

# Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

*"Saving Lives in Tennessee"*

**TSPN Advisory Council Meeting  
Community Room  
Metro Nashville Police Department Hermitage Precinct  
3701 James Kay Lane, Hermitage  
Nashville, TN  
February 24, 2010  
12:00 – 3:00 PM**

## **Advisory Council Members and Alternates Present**

Stephanie Barger, M. Div., Crisis Services Manager, Family and Children's Services  
Jodi Bartlett, Ed.S, MCRT Director, Northern Region, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care Services  
(Upper Cumberland Regional Chair)  
Jennifer Burger, LPC-MHSP, School-Based Program Manager, Centerstone  
Karyl Chastain Beal, M.Ed., Retired/Community Advocate (South Central Regional Chair)  
Linda Ellison, Contact Concern of East Tennessee  
Elizabeth Haren, LPC-MHSP, Utilization Manager, Americhoice  
Ben Harrington  
Jennifer Harris, MS, Hickman Community Hospital (Chair, Hickman County Suicide Prevention Task  
Force  
Anne Henning-Rowan, MS, Jackson-Madison County School System, District 1 (Rural West Regional  
Chair)  
Janna Herbison, MS, YWCA of Greater Memphis  
Judith Johnson, AAS, CC, Community Advocate (Member Emeritus)  
Harold Leonard, MA, LPC-MHSP, Private Practice (Northeast Regional Chair, Advisory Council  
Chair, Special Activities Committee Chair)  
Claudia Mays, LCSW, BCD, CM Counseling & Consulting Service  
Kandi Shearer, Youth Villages  
Anna Shugart, LCSW, Director, Emotional Health & Recovery Center, Blount Memorial Hospital  
(Chair, Blount County Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance)  
Sandy N. Smith, M.Ed, Hamilton County Department of Education  
Kathy Strahan, Professional Care Services of West Tennessee  
Tim Tatum, MA, Outreach Coordinator, Pine Ridge Treatment Center (Southeast Regional Chair)  
Misty Yarbrough, BBA, BSW, Community Liaison, Mental Health Cooperative (Mid-Cumberland  
Regional Chair)

Anne Young, MS, CAS, Program Director, Young Adult and Residential Relapse Recovery Program, Cornerstone of Recovery (East Tennessee Regional Chair)

**Intra-State Departmental Group Members Present**

Dustin Keller, Director, Council on Children’s Mental Health, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Gwen Hamer, Director of Clinical Leadership, Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities

Yvette Mack, Director, Adolescent Health and Asthma Programs, Tennessee Department of Health

Thom Roberts, Executive Director, Tennessee Council for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Tennessee Department of Human Services

Lucy E. Utt, Supervisor, Community Services, Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability

Maj. Joseph W. Varney, USA (ret.), Suicide Prevention Program Manager, Fort Campbell

Lygia Williams, MA, Office of Special Populations, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

**Guests**

Kim McMillan, former State House Majority Leader and former Senior Advisor to Governor Phil Bredesen, current candidate for Governor of Tennessee

Tiffany Shaw, Executive Assistant, Suicide Prevention Program, Fort Campbell

**Advisory Council Members and Alternates Absent**

**Intra-State Departmental Group Members Absent**

**TSPN/TLC Staff Present**

Vladimir Enlow, MTS, Executive Assistant, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

Michelle Nevels, MA, Project Trainer, Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Project

Jason Padgett, MPA, MSM, Project Coordinator, Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Project

Daryl Pike, BGS, Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Project

Scott Ridgway, MS, Executive Director, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network

**Welcome and Introductions**

- Leonard called the meeting to order at 12:14 PM. Introductions were postponed until the arrival of special guest Kim McMillan, a candidate in this year’s gubernatorial race.
- He thanked Ridgway for arranging for today’s luncheon.

**Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

- Members reviewed the minutes from the business meeting held October 28, 2009.
- Tatum motioned for approval of the document as submitted with no corrections; this motion was seconded by Yarbrough and passed without objection.

## **Regional Reports**

### **Northeast Region**

- Regional chair Leonard discussed the region's current focus on preventing midlife suicide.
  - Noting the dearth of materials related to this problem, members are interested in developing brochures and toolkits using information from TSPN and county governments.
- QPR training continues within the region on a regular basis.
  - These sessions include one at a local high school which had students talking for weeks afterwards. Students there are working on a suicide prevention skit they hope to present district-wide, and a regional member is advising them on this project.
- ETSU received funding for a youth suicide prevention program via the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act (GLSMA); the region is working with two ETSU to coordinate and support the development of the program.

### **East Tennessee**

- Regional chair Young noted ongoing local stigma reduction efforts and the continuing provision of QPR training in a variety of venues across the region.
- The region has established alliances with several different community agencies, leading to several exhibits at community events.
- Recently members have noted the profound increase in the suicide rate within Cocke County and have redoubled their efforts here, running exhibits at three events, recruiting new members from local government and law enforcement agencies, and submitting an article on suicide prevention to the local paper.
- The University of Tennessee-Knoxville also received a GLSMA grant.
  - At this point, Young turned the floor over to Ridgway, who added that the University of Memphis has received funding to continue its pre-existing suicide prevention program.
  - Connie Brisco is the regional contact for the UTK suicide prevention program.
- Young pointed out an increase in UTK representation at regional meetings.

### **Blount County**

- Young turned the proceeding over to Shugart, who chairs the Blount County Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Task Force.
- Shugart reported that 17 suicides were recorded in Blount County during 2009, down from the previous year but still high.
- The Alliance is concentrating on expanding its membership to other groups; while there are about 30 active members at present, some important community agencies remain unrepresented.

- Members are particularly interested in recruitment within Mississippi State and the new psychiatrists' office that just opened up in Maryville.
- The Alliance submitted an article to the *Maryville Daily Times* on the subject of coping with grief during the holidays. A subcommittee within the group has been organized to focus on media outreach.
- The group is developing an information packet and other support network for families affected by recent suicides.
- The Alliance is also obtaining more detailed data from the county medical examiner's office and reviewing it for patterns.
- Concerned about the impact of state budget cuts on local mental health services, the group's Advocacy Subcommittee has worked to build relationships with local elected officials, hoping to convince them to lobby for increased mental health supports.
  - Several officials attended a February presentation by local members; they were stunned to learn of the high rate of suicide within Blount County.
  - An earlier abbreviated presentation in January counted the county's State Senate and House delegates among the participants.

### **Upper Cumberland Region**

- Regional chair Bartlett reports that the region has lately focused on QPR training for local 911 operators.
- A regional member wrote a letter to President Obama and Vice-President Biden on the subject of increased mental health funding and shared the response he received with the group at the November meeting.
- Several articles on mental health and suicide prevention have been published recently in local newspapers.
- The region's going concern is DeKalb County; several training sessions have been arranged, including one at Smithville First United Methodist Church for next month.
  - Members have also distributed resource directories at various places around the county.
  - The region's next project will involve engagement of county law enforcement in the local suicide prevention effort.

### **Southeast Region**

- Regional chair Tatum reports QPR trainings at two local private schools and four local colleges, as well as sessions for all clinicians and administrative staff at two area rehab clinics.
- The Southeast Region continues its partnership with the Crisis Intervention Team in Hamilton County, which now consists of officers from the city of Chattanooga and outlying areas of the county. The current plan is to have three officers trained in CIT available on each shift.
  - 25 CIT officers received training in QPR in September, and a session with upwards of 40 participants is planned for next week.
  - Several officers have attended regional meetings.

- The region is interested in arranging trainings for 911 operators in Hamilton County and in Bradley County, the second most populous county in the Southeast region.
- The region coordinates monthly suicide prevention awareness events at Skyridge Medical Center, where staff members may request QPR training sessions for themselves or their divisions.
- Members continue to work with the support group coordinated by Dennis Dodson and his continuing information packet project; 1000 resource directories have gone out to substance abuse treatment and mental health facilities through the packet project.
- Smith added that at this meeting she will pick up brochures and resource directories for distribution within Hamilton County schools. She continues to invite school staff to meetings, but has received no responses.

### **Mid-Cumberland Region**

- Regional chair Yarbrough summarized the reorganization of local subcommittees pursued during the last regional meeting.
- About 400 people have received QPR training since the last Advisory Council meeting; most of these have been students, law enforcement, or participants at various conferences.
  - Members are particularly interested in reaching out to local law enforcement personnel.
- Last year the region was in talks with a man from Clarksville who was attempting to form a suicide prevention foundation serving central Tennessee and central Kentucky, but Yarbrough has lost contact with him and is unsure of the status of this project.
- The region sent a delegation to the recent State of the Child Conference and has attempted follow-up related to the “Older Lives Count” event held in May. Yarbrough also referenced the upcoming faith conference, about which Hamer would speak later.
- The region continues staging regular booths at local health and resource fairs.
- Yarbrough welcomed new regional Advisory Council member Mays, who has already set up several exhibits on the region’s behalf.
- At this point, Yarbrough yielded the floor to Hamer so she could provide a summary of the developing conference.
  - The Suicide Prevention and the African American Faith Communities Conference (subtitled “Silencing the Silent Epidemic”) will take place on March 15 at the Lentz Metro Public Health Department building, located at 311 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North in Nashville.
  - The conference is intended to provide clergy and faith community leaders with the information and resources they will need to prevent suicide in their assemblies and communities.
  - Several state departments are supporting this project, as well as 17 local churches and other faith groups.
  - The conference’s small budget has been greatly enhanced by several non-profit and small business sponsorships.

- Registration has been limited to the first 200 registrants; Enlow reports that there are 161 registrants as of today.
- Registration forms are on the table in the back of the meeting room and available from Hamer personally.

### **South Central Region**

- Regional chair Chastain Beal announced that this year the region will try to focus on all counties it covers as opposed to only the few regularly represented at meetings.
- A total of 685 people within the South Central Region were trained in QPR in 2009; many of these were nursing students and law enforcement personnel.
- The region maintains two active survivor support groups, and continues dissemination of TSPN and other materials at appropriate venues.
- Chastain Beal reports that the Giles County Suicide Prevention Task Force is primarily reaching out to the county medical examiner for additional data, and to local law enforcement for training opportunities.
- The Hickman County Suicide Prevention Task Force held a presentation for families of National Guard members, organizes regular depression screening opportunities, and organized the “Moment of Remembrance” event in November.
- Finally, Chastain Beal mentioned that FFOS retreats are planned for late April and May. The April event is primarily for newcomers.
- Chastain Beal turned the floor over to Harris, who provided more information on developments within Hickman County:
  - Specifically, the region put together a QPR training session for the Family Readiness Group associated with the 771<sup>st</sup> Maintenance Division the week before the unit returned to the states. Harris concedes the event was not well-attended and that the Task Force plans to hold a repeat session.
  - She read a portion of a recent editorial on local teen automobile accident fatalities in which the Task Force was held up as a model of community involvement in an injury prevention project.
- At this point Ridgway presented a summary of efforts within Giles County. He spoke on behalf of Task Force chair Arnell, who was unable to attend due to a court appearance:
  - The county medical examiner reported the county’s first suicide of the year last week, the first since late last year.
  - In 2009 there were no recorded suicides in Giles County, compared to 16 in 2008.
  - Part of the reason for this dramatic improvement is the Task Force’s focus on attempt aftermath. 58 people were treated the county emergency room in 2009 for injuries related to suicide attempts. The Task Force worked with the ER to make sure that all these patients were directed to suitable community mental health resources and received organized aftercare plans. Ridgway considers this a prime example of how proactive involvement as opposed to reactive efforts can help save lives.

- Ridgway noted that two teenagers in the region died by suicide in the last two weeks—one of them only two days ago in Perry County. Ridgway recalled how Chastain Beal and husband Ronnie Beal drove over to the grieving family's home (an hour and a half away) to meet with them and provide them with support and resources.
  - The other death occurred in Marshall County; Burger and staff members of Centerstone will handle this postvention.
  - Ridgway expects to be in Perry County on Friday assisting in that postvention while Burger and Keller attend to the Marshall County situation.
- Leonard was impressed by the amount of detail available regarding the local attempts. In response to his question about the ages involved, Chastain Beal reports that all of the attempters were adults.
  - He believes it demonstrates the importance of providing emergency department personnel with information on suicide, the value of maintaining good relations with agencies like Mobile Crisis and Youth Villages, and how critical it is that survivors of suicide attempts have clear aftercare plans.

### **Rural West Region**

- Regional chair Henning-Rowan reported on regional efforts to spread suicide prevention awareness through local media. These included a December 6 appearance on a talk show hosted by 101.5 FM.
  - The regional members who participated in this program have been asked to make a return appearance.
- The Rural West Region has also worked to involve schools more; the last regional meeting included representatives from Lexington City Schools, the Jackson-Madison County school district, and the school systems in Humboldt and Gibson County.
  - The Coordinated School Health officer within Jackson-Madison County Schools is a regular participant at regional meetings.
- Regional members continue to seek out any and all community events that might host a TSPN booth or exhibit. During the last quarter TSPN made appearances at:
  - The Northwest TCCY conference, as well as the legislative advocacy training the group organized
  - A health fair in Ripley
  - Lakeside's annual EAP fall conference
- Training sessions not referenced at the last Advisory Council meeting:
  - 119 teachers within Humboldt City Schools
  - 35 employees of a local health care company
  - 43 teachers within the Paris school system
  - 96 teachers with Lexington City Schools
- In upcoming events, a training session is planned for First United Methodist Church on May 18; many walk-ins are expected in this event.
- The region continues its work to develop a regional survivor support group.

- Letters promoting TSPN and its mission have gone out to local papers such as the *Union City Messenger*, the *McKenzie Banner*, and the *Jackson Sun* where the region has a steady contact.
- The region is actively encouraging local colleges to pursue GLSMA grants. UT-Martin and Bethel have submitted applications, and the region is looking into the possibility of Jackson State, Lane, Lambuth, and Union collaborating together on a single grant.

### **Memphis/Shelby County Region**

- Herbison provided the regional report on behalf of regional chair M. Tullis, who was unable to attend today's session.
- The February regional meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.
- As noted on the regional trainer tally sheet, Michael LaBonte trained 1,964 people in QPR through the end of 2009.
- The region has switched to a monthly meeting schedule as opposed to bi-monthly.
- Training sessions continue as part of Lakeside's weekly lecture series, for the local Job Corps unit, and as part of health fairs sponsored by local neighborhood watch committees.

### **Remarks from Ms. McMillan**

- Ridgway explained that at the last meeting, the Advocacy Committee developed a list of questions on mental health and suicide prevention for candidates in the 2010 Tennessee gubernatorial election, and directed the central office to invite the candidates to either this meeting or the June retreat.
- Several of the candidates have already submitted responses, and McMillan plans to do the same. However, she also opted to visit us in person.
- At this point Ridgway yielded the floor to McMillan, noting there would be a Q&A session afterwards.
- McMillan observed how important the group was on the statewide level.
- She believes "the next governor is going to be someone who has to listen", and while she does intend to answer the gubernatorial questions in writing, she also wanted to make a personal appearance before the group to demonstrate her commitment in listening to the concerns of the people of Tennessee. She also mentioned that she is already familiar with certain members of the group (Smith earlier acknowledged being a member of McMillan's campaign.)
- McMillan provided some biographical information:
  - A native of Clarksville, McMillan served in the Tennessee General Assembly for 12 years, including four-years as Majority Leader. In 2006 she left the assembly to serve as Senior Advisor to Governor Bredesen, a post she held until this year when she began her campaign for governor.
  - An attorney by trade for the past 20 years, she currently holds administrative and teaching posts at Austin Peay. McMillan believes this give her a perspective on the value of higher education other candidates do not have.

- She has been married to husband Larry (also a lawyer, and currently a judge in Montgomery County) for the past 20 years. Her two children attend Rossvie High in Clarksville, and her daughter will start classes at UT-Knoxville this fall.
- McMillan claims she offers a different and new perspective on Tennessee politics, noting that Tennessee has never had a woman governor. She believes the experience of being a wife and mother, especially one active in the public sector, provides her with unique insights into the needs of the people of Tennessee.
- While McMillan cannot claim a personal experience with suicide or depression, she claims a long record of public service that includes a stint on a rape crisis hotline. The experience convinced her that education is the best way to help people and improve communities... and TSPN's efforts to educate people about the problem of suicide is a perfect example. Both the rape crisis hotline and TSPN help show people in desperate situations that they have other options.
- She believes the main purpose of state government is to help people, and TSPN's mission of providing hope and understanding to people in need fits with that goal.
- McMillan mentioned her familiarity with the Jason Foundation and its youth suicide prevention education projects.
- She does not want state government "shutting people out", even though funding is tight. She realizes that TDMHDD is underfunded, and while she cannot promise full funding for all the Department's project, she assured the group that she will work "as hard as humanly possible" to make sure that help is still available for people who need it.
- At this point McMillan took questions from the Council, starting with campaign supporter Smith's encouragement to provide a certain important anecdote regarding her family background.
- McMillan was adopted as an infant by husband-and-wife schoolteachers who instilled in her the value of a good education.
- Politically involved themselves, they also taught her that when she became successful, she had an obligation to give back to the community.
- Considering state government's role in education, having someone in the General Assembly with an interest in education is important. Her tenure in the Assembly granted her even further insights into education's role in the state budget, especially how it is funded in a state that requires a balanced budget.
- During the Q&A session that followed Ms. McMillan's remarks, Harrington observed that the last several TDMHDD budgets "have effectively gutted mental health services" in Tennessee, and that any further reductions in funds will result in "Armageddon" for the mental health consumers of Tennessee. He stated that Tennessee needs a "mental health governor" and wants to know what McMillan will do to reverse the tide of mental health cuts.
  - McMillan responded that she is fully aware of the role TDMHDD plays in state welfare. As a practicing attorney, she knows first-hand that too many mentally ill people are unnecessarily incarcerated, when all they really need is help. She

realized that preventive services could have stopped these people from reaching this point.

- She observed that “no one thinks twice” when it comes to the cost of building prisons and jails, but few people consider that spending on mental health could cut out the expense of building more jails entirely.
- She has witnessed the problems caused by unnecessary incarcerations personally. She also knows that many of the police officers involved in these cases do not want to take people with obvious psychological disturbances to jail, but they have no place else to take them.
- Since McMillan understands what the problem is, she is prepared to offer different solutions.
- “That we have to put this in terms of dollars and cents is unfortunate, but if that’s the case, we can convince (state legislators) that it saves money.”
- Johnson had concerns about the Tent City complex in Nashville. If the complex is closed, many of its residents could end up in jail for lack of any other place to go.
  - McMillan is familiar with the need for housing and job counseling for veterans, since she is based in Clarksville, home to Fort Campbell.
  - Since many veterans retired from Fort Campbell reside in Montgomery County, she has never understood why there is no VA clinic there. Many of these veterans end up having to drive to Kentucky for the services they need.
  - This motivated her to secure \$8 million in funding for a local center that will include a mental health care clinic. State, county, and city governments contributed funds to the project as well.
  - Lobbying the Veterans Administration to convince them of a need for a facility was somewhat more difficult. After 10 years of effort, the facility is still not in operation but is in the top five on the list of VA priorities. In the meantime, local mental health professionals are developing creative ways to partner with Fort Campbell to provide services to veterans.
  - McMillan also referenced her own work with Operation Stand Down and Eagle’s Nest for projects such as installing wheelchair ramps in private residences.
- Tatum thanked McMillan for speaking about the financial cost of mental illness. Jails are too often seen as the cheap alternative to dealing with the mentally ill, but it costs \$34 a day to hold and support a single mentally ill inmate. Meanwhile, mental health services in our state have been seeing annual cuts of 7 to 10 percent. The situation more than demonstrates “an ounce of prevention, etc.” But perhaps more important than the financial costs is the loss of life due to suicide and the quality of life lost as a result of mental illness.
  - McMillan acknowledge that it is “unfortunate” that people only think about mental illness in terms of the financial cost, and is grateful that someone out there (namely, TSPN) is working to demonstrate the human costs of mental health cutbacks. We can no longer afford to make cuts blindly without regard to how they affect the people of Tennessee.

- She recalled how many people thought state funding of pre-kindergarten problems was a waste until they saw the connection with improved test scores. Investment on “the front end” prevents problems later.
- Utt pointed out the impact of the aging “boomer” population on state and national budgets that are already tight. On the national level, much has been made of the “professional volunteer”, someone who receives a stipend or other support to support their involvement in community improvement initiatives. She wanted to know what McMillan was going to do locally to support this trend.
  - McMillan was a big supporter of Americorp within the General Assembly, and as governor would work to build state support for this program back up to its prior levels.
- Ridgway informed McMillan that between 2004 and 2008, the youth suicide rate in Tennessee dropped by over 30%, largely due to educational and awareness programs such as Teenscreen and Mental Health 101, often by TSPN members. Members were also largely responsible for the General Assembly’s passage of the Jason Flatt Act of 2007, which mandates yearly youth suicide prevention education for all public school staff in the state.
- Any other questions members might have for McMillan should be e-mailed to the central office via Enlow. More information on other aspects of McMillan’s campaign platform can be found at the campaign website ([www.kimmcmillan.com](http://www.kimmcmillan.com)).

## **Committee Reports**

### **Strategies, Outcomes, and Evaluations Committee**

- Young reported in place of absent committee chair K. Tullis.
- She reported that the group read through the “State of Suicide in Tennessee” draft, making suggestions as they deemed necessary. These will be turned in to Enlow later.

### **Special Activities Committee**

- Committee chair Leonard reports that the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month event is tentatively planned for September 8 at the State Capitol.
- Herbison added that this year will have as its theme the celebration of the public-private partnership in the suicide prevention movement.
- The committee finalized the quilt use policy document. There was some discussion as to the circumstances under which a quilt request would be denied, but this discussion was ultimately tabled with plans to bring it up at the June meeting.
- The Tullises had recommended changes in the guidelines for the Ken and Madge Tullis Suicide Prevention Award, specifically that the award should only go to one or two people, as opposed to entire groups or agencies, and that the winner must be a Tennessee resident.

- The committee recommended putting these changes up for a full council vote. Leonard put this forth as a formal motion, with Chastain Beal seconding. There were no objections, and the motion passed.

### **Advocacy Committee**

- Tatum reported on behalf of absent committee chair M. Tullis.
- The committee reviewed the Election 2010 page and had recommendations for copy edits.
- They noted that the page includes links to candidate responses to the list of gubernatorial questions. McMillan's responses should be online by the end of next week.
- Tatum believes the project provides TSPN with a unique opportunity to determine which candidate best has TSPN's interests at heart.
- The committee has developed an alternate set of questions intended for congressional candidates, both these and the proposed changes to the Election 2010 pages will be sent to Enlow, alongside minor amendments to the Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamation copy.

### **Intra-State Departmental Group**

- Group chair Roberts began by thanking previous chair Williams for her years of past service to this body.
- He detailed a possible CDC grant opportunity researched by Williams for which TSPN may consider applying.
- Carol Boone, director of the state's Employee Assistant Network (EAP) and the group's Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration representative, has resigned. As soon as the position is filled, the group will contact them and attempt to involve them in the Intra-State Departmental Group.
- In the meantime, previously submitted articles on suicide prevention continue to run in *rEAP the Benefits*, the state EAP newsletter; some of these will be sent to Varney for printing in the Fort Campbell newsletter.
- Utt oversaw development of a flyer on "holiday blues" distributed through the Meals on Wheels program.
- Varney announced that the Kentucky and Tennessee NAMI chapters are staging a stigma reduction event on the base on May 11-12. The event will include a segment on the needs of military families, as well as tours of Fort Campbell's TBI and PTSD facilities and the installation at large. Interested parties should contact Varney.

### **Tennessee Lives Count (TLC) Report**

- Williams, primary investigator for the TLC grant, apprised meeting participants of the TLC Powerpoint presentation included in the meeting packet.
- The second cycle of TLC focuses on the juvenile justice system.

- At present the Task Force and staff are trying to raise awareness of the grant and identify training opportunities.
- Williams provided a review of the components of the second grant:
  - The first component authorizes training of 31,000 people across the state in a modified form of QPR.
    - 1000 of these will be college and university students majoring in the helping professions.
    - 100 of these will be college and university in these fields
    - At least 650 of these will be staff in youth development centers; these will receive training in the ASIST protocol.
    - At least 500 will be youth in TDCS group homes; these will receive training in the Jason Foundation curriculum.
  - The second component involves working with youth councils across the state to gain greater insight into the needs of high-risk youth.
  - The third component focuses on raising awareness of the program through social marketing.
- Williams recognized Padgett's efforts on the second grant, specifically the development of three work groups.
- Williams serves as Primary Investigator for the grant, with Padgett as Program Coordinator and Jennifer Lockman as Lead Evaluator. These three make up the Core Management Team, as well as Ridgway (who is serving as Special Advisor to the grant), Keisha Bean (who represents the Tennessee Department of Children's Services), and Starling (who represents MHAMT).
- The Core Management Team is advised by three committees: Sustainability and Institutionalization, Social Marketing, and Juvenile Justice Staff Training.
  - The latter of these is developing a training curriculum tailored to juvenile justice—for example, this version will include a de-escalation element.
- Ridgway and Clark Flatt will co-chair the Sustainability and Institutionalization Committee.
- The chair of the Social Marketing Committee is Sarah Lingo
- Bean and Jeff Feix of TDMHDD co-chair the Juvenile Justice Staff Training committee.
- TLC staff members are developing a version of ASIST training customized for the state's Youth Development Centers (YDCs). They are working with Woodland Hills to schedule an overview of the program.
- After the session at Woodland Hills, New Visions and other YDCs will follow as scheduling permits.
- A two-page summary of the first cycle's outcomes is also included in the meeting packet, in addition to select TLC marketing materials.
- The staff of the TLC Project, has, in consultation with Williams, developed a brief presentation to be presented to Boards and Commissions providing a summary of the program.

- At this point Williams turned the floor over to Padgett, who reported on the “nuts and bolts” of the project.
- Since the last meeting, one trainer has resigned and two more were hired. Padgett introduced Nevels and Pike to the group.
- TLC staff recently attended a QPR and ASIST instructor training seminar in Fayetteville, North Carolina.
- Staff members are offering an open-admission ASIST training session in order to refine their presentation in advance of the Woodland Hills event.
- Padgett closed by thanking Chastain Beal for her assistance with a recent training session and Ridgway for his efforts to support the project in general.

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

- Ridgway announced that the meeting packets contain spreadsheets tracking call volumes at Tennessee centers going back to October 2007. He thanked Enlow for putting this together.
- Lifeline posters with TSPN labels affixed are available for pick-up on the table against the wall; members are encouraged to take as many as they need.

### **Website Report**

- Ridgway pointed out the website report from the last quarter, located in the meeting packet.
- Enlow acknowledged the ongoing virus alert concern noted by several visitors to the website. Specifically, the TSPN website has been repeatedly flagged as an attack site by Google and Yahoo.
  - At length, Ridgway was able to determine that the problem was connected to a corrupted hyperlink to Mapquest that redirected anyone who clicked on it to an attack site. To resolve the problem, Ridgway has authorized the deletion of all links that lead to websites of entities not tangential to TSPN. The delinking project should be completed by the end of this week.
- Additionally, Enlow referenced the decline in hits and page views over the previous quarter, which represented a “cooldown” from the Suicide Prevention Awareness and Educational Events in September.
- Meeting information on regional information pop-ups has been updated, although outdated information may still found on the additional resource pages.

### **Fort Campbell Report**

- Varney announced that for 2009, there were 160 recorded suicides among Army personnel, including 75 among reservists. Also, 30 suicides of family members have been reported.
  - Within Fort Campbell, 21 active-duty soldiers and three family members died, the highest death toll of any installation. However, it should be mentioned that Fort

Campbell had 18,000 personnel who recently returned from Iraq, the largest force of all.

- Much progress has been made within the Army as a whole, with the development of numerous tools and resources publicizing suicide warning signs and risk factors, as well as further engagement of personnel in suicide watches.
- Last year over 140,000 Army personnel were trained in ACE, a suicide prevention training protocol similar to QPR. Varney has the authority to mandate participation, and as such 36,000 personnel on the base received this training.
- However, all this work is “not enough” as far as Varney is concerned. Much work remains to be done in the area of communication.
- Up until recently Varney and his assistant Shaw were the only two people on the base charged with coordinating the suicide prevention effort. But last November several new trainers were certified, not only within military and civilian personnel but also family members.
- So far this year there have been two suicides on base; last year this time it was six. Within the Army as a whole, there have been 18 recorded or suspected suicides this year, compared to 45 this same time last year.
- Since last April the Army has redoubled its suicide education efforts; the video presentation screened at the June retreat is a major part of this project.
- Varney believes “the message is being heard” regarding the problems posed by stigma, and he looks forward to TSPN’s continued support and guidance.
- As the U.S. redoubles its efforts in Afghanistan and transitions out of Iraq, Fort Campbell will be called upon to deploy another 12,000 troops, which means that in the spring of 2011 the base will be dealing with another large contingent of returning soldiers, many of whom will be in need of crisis services. In fact, 3,000 of these have already been deployed.
- A recent study of 585 confirmed Army suicides revealed that soldiers are most at risk for suicide during the 90 days before their first combat deployment and 60 to 120 days after their return. Troops returning from repeat deployments show greater resistance and are less likely to attempt suicide.
- However, a full-third of the soldiers who died were never deployed at all. This suggests the need for a reevaluation of recruiting efforts; apparently too many recruits coming into the service have mental health concerns that are either undiagnosed or deliberately concealed by the recruit or the recruiter.
- Varney closed by directing members to available sample materials currently used on Fort Campbell.
- He offered a repeat showing of the suicide education video, which members accepted on the condition that it is screened earlier in the day.

## **Executive Director's Report**

- Ridgway has been briefed by Chastain Beal regarding pending updates to the quilt panel instruction packet currently available through the website.
- Ridgway pointed out the local trainee tally sheet in the meeting packets, which cover all training sessions held through the end of 2009. 6,239 people in Tennessee received QPR training between 2008 and 2009, and that figure only covers trainees who completed the pre- and post-test forms.
  - Michael LaBonte is far and away the training leader, with 1,964 trainees instructed.
  - The Network currently has 15 QPR trainers who completed their training requirements and as such were certified by the QPR Institute.
- In other news, Mental Health Day on Capitol Hill will take place on March 1. Children's Advocacy Days and the TSCW Spring Conference (for which Keller is conference chair) will take place later this month.
- The Tennessee Mental Health Consumers' Association has issued a white paper on the upcoming state budget.
- Ridgway continues to act as special advisor to TLC and Tennessee Voices for Children.
- The CDC has issued a request for proposal worth \$50,000 yearly for 5 years. Since a research component accounts for "75 to 80 percent" of the project according to Ridgway, TSPN is in communications with Centerstone regarding partnering for this grant. Centerstone would evaluate TSPN's quantifiable efforts at fulfilling the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention within the various regions.
  - The grant application is due in April. The real challenge in assembling the paperwork involves the demographic information.
- More information about this grant opportunity is included in the CDC handout within the meeting packet.
- Meanwhile, regional leadership is encouraged to review and develop quantifiable approaches to the Tennessee Strategy for Suicide Prevention, such as distribution of emergency room brochure holders and survivor outreach.
- The 1-800-SUICIDE number, formerly the property of the National Hopeline Network, has been officially rolled into the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. However, members may still encounter reports and materials circulated by the Hopeline regarding the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hotline.
- Chastain Beal noted Keller's first appearance at a TSPN function since joining the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth and welcomed him back to the Network.
- Ridgway mentioned the AAS conference in Orlando in April. Early-bird registration ends March 15<sup>th</sup>, and the event is reportedly at 88% capacity already.
- He provided information on two upcoming MHAMT conferences: the "Soldiers, Sports, and Stigma" event, and "The Costs of Caring" in Murfreesboro, which is being packaged together with the "Jammin' in the 'Boro" concert.

- The Advisory Council retreat has been tentatively scheduled for June 2-3; Ridgway has attempted to reach representatives of the Montgomery Bell State Park Inn but has not been able to make contact. Varney's presentation (which will take place during the afternoon) is the only presentation currently on the agenda.
- Regarding the "Election 2010" project, several of the candidates who hold elected office will go back into session soon but should be free by the time of the retreat.
  - It was noted that Reps. Bart Gordon and John Tanner are both retiring and elections will be held for their replacements. Additionally, Rep. Zach Wamp has opted not to run for re-election in order to focus on his gubernatorial campaign, and Willie Herenton, former Mayor of Memphis, has announced his intention to run for the House seat currently held by Rep. Steve Cohen.
  - Ridgway emphasized the need to interest rising members of Congress in TSPN; he noted that U.S. Senator Gordon Smith, the author of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, lost his last bid for re-election in 2008.

### **Emeritus Presentation**

- At this point Ridgway announced the selection of three former Advisory Council members as Emeritus members:
  - Sam Bernard
  - Clark Flatt
  - Judith Johnson
- Of these three, only Johnson was able to attend today's meeting. Ridgway presented her with her certificate, holding the others for later. Plaques recognizing each of these members will be ordered next week.
- Ridgway recalled for those present that the Emeritus title was created to honor distinguished former members of the Council. Guidelines and a nomination form are available on the TSPN website.

### **New Business**

- It was noted by Ridgway that Micky Roberts of the East Tennessee region has yet to attend a single TSPN meeting or function since his reinstatement to the Advisory Council. The regional network is interested in replacing him with someone who can commit to attending TSPN functions.
- At this point Young offered a motion terminating Roberts's membership on the statewide council.
- Keller questioned as to whether Roberts's membership would have terminated by default as a result of missing so many meetings. Ridgway replied that Roberts had been given "the benefit of the doubt" considering his prior active service to the Council. After several missed meetings during his last term of service, Roberts contacted Ridgway and offered his resignation. Ridgway rejected this offer, preferring to let Roberts rotate off the Council when his term ended regularly.

- Roberts was reappointed in 2008, but did not attend any meetings since his reappointment.
- As the Director of the Blount County Health Department, Roberts has every opportunity to stay involved with the Network through the Blount County Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance—the group meets in the same building he works in, during his lunch hour. Ridgway believes Roberts has no excuse for not participating.
- Young’s earlier motion was brought back up for consideration, with Harris seconding. The motion to terminate Roberts was approved without objection.

**Adjournment**

- There being no further business before the Council, Tatum motioned for adjournment with Barger seconding.
- There being no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 2:29 PM.