James Schut of Centerstone, and two CDC/SAMHSA suicide prevention experts. have co-authored a summary of the project's activities along with
- The memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been completed since the last Advisory Council meeting. It is the only MOU in the state approved by the Tennessee Departments of Education, Children's Services, and MHDD. Several other child-serving agencies have also signed onto the document.
- The grantee meeting took place in December; going into its third year TLC is well ahead of the others, many of which are only starting to put their plans in action.

- Keller concluded by thanking those present for all the feedback, attributing the success of the project to the high priority given to suicide prevention by state government and various agencies at the local level.
- Knox County Schools approached TLC regarding training for 4000 of its teachers. Given the logistical challenges inherent in training this many people in a short time, Keller opted to provide the school district with a copy of the MTSU broadcast, which was screened to two groups of trainees in January. Preliminary feedback was extremely positive. Keller looks forward to reviewing the evaluations from this operation and may consider adopting this method for reaching future large groups.
- Finally, TLC has submitted an application to the annual System of Care conference sponsored by Georgetown University. The conference is being held in Nashville this year, so Keller thought participation here was especially important. TLC has been scheduled for one of the long-format presentations (210 minutes). Keller thanked Williams for her assistance in assembling the application and all her prior support.
- Enlow added that after the WSMV PSAs went into rotation, WSMV linked TSPN on its website. WSMV was the Network's fourth-leading online referrer last quarter, and the top-ranking referrer aside from a state agency or search engine.

Advisory Council Retreat

- Bernard announced that the retreat was scheduled for June 4-5 at Montgomery Bell State Park.
- Barton, Henning-Rowan, Ridgway, and Smith volunteered to serve on the Retreat Committee.
- More information will be made available as planning continues.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- Ridgway pointed that call volume reports for 2007 were included in the meeting packets.
- Peninsula is set to answer the Lifeline following the conclusion of negotiations with Mobile Crisis. Meanwhile, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services has submitted an application; if accepted, it would cover the Southeast and Upper Cumberland Regions.
- The Crisis Intervention Center in Nashville answers the Hopeline (1-800-SUICIDE), but not the Lifeline, and plans to submit an application for the latter in order to ease the burden on Centerstone.
- At the previous meeting, it was mentioned that Tennessee was a "leaky" state, with a large percentage of calls bounced outside the state. This is no longer the case, as roughly 98% of all Lifeline calls were picked up locally in 2007.
- Finally, Ridgeview in east Tennessee may pick up a few counties not currently reached by Peninsula.

TSPN Website

- Ridgway reported that veteran's page has been added, with resources categorized according to areas of need.
- Additionally, the professional contacts section has been slightly revised, and Ridgway plans a page profiling the I. C. Hope® Campaign as well. These moves are intended to connect the Network's professional members with resources outside their own agencies.

- Ridgway urged members to inform the central office they see anything on the site requiring correction or update. The website is updated regularly, almost on a daily basis.
- The website HTML is admittedly old and is being updated using an outdated program. Ridgway would like to purchase of updated software in order to reformat the site and is actively seeking funding sources.
- Chastain Beal added that the Tennessee "Faces of Suicide" page had been linked on the TSPN homepage.
- The website has received an increase of hits from Lakeside thanks to K. Tullis's recent PSA.

New Business

Postvention Pilot Program

- Gloria Hastings, facilitator of the Suicide Isn't the End (SITE) support group, planned to present this report, but was unable to attend due to health concerns. Bernard presented the report on her behalf.
- The program's first quarterly meeting was covered in the SITE newsletter. The meeting included several tabletop scenarios which will soon be printed for distribution.
- Program organizers are developing a promotional postcard for provision to first responders and funeral directors. The graphics for the postcard were carefully considered for taste and appropriateness; the organizers settled on a crime-scene graphic.

Fort Campbell Suicide Prevention Matrix

- Ridgway was contacted by Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, commanding officer at Fort Campbell and its 30,000 service personnel, regarding several suicides on the base; these involved both members of the military and family. He was interested in forming a task force to remedy the problem.²
- When the Suicide Prevention Matrix, as it was called, first formed last year, only one surviving family member was included. However, all the officers participating were committed to addressing the phenomenon.
- The Matrix will focus on prevention, intervention, and postvention. At Ridgway's suggestion, it will meet once a month to conduct debriefings of all suicide incidents, with particular attention to demographic trends.
- In the month of December alone, there were three suicides on base.
- In addition to Ridgway, Hamer and Williams attended the Matrix meeting as representatives of TDMHDD.
- Ridgway recalled that initially the Matrix members were untutored in outreach and raising public awareness, but after two meetings, they have picked up a few ideas. They are also more committed to involving survivors of suicide and suicide attempts in their efforts.
- The results of this project may interest facilitators of suicide support groups, since Fort Campbell is a controlled environment; one may count upon the directives being fulfilled in that they take the form of direct orders from commanding officers.
- All autopsies will be reviewed for evidence of traumatic brain injury. Ridgway noted that the base is technically headquartered in Kentucky but significantly

² At the time of this meeting, the information provided in this section was confidential, to be discussed only by Advisory Council and ex-officio members and not to be divulged to outside sources. Since then, the information has been made publicly available.

overlaps state lines. Hence, a soldier or base resident who is hospitalized will typically go to the inpatient unit in Cumberland Hall (in Kentucky) or one of its state hospitals. Network delegates informed the Matrix that for one million dollars, the base could convert an empty barracks into a crisis stabilization unit. Currently, unstable personnel not requiring immediate hospitalization are assigned a "watcher".

- Even though most personnel on the base will be deployed to Iraq in four months, a skeleton crew will be on hand to keep the base running, and the Matrix will continue to meet as scheduled.
- Williams pointed out that the vast majority of suicides did not occur among service personnel facing imminent deployment. Many of the victims did not reside on the base proper. Ridgway added that many of the soldiers on base were on standby awaiting possible deployment and were assigned only minimal maintenance tasks. The downtime occasionally leads to incidents involving alcohol which may include suicide. Furthermore, there is the anxiety caused by imminent overseas deployment, which trickles down to the family unit.
- Williams added that many of the suicide victims had a history of psychiatric problems or psychotropic prescriptions, which suggests recruiters may need to be more thorough during the screening process.
- Hamer also testified to the substance abuse component to the suicide outbreak, and noted that the Army has issued wallet cards noting the potential lethality of mixing alcohol and prescription drugs.
- Ridgway commends Schloesser his efforts in assembling the Matrix. He asked numerous questions during the initial two-hour meeting and subsequently developed a comprehensive approach to the problem. As an example, one of his recommendations involves condensing prescription paperwork to streamline the treatment process.
- Apparently no one at the base ever heard of QPR. The Army has its own suicide prevention training protocol called CHOPPA. Terrye Bradshaw was able to provide Ridgway with information about it; apparently TSPN would have to pay for a copy of the program.
- Barton suggested providing training for National Guard members on a state level, and recommended contacting Guard headquarters in Smyrna to arrange a training session. Ridgway is currently checking with the commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Veteran's Affairs to arrange for a delegate to serve on the ex-officio group. He would also like to arrange a training session for National Guard members, noting the particularly high incidence of PTSD within this subgroup of the armed forces.
- Hamer mentioned that Howard Burley within her department had worked with the Air Force in the past.
- Brown announced that substance abuse efforts are the currently TCCY's primary focus.

Tennessee Suicide Grief Network

- Chastain Beal had covered TSGN earlier in the meeting, but added that she serves as the contact point for the organization, which is presumably the first organization in the country that specifically serves facilitators of suicide survivor support groups.

Text Messaging/Cell Phone Crisis Referral

- Harrill submitted a idea suggested by Gilliam intended to take advantage of the high usage of cell phones and text messaging by young adults. He

proposes a kind of network linking service providers and NSPL, so that the Lifeline number would come pre-programmed in cell phones and that a call placed to the number would not count against the user's minutes. The service would represent a viable alternative for people concerned for friends or family who do not wish to involve 911 services.

- Harrill calls the proposal "a fabulous next step sensitive to the electronic age".
- Keller especially liked the idea of invoking free minutes.
- It was pointed out that if one phone company adopted the program, others might be moved to follow suit.
- Members considered contacting cell phone providers operating in Tennessee. It is known that Verizon has a call center in Murfreesboro and Spring operates one in Nashville.
- However, Ridgway advised contacting NSPL first to see if the idea is technologically feasible. He recalls that when the Veteran's Administration started referring large numbers of people to the Lifeline, they did not inform NSPL first. Consequently, the system was swamped with an influx of calls and the operators were unequipped to handle it.

Miscellany

- Bernard suggested drafting a letter to Levy thanking him for his attendance at this meeting and inviting him to the upcoming retreat. M. Tullis restated the idea as a formal motion, which was seconded by Chastain Beal and carried without objection.

Executive Director's Report

- Ridgway opted to skip his planned report in the interests of time.

Closing Remarks

- A closing quote from Bernard: "Many hearts are broken. We are about mending them."
- Bernard thanked those present for attending and for their continued action on behalf of the Network.
- Thompson offered a last-minute announcement regarding MHAMT's "Running to Beat the Blues" event, a 5K and one-mile walk/run scheduled for March 29 in Nashville. She requested dissemination of the event brochure to any and all potentially interested parties in the Mid-Cumberland region.

Meeting Adjourned

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:17 PM.