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Alabama Council of
Community Mental
Health Boards
40th Anniversary
April 16 - 17

Children's Mental
Health Awareness
Week May 2 - 8



Memorial Day Holiday
Remember men and
women who died while
serving in the United
States Armed Forces
May 26

Artwork: Bobby Jiles
AltaPointe staff member



He dreams of recovery from mental illness

EDITOR'S NOTE: *In a recent interview, an AltaPointe patient talked about his journey to recover from a serious mental illness and the life of hope he lives today. The following article depicts the patient as James Smith, a fictitious name used to protect his identity.*

When 36-year-old James Smith was a little boy, he dreamed of becoming a professional soccer player. Today, he dreams of recovery from mental illness and being well enough to leave the AltaPointe group home where he lives.

"I haven't felt depressed in a really long time," Smith shared. "My goal is to go home and for people to see I am just like everyone else."

Smith was among 13 patients from the Mobile area admitted to Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa after Searcy State Psychiatric Hospital in Mt. Vernon closed its doors Oct. 31, 2012.

"I do not want to go back to Bryce," Smith added. "There is no freedom there... no group showers here, and I have my own room."

Because of their symptoms, these patients' personal freedoms were restricted in that environment. The Searcy closure plan designated Bryce as the hospital that would treat Mobile area patients who were not ready to be treated in a community setting because their behaviors were a potential danger.

Commitment catches him 'off guard'

Smith has been involuntarily committed twice. The first time was in 2005, when he was evaluated at BayPointe Hospital and then sent to Searcy. He was released three months later.

Smith described the experience as being caught off guard. "I thought, 'Oh my god,' because I did not know they could do that...put you anywhere for mental illness. I tried to keep my mouth shut during the hearing. The second time I had a hearing, I decided to speak up."

Records indicate Smith's diagnosis has varied over the course of his treatment ranging from schizophrenia to bipolar disorder. In the course of his illness he has

See **He dreams of recovery** on page 7

What has your HR Department planned to help staff members?

The HR Department has been working with MIS and API Healthcare, a company that provides software solutions to healthcare businesses. Find out how this new software will benefit AltaPointe employees.

See **'Staff to gain many advantages from new HR software'** - Page 3

Without positive change, there would be no progress



Tuerk Schlesinger,
CEO

Winston Churchill, Britain's most famous prime minister, once said, "To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often."

If one applies his observation to the world of healthcare, it would seem that improvement is our goal, and perfection is our hope. To say things change often in this field in which you and I have chosen to work is truly an understatement.

Over the past two years, change in behavioral healthcare has been a major topic in this column. We have talked about the importance of being prepared for the changes brought about when patients moved from institutions to the community, changes in health insurance coverage due to new laws, and changes in behavioral healthcare delivery through innovative programs that meet newly identified needs.

Today, possibly the most all-encompassing change we are facing involves something called the "1115 Waiver." In case you aren't familiar with this term, please keep reading so you can learn more. When implemented, the 1115 Waiver will make possible some major changes in the Medicaid delivery system in our state.

First, some background on why this is important to Alabama and AltaPointe. Medicaid consumes one-third of the state's general fund, which is approximately \$615 million. That amount is double what it was ten years ago. Medicaid is not sustainable at that level.

When you consider that AltaPointe receives 37.5% of its revenue from Medicaid and Medicare, you can see why any changes that will sustain this program are vital to not just our sustainability but our survivability. It is important that we increase efficiencies and reduce costs and do it without jeopardizing critical services to Medicaid beneficiaries. The future of Medicaid and the health of our patients depend on the goals the State sets and ultimately achieves.

So, in October 2012, Gov. Robert Bentley convened a multi-stakeholder Medicaid Advisory Commission (MAC) tasked with finding ways to improve Alabama's Medicaid program. In January 2013, the MAC provided the governor with 11 recommendations. The first was to divide the state into regions with each one having a Regional Care Organization (RCO) to coordinate and manage the healthcare services of Medicaid patients. Alabama Senate Bill 340 passed in 2013, creating RCOs. Subsequently, five regions were established with AltaPointe being in Region E (see map, below).

Tied to the ability of Alabama to transform Medicaid is its seeking a "Section 1115 Waiver Demonstration Project" from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS), another MAC recommendation. The waiver will allow Alabama to implement its transformation to Medicaid Managed Care via the RCO structure, which is a departure from the current agreement with CMS. The State has completed the application for the waiver requesting federal approval by October 2014. The State's plan calls for all RCOs to be fully operational by October 2016.

AltaPointe is taking steps to plan for its part on the Region E RCO, attending meetings, working through strategies with other RCO members, and conducting research on all aspects of the 1115 Waiver.

Everyone's work at AltaPointe will be affected either directly or indirectly by the changes that managed care will bring. One way will be our conversion from a reactive model of care to a preventive model that promotes wellness. This should dramatically improve patient outcomes bringing greater improvements to their health.

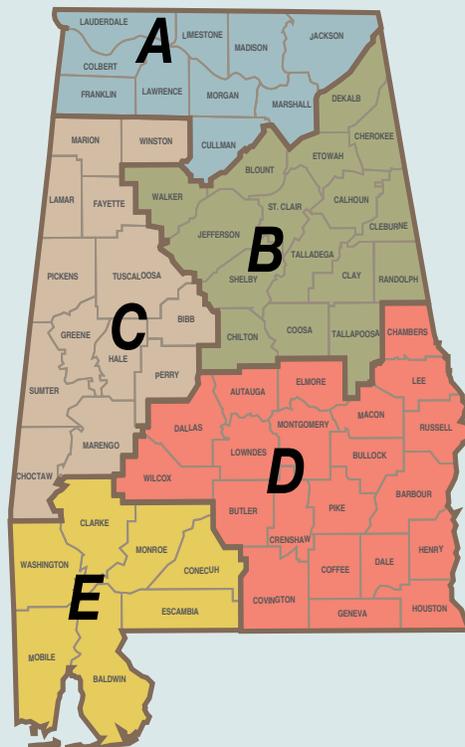
Another way this change will affect AltaPointe is in the way we will be paid for providing services under Medicaid. Instead of a volume-based, fee-for-service reimbursement system, we would move to a capitated payment system that incentivizes the delivery of quality health outcomes. All clinical programs, finance and accounting, medical records, MIS, performance improvement and other AltaPointe departments will be heavily involved in implementing these changes.

Managed Medicaid also will require AltaPointe to increase the size and scope of its services. To be prepared to offer these services, AltaPointe has been exploring mergers with other mental health centers. For instance, we are in the process of merging with Baldwin County Mental Health Center and are hopeful this will happen soon.

As an AltaPointe staff member, it is important for you to understand that our future depends on these new revenue sources resulting from the Medicaid waiver. Rest assured, we are giving our full attention to the anticipated changes so we will be able to survive the transformation of how our largest funding source reimburses for services.

With all these latest changes following a long line of continuous change over the years, let's hope that Churchill was right.

Regional Care Organization Districts Effective October 1, 2013



Staff to gain many advantages from new HR software

AltaPointe staff members will soon realize numerous improvements in how they can electronically manage their benefits, internal employment opportunities, work schedules and various other job-related functions, thanks to a new human resource software system.

AltaPointe's Human Resources Department has been engaged for several months in the implementation of API Healthcare, an HR information software system that will allow the department to streamline all its processes through a single solution.

"While many of our HR functions are already handled electronically, there are actually five different systems in place, which poses a number of challenges," Alicia Donoghue, human resources director explained. "With API Healthcare, everything will be in a single system resulting in much greater efficiency."

API is not just integrated within itself, but with other patient-care systems to give supervisors detailed data right at their fingertips, which in turn will make forecasting daily staffing decisions more efficient. The benefits trickle down to the employee by giving them more flexibility with schedules, as well as access to self-service features.

Through API, employees will potentially be able to access their schedules, correct missing punches, view benefit balances, ask for time off, pick up shifts, and trade shifts all from the time clock, according to Donoghue.

Self-service portal gives new access

Basic employment information will be accessible at any time from home through the employee self-service portal. Other web-based features will allow employees to enroll in benefits online and make changes in real time because there will be interfaces with these vendors.

"I believe API will improve employee engagement and retention by highlighting future career paths and generating awareness of AltaPointe job openings," Donoghue said. "It will bring visibility to the skills and competencies needed and in turn help employees formulate their professional growth goals."



Every member of the AltaPointe HR team will utilize the new API system. The entire group gathers for a photo on the Admin C Deck. They are, front row, from left, Allison Luker, employment assistant; Malinda Weems, HR assistant; Jason Holston, assistant director; Hannah Stone, employment specialist; and Lisa Nelson, recruitment manager; and back row, from left, Courtney Washington, HR specialist; Katie Miller, employment specialist; Alicia Donoghue, director; Sonja Butts, payroll specialist; Melissa Parker, receptionist; and Mary Caron Downing, HR specialist

API allows employees to set up user profiles – including their qualifications and skills – and will customize a homepage for each employee that will show them only jobs for which they are qualified. The software will automatically identify current employees applying for jobs. Now, HR staff members must manually separate employees from non-employees.

System provides so much more

The API learning management system also

will provide more continuing education content and opportunities for staff development.

"We pride ourselves on trying to provide career paths where possible," Julie Bellcase, AltaPointe COO, said. "This system is going to help the staff members be aware of those opportunities and work toward them."

API will benefit the HR department by cutting down on the potential for mistakes made pushing paper.

"So many people are doing so many different things in human resources," Donoghue said. "API brings them all together. Using a system like this to drive company efficiency translates to better patient care and employee satisfaction because that is where you can begin to focus your efforts and resources."

The transition to a single software solution also allows for future growth and readiness for the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and Alabama's move to Medicaid managed care. Donoghue says these changes make the move to API especially important.

"With more patients expected to enter the healthcare system and operational costs expected to climb," she continued, "AltaPointe will have a system in place that promotes productivity and reduces unnecessary costs while improving overall care."

The implementation to API is an ongoing process that was not designed to work overnight. Employees will soon see new time clocks installed and will be able to use some aspects of the new software by the end of 2014. Donoghue says the AltaPointe Information Technology department has played a major role in the transition to API, and without it, the transition would not be successful.



New time clocks similar to the one in this snapshot will be installed at AltaPointe locations.

People & Positions at the Pointe

Welcome new staff members



Jack Lungu

Jack Lungu, MBA, has joined BayPointe Children's Hospital as hospital administrator. Lungu has more than 35 years of behavioral health and executive experience working in for-profit and not-for-profit systems, medical centers and free-standing psychiatric hospitals. His management background includes working as chief executive officer, vice president, chief nursing officer and hospital administrator. Lungu has extensive experience with adult, children and geriatric populations. Highlights include business turnaround and culture change, strategic program development, quality management, and market growth. Raised in Michigan, Lungu spent 25 years in San Diego before moving to Alabama three years ago. He has a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's degree in business administration.

Nick MacDonald, CPA, has joined AltaPointe's finance and accounting office as business manager. Previously, MacDonald served as the treasurer and controller in a regional, complex rehabilitation company providing mobility products to communities from Texas to the Florida Panhandle. He also was the finance manager with a global producer of hydraulic cylinders. Additionally, he has served in public accounting as an auditor and small business consultant. MacDonald is a certified public accountant and earned a degree from Auburn University in 1988.

Hannah Stone was hired recently as a human resources specialist. Stone graduated from the University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in business management and a specialization in healthcare

management. Before joining AltaPointe, Stone served as the HR administrative assistant at Westminster Village in Spanish Fort.

Promotions



Heather Joseph

Heather Joseph, MBA, has been appointed to the newly created position of AltaPointe Chief Administrative Officer after serving as the BayPointe Children's Hospital Administrator. In her new role, Joseph will oversee the management and operations of medical records, coding and professional services, which includes AltaPointe's provider contracts with local hospitals and nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Joseph's recent experience as hospital administrator and previous years working as a medical practice administrator give her the unique skills required for this position. Joseph earned bachelor's degrees in business and marketing and a master's degree in business administration from Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio.

Pam Wisner, MA, LBSW, is now with CarePointe as hospital admission and referral coordinator, previously working as a therapist at Zeigler Outpatient. Wisner has several years of clinical, administrative and supervisory experience, which includes facilitating admissions for Charter Hospital onsite as well as at local hospitals and emergency rooms. Wisner earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Mobile in psychology and sociology, and a master's degree in counseling from Louisiana Baptist University. Wisner is a licensed social worker, trained in disaster mental health by the Alabama Department of Public Health.

All-Stars Super Team wants 'you' for NAMI Walk 2014

Lace up your sneakers, AltaPointe employees, because we're going for a walk!

On Saturday, May 17, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-Mobile will hold the first and only official NAMI-Walks 5K Walk in Alabama under the lush canopy of oaks at historic Spring Hill College. AltaPointe is the Walk's primary financial sponsor.

AltaPointe staff members may join the AltaPointe All-Stars Super Team. Director of Adult Residential Services David Beech serves as the NAMI Walk Mobile Chairman and has tapped eight other AltaPointe employees as captains on the AltaPointe All-Stars Super Team.

"The AltaPointe All-Stars will consist of nine teams of at least 10 walkers each," Beech explained. "Each team will try to raise \$1,000. We're encouraging friendly competition between teams with awards in different categories just to make it fun.

Beech serves with several other AltaPointe employees on



AltaPointe All-Stars Super Team captains during a recent meeting. They are from left, seated, Christina Russo, Susie Boucher, David Beech, Lee Ann McDonald. Back row, standing from left, Ellen Lambert, Robert Carlock and Cindy Gipson. Cindy Martin and Olivia Nettles were not available for the photo.

the NAMI-Mobile board. He said the two organizations have similar constituencies.

"NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots organization dedicated to building better lives for millions of Americans affected by mental illness. Some of the money raised from the Mobile-NAMI Walk will go to start a dental care program for individuals we serve in Mobile County. Since Medicaid doesn't pay for adult dental care, many people living with a mental illness go without this much-needed service."

"Olivia Nettles, our director of children's outpatient services, also serves on the NAMI board and has been instrumental in forming our Super Team," Beech said. "When our NAMI Walk Honorary Chairperson, Mobile City Council President Gina Gregory, starts the race, we want to see dozens of AltaPointe employees leading the way."

Bravo! Bravo!



J. Luke Engeriser

J. Luke Engeriser, MD, AltaPointe Deputy Chief Medical Officer, received the distinction of Fellow by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) for his dedication to the profession of psychiatry. He will be formally recognized during a ceremony at the APA's 167th Annual Meeting in New York, May 5, 2014. The Fellow designation is an honorary one created by the APA Membership Committee and Board of Trustees to recognize career members who demonstrate allegiance to their profession and commitment to the ongoing work of the association. "Dr. Engeriser has achieved distinction in special areas of psychiatry and possesses depth of knowledge and breadth of skills that are recognized and highly respected," said Alabama Psychiatric Physicians Association Executive Director Jennifer Hancock. "As we look toward the new year, more psychiatrists should pause to evaluate their careers. Carrying these marks of distinction not only elevates the professional, but it also elevates the profession itself."



Clockwise from top left, Stewart, Miele, Martin and Sylvester.

Patrick Stewart, Bridge Team case manager; **Lisa Sylvester**, Bridge Team case manager; **Tamiaka Martin**, AOP assistant coordinator; and **Mark Miele**, AOP therapist, **have each been certified to teach Mental Health First Aid**. There are approximately 38 certified instructors in Alabama with nine of them being AltaPointe staff members. Mental Health First Aid is an in-person training that

teaches one how to help individuals developing a mental illness or in a crisis. For more information on how to become trained in Mental Health First Aid, call (251) 450-1386.

Jennifer Palomo, children's outpatient assistant coordinator, has passed the exam to become a licensed counseling professional.

Michelle Counts, children's outpatient in-home therapist, has passed the exam to become a licensed counseling professional.

Intellectual disability case managers, Vanessa Butler, Katie "Rachel" Tillman and Typhany Gardner have passed the intellectual disability case management certification test. The certification was developed by the Alabama Association of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Boards in cooperation with the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Alabama Medicaid.



COP staffers meet service standards

Congratulations to the AltaPointe Children's Outpatient staff members for meeting service standards for 2013. These individuals were recognized for spending the indicated number of hours per month providing direct services for their patients. From left, top row, **Kim Dyson, Yvonne Jackson, Deloris Law, Tina Williams, Julie Bellcase, Olivia Nettles, Stephanie Gatlin, and Fran McQuirter**. From left, front row, **Leigh Ann Macon, Sheila Wimberly, Jamie Turner, Tiffany Shea and Jessica Roberts**.

Congratulations to **Perry Tan, Eula Richardson, Gil Fields and Sarah Whitfield** who all retired in 2013 after a combined 88 years of service to AltaPointe. **Tan** joined the company 27 years ago, serving in numerous roles during his career and leaving AltaPointe as an AOP therapist. **Richardson** worked as a behavioral aide for 22 years in the adult residential population. **Fields** joined AltaPointe 25 years ago, also serving in numerous roles, but eventually retired as a corporate compliance officer. **Whitfield** started with AltaPointe at BayView 14 years ago, but retired as a therapist at children's outpatient. "All four have represented AltaPointe so well, at many different levels working across our continuum of care," Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO, said. "We will miss all of them, and wish them all the best."



You can join an AltaPointe AllStars Super Team, too. Look for a sign-up sheet at your location and join today.

Also, visit our Super Team Page here: <https://securewalks.nami.org/registrant/startup.aspx?locationID=141067>.

Smooth transition for one patient proves successful

Editor's note: James Smith's successful transition is only one of many to emerge from AltaPointe's role in helping patients move from institutional settings into the community.*

Ellen Lambert recalls in vivid detail meeting James Smith. She had gone to Tuscaloosa to visit 13 patients from the Mobile area that had been discharged from Searcy State Psychiatric Hospital and admitted to Bryce Hospital. The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) had designated 29 beds at Bryce for patients who were residents in the Mobile region who needed intensive, long-term hospitalization before they could receive care in a community setting. Smith occupied one of these beds.

"The first time I saw him he was sitting in a corner of the dayroom as if he were in a cocoon. His knees were drawn up, and his head was down," Lambert recalled. "He wasn't ready to talk. I told the social worker I still wanted to see him every month and, that maybe somehow, someday I could get him interested in recovery."

Lambert, an ADMH utilization review coordinator based at AltaPointe, said Smith's case drew attention because his family had been in contact with AltaPointe and wanted him to come home.

"Helping people like him [Smith] is one of the reasons I have stayed in this field for more than 35 years," she said.

Circumstances began months earlier

The circumstances surrounding Lambert's encounters with Smith began with the ADMH's announcement in late summer 2012, that Searcy would close its doors after more than 100 years in operation. AltaPointe expected the closing and had been preparing long before the announcement to guarantee patients would have a smooth transition from Searcy's institutional environment to treatment in the community.

When it was time for patients to finally make the move from Searcy, AltaPointe staff members had been planning with the ADMH how to make sure each one would receive the best possible treatment in a safe environment. Lambert was among the AltaPointe staff-member group that interviewed up to nine Searcy patients each week in the summer and fall of 2012 to determine the best path for recovery for them.

"I thought it was an excellent idea to meet with patients and learn more about their histories," Lambert said. "I have always



Ellen Lambert continues helping patients find the most appropriate treatment environments in her role as ADMH Utilization Role Coordinator. She is shown, above, working from her office located in AltaPointe's Admin C Building.

been a champion of helping people move into a better situation so they can feel encouraged and empowered to be all they can.

"All of us need a cheerleader. For me, it's just a matter of being able to form an alliance with somebody, making them feel like they can make the leap and that they will be safe and okay," she continued.

Persistence pays off

Lambert said she was not allowed to interview Smith while he was at Searcy because of his state of mind. Yet, because she knew his

family wanted him close to home and that they wanted to help him, she did not give up trying to get that interview. Her persistence and passion paid off, along with her personal mantra... "Form an alliance to make them feel safe."

After two months at Bryce, Smith finally consented to speak with Lambert.

"The social worker brought him into the nurses' station; it was just the three of us. He was wearing a sock cap and maintained eye contact with the floor," Lambert said. "I told him I was concerned about him, that I had been talking to his family and that we had a new intermediate care facility program. I told him it would offer him more treatment and attention... that he should just consider a transfer."

Less than five months after being admitted to Bryce and after many conversations with Lambert, Smith was transferred to AltaPointe's Lakefront Intensive Care Facility (ICF) at its Zeigler campus. This was to be Smith's first step on his path to living and receiving treatment in the community.

A change as from 'night to day'

Lambert has witnessed a part of Smith's recovery. From the first time she saw him in Bryce, withdrawn and aloof, to the most recent time she saw him visiting with his family at the AltaPointe ICF, Lambert says the change in Smith has been like going from night to day.

"I walked toward him, and he stood up," Lambert said. "He looked me in the eye, shook my hand and said 'thank you so much for helping me.' I about fainted."

Lambert still travels to Bryce each month in search of more people like Smith and said she knows there will be many more success stories.

had paranoid ideations, trouble sleeping, shown aggression and moodiness, and had problems staying on his medications while living in the community, among many other symptoms.

Smith was committed a second time in 2012 to Searcy and, when Searcy closed, he was transferred to Bryce because it was determined he needed further inpatient treatment. Three months later, Smith was released from Bryce to AltaPointe's Lakefront Intermediate Care Facility (ICF), which meant he was able to be treated close to his home and family, who is involved in his treatment.

"If I did not have my family, I would be depressed," Smith said.

Despite his struggle to maintain wellness over his lifetime, Smith attended and graduated from college, earning a bachelor's degree in pre-medical studies.

Progress at ICF leads to group home

While living at Lakefront ICF, Smith made rapid progress, according to Patricia Sullivan, adult residential assistant director. Unlike an institutional setting, AltaPointe tailors care to meet

individual patient needs. Sullivan attributes Smith's success to the frequent psychiatric care and treatment services he received.

"He was seen daily by a doctor and received partial hospitalization treatment services five days a week," Sullivan added. "After two-and-a-half months, he had shown significant progress and maintained stability. Then he made the transition to a less restrictive level of care and moved into one of AltaPointe's group homes. He was discharged from his commitment status at that time."

In an institutional setting, patients often are allowed outside for only one hour each day. AltaPointe provides patients with more time outdoors and in the community.

A sock cap pulled over his head, most days you will find Smith walking the grounds of the Zeigler campus since he says sitting still is hard for him, and he enjoys being outside.

"I want to be treated like a normal person, and not be talked to like I am unintelligent," Smith said. "People like me are not rare; actually, there are more people like me."

Smith hopes one day more people will understand this, and that soon he will get to go home.

What is recovery?

RECOVERY is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. This is the definition adopted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as part of its Recovery Support Strategic Initiative in 2011.

SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde has said this definition can enable policy makers, providers and others to better design, deliver and measure integrated and holistic services and to promote greater public awareness and appreciation for the importance of recovery.

Health, home, purpose and community in recovery: It also developed the following SAMHSA's "Guiding Principles of Recovery" to help make recovery a reality for millions of Americans. The full text that accompanies these principles may be found at <http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery/>.

Guiding Principles of Recovery

Recovery emerges from hope

Recovery is person-driven

Recovery occurs via many pathways

Recovery is holistic

Recovery is supported by peers and allies

Recovery is supported through relationship and social networks

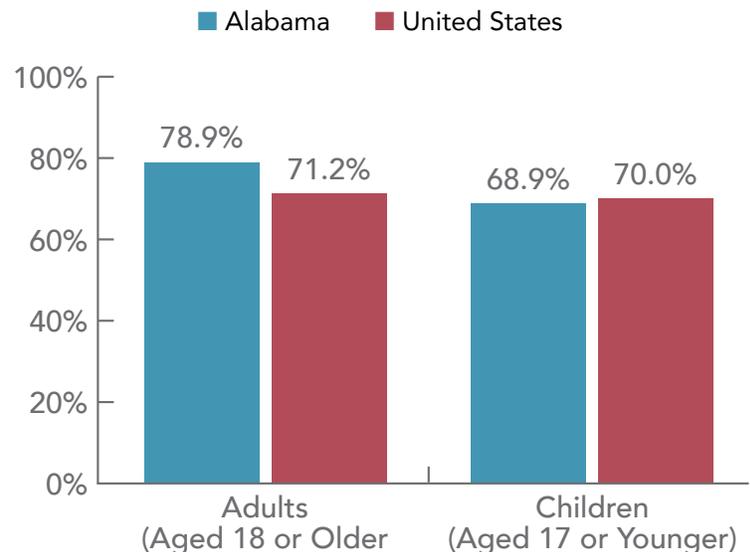
Recovery is culturally-based and influenced

Recovery is supported by addressing trauma

Recovery involves individual, family, and community strengths and responsibility

Recovery is based on respect

Mental Health Consumers in Alabama and the United States Reporting Improved Functioning from Treatment Received in the Public Mental Health System (2012)



The percentage of youths reporting improved functioning from treatment received through the public mental health system in Alabama was lower than for the nation as a whole.

HHS Publication No. SMA-134796AL 2013; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. www.samhsa.gov 2013

Program Progress

Children's Outpatient Services

School-based therapists help students succeed onsite

A Mobile County middle school student struggling with explosive, aggressive behavior at school finds help with AltaPointe and its school-based therapy.

School leaders say the young student is "doing awesome." Her grades have improved, and she requests to see her counselor when she needs to calm down.

Dr. Wanda Hannon, Mobile County Public Schools System's Health and Social Services Supervisor, says this is just one example of students with mental health issues getting the help they need.

"When students ask to go see the counselor at school because their friends are going, and they like what is happening with their friends, that is wonderful progress," Hannon said. "Children are improving in behavior and attendance, and with discipline issues."

Three AltaPointe staff members have filled full-time positions as school-based counselors and work onsite at several area schools during office hours.

"We have done this in a limited fashion for years," Olivia Nettles, AltaPointe Children's Outpatient Director, said. "We have just never had therapists doing this full time. School-based therapy is being recommended by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and is a national trend, as well."

The Mobile County public schools include Leinkauf Elementary,



the Continuous Learning Center, McDavid-Jones Elementary, Lott Middle and Citronelle High, which are covered by Vickie Charpie, licensed professional counselor. Therapist Stephanie Pope oversees the Saraland and Satsuma city school districts.

Plans are for Jamie Turner to work with students in the Chickasaw City School System.

"With on-site counselors at schools, the children are receiving consistency and continuity of care," Hannon added. "Students and counselors are no longer waiting for parents to take off work and

get them to their appointments. Therapy is real time, with real-life events."

AltaPointe's counselors care for more than 100 students who are making great strides to overcome mental health issues. Hannon reports tremendous improvement in behavior and attendance, not only for those students but for the milieu of the entire school.

School-based therapy is a trend and a partnership school staff members hope continues.

"We love this partnership," Becky Elmore, MCPSS Guidance Services and Student Records supervisor, said. "It is a win-win: Our students win, our parents win, our school staff members win, the school-based therapists win, and AltaPointe wins. We are seeing great successes."

Adult Outpatient Services

Project Rebound closes its doors in Bayou La Batre



Project Rebound closed its doors Dec. 31, 2013, after providing services to the people of south Alabama who were affected by

the BP Deepwater Horizon accident in 2010.

It has been nearly four years since the explosion on the BP Deepwater Horizon drilling platform where 11 workers were killed. Oil leaked into the Gulf of Mexico for 87 days and created the largest spill in American history and wreaked havoc on families living along the Gulf Coast.

The State of Alabama responded to the disaster by reviving Project Rebound, which was funded by a \$12-million BP grant awarded to the Alabama Department of Mental Health. AltaPointe began operating Project Rebound in December 2010, and led the charge to take care of the mental health needs of south Mobile County families impacted by the oil spill.

"The Deepwater Horizon oil spill focused increased attention on mental health problems related to the disaster," Tuerk Schlesinger, AltaPointe CEO, said. "Families who relied on

Program Progress continued on page 9



Bayou La Batre residents benefitted from Project Rebound's presence during the aftermath of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill of 2010. Photo courtesy of the Press Register.

the seafood and tourism industries for their income faced uncertainty about their livelihoods.”

The town of Bayou La Batre was just bouncing back from Hurricane Katrina when the oil spill dealt it another devastating blow in April 2010. For a town built around the seafood industry with shrimp boats and seafood packing houses lining the canal, Bayou La Batre's residents didn't need the oil tainted water that affected them financially or mentally.

From 2010-2013, Project Rebound assisted more than 2,100 families with free short-term counseling, translation services, transportation to medical appointments and referrals to other social service agencies.

Martha Pharr, AltaPointe Adult Outpatient and Project Rebound coordinator, said the free counseling was “monumental” in changing lives for the better and opened the door to long-term counseling for many who would not have sought help otherwise.

“The work of Project Rebound was different day-by-day,” Pharr said. “You never knew who was going to come through the door and with what problems. I believe the program impacted the community for the better.”

AltaPointe Community Counseling Center of South Mobile County continues to serve these residents.

Adult Inpatient Services

EastPointe Hospital survey indicates successes

Several EastPointe Hospital patients agree they had been treated with dignity and respect and felt comfortable asking about treatment and medications as part of a survey being conducted to measure patient satisfaction.

EastPointe has been using a survey endorsed by the National Quality Forum as an effective tool for quality improvement. The survey asked a wide range of questions about the services provided and treatment during their hospital stay and was issued to patients upon their discharge. The survey process started in August 2013 and so far more than 60 patients have participated.

One patient commented, “I feel EastPointe and all staff truly helped save my life. I will be attending outpatient services to help me with my coping skills and self-worth skills. I would highly recommend that anyone needing help should consider EastPointe.”

EastPointe offers a variety of therapies to help meet the individual needs of each patient. Christina Russo, EastPointe Hospital clinical coordinator, says patients are admitted for a variety of reasons, whether they have been experiencing symptoms from a chronic mental illness or an acute onset due to life stressors.

“Daily medication management and assessment by a psychiatrist can assist with treating distressing symptoms,” Russo said. “Master's level therapists provide daily groups

Program Progress continued on page 10

CarePointeSM CORNER

CarePointe, AltaPointe's call center, receives thousands upon thousands of phone calls each year, most of which involve mental health, substance abuse, or social services resource questions. In 2013, there was an increase of more than 7,600 calls over 2012.

Ingrid Hartman, CarePointe assistant director, says a multitude of factors have contributed to the surge in calls, such as an expansion in the number of hospital beds and an increase in educational efforts about CarePointe with the board of health and other providers.

“Plus, we have increased our accessibility by adding a designated line for doctors and hospitals,” Hartman said. “We also have increased our availability with after-hour CarePointe staff members in the office until midnight.”

CarePointe serves AltaPointe's two hospitals, nine outpatient clinics and 76 programs. It also supports psychiatric services for six acute care hospitals in Mobile and Baldwin counties and four state psychiatric hospitals.

CarePointe (251) 450-2211

CarePointe Calls Received

	2012	2013	
Total Calls	34,005	41,623	7,618 Increase
EastPointe/ BayPointe Referrals	1,192	2,160	968 Increase
After-hours Crisis Calls	1,404	2,887	1,483 Increase

Program *Progress*



EastPointe Hospital staff members take part in yoga, a popular recreational therapy with the hospital patients.

and individual therapies to meet the specific needs of the patient. Each patient is unique, and treatment is individualized to meet those needs.”

EastPointe offers group, individual and recreational therapy, including the more non-conventional therapy, yoga, which appears to be popular.

“There has been positive feedback regarding meditation and yoga,” Russo said. “In many cases, patients have never been exposed to these activities and are able to learn skills to practice at home. At the time of discharge, patients are offered a free CD to use for meditation at home.”

Performance Improvement will calculate the survey responses and use the results to improve patient care. Russo says surveys are being given to all patients willing and able to complete them.

Environment of Care

EOC program to feature monthly safety topics

AltaPointe’s Environment of Care (EOC) is placing a stronger emphasis on safety awareness throughout the organization. Incident reports, committee meetings and input from employees throughout the company were used to develop a monthly safety training program, which includes a monthly safety topic.

“The purpose of the monthly topic is to keep everyone ‘safety aware’ while sending the message that safety is the responsibility of every employee,” Robert Carlock, EOC director, said.

The first safety topic of the newly formed program was ‘Slip, Trip and Fall’ awareness which began in January. Staff members are required to review the safety topic which can be found on the EOC page of AltaLink.

Future safety topics include, “Chemical Awareness,” “Heat and Weather,” and “Security Awareness.”

Staff members tighten their belts for Scale Back Alabama

Scale Back Alabama is underway across AltaPointe. Employees are tightening their belts and buckling down to lose weight.

Scale Back Alabama is a challenge to drop 10 pounds in 10 weeks. Since the first contest in 2007, Alabamians have lost more than one million pounds. Last year, AltaPointe staff members shed 400 pounds during Scale Back.

Jill Harvison, EastPointe therapist, lost more than 20 pounds participating in Scale Back 2013 and has kept off the weight.

“I lost more weight after Scale Back ended for a total weight loss of nearly 50 pounds,” Harvison shared. “Since Thanksgiving, I have put on 8-to-10 pounds with the good intention of being able to drop it during Scale Back.”

Harvison says she changed her eating habits completely and started using a mobile app called, “MyFitnessPal” to keep track of her calorie intake, which meant no more chicken fingers, French fries and sides of ranch.

Employee health nurse, Nicole Zediker, says a little goes a long way when it comes to losing weight. “The benefits of weight loss include lower blood pressure, lower risk of cardiovascular disease, and, you reduce your ‘bad’ cholesterol levels,” Zediker said. “Dropping as little as five to 10 percent of your body weight can make a difference.”



Performance Improvement staff members, Anitra Jarreau, Grace Moffett, Sonya Sims and Nicole Zediker, make up the Scale Back team ‘PI Waist Management.’ The group didn’t let rainy weather put a damper on their workout and moved indoors to complete their walk, March 11.

Need more incentive, no problem. AltaPointe awards a \$20 cash prize to each staff member who reaches the 10-pound weight-loss goal and a \$50 cash prize to each member on a winning team.

Two hundred and forty staff members signed up in January for Scale Back forming 61 teams. The initiative is touted by the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health as “the competition where it pays to lose.”

Scale Back weigh-ins took place the week of January 18. Weigh-outs will be the week of April 5-11.

'Ham Toss' brings holiday cheer to staff members

Right before Christmas holidays every year, a large refrigerator truck, packed with holiday hams and driven by CEO Tuerk Schlesinger, makes the rounds to AltaPointe's campuses. It's a decade-long tradition affectionately called 'Ham Toss' that delivers smiles, fun and more than 1,000 hams to staff members.

"Everyone starts talking about it and speculates 'when will we get our hams,'" Dianna Enzor, insurance clerk, said. "Tuerk has

made sure that if there was any way possible, the company would give us something during the holidays."

The "Ham Toss" took place Dec. 10 and 13, 2013.



Jessie Wallace receives his ham from AltaPointe CEO Tuerk Schlesinger at ARS.



Children's outpatient staff members stop to take a picture with CEO Tuerk Schlesinger on 'Ham Toss' day. They are from left, Sarah Elizabeth Peters, Jamie Turner, Ashley Blount, Katrina Millender and Taylor Snowden; back row, Stephanie Gatlin, left, and Schlesinger.



Human resource staff members, Allison Luker, Lisa Nelson, Hannah Stone and Katie Miller pose for a picture with CEO Tuerk Schlesinger and COO Julie Bellcase after receiving their hams.



The ham truck made its way across the bay to EastPointe Hospital in Daphne. Staff members seem in the holiday spirit during the 'Ham Toss'. They are from left, Dexter DeVaughn, Richard Monroe and Scott Butterley.

AltaPointe 'grows' its social media presence



AltaPointe staff members may be surprised to know that they, along with our patients, their families and anyone interested in news about AltaPointe, can keep up through social media. Social media has changed how the world communicates. It has done the same for AltaPointe.

AltaPointe continually increases its social media presence. Recently, news of AltaPointe's unique partnership with the University of South Alabama was published on business and news websites serving the states of California, Arkansas, Louisiana and Georgia, just to name a few. More than 1,000 people across the United States read the article and learned about AltaPointe, some perhaps for the very first time.



Fox10 TV News reporter Michael Brannon interviews Susie Boucher about her Facebook posts that successfully raised funds for Christmas gifts for patients.

the holidays for AltaPointe's transitional age consumers. In less than 24 hours, Boucher's friends had donated more than \$400, and other contributions helped that total grow to more than \$600.

AltaLink promotes unity

AltaPointe's very own *AltaLink*, our organization's internal website, also has grown in popularity. Photographs and company-wide announcements are updated often, along with stories featuring the hard work of AltaPointe staff members.

"I just want to take the opportunity to tell you

what a wonderful job you do to create a warm and happy work environment for the employees," Sonya Sims, performance improvement assistant director, recently said about AltaLink. "I so enjoyed the 'Ham Toss' photos and seeing the smiles on the employees' faces."

Juanita Johnson, BayPointe Children's Hospital therapist, said she looks at the pictures and reads the articles when it is about AltaPointe staff members.

"It is nice to see and read about all of the things AltaPointe staff members are doing," Johnson said. "It promotes a sense of unity across the continuum."

AltaPointe's Facebook, Twitter pages growing popular

In case you did not know, AltaPointe has a Facebook page that is growing in popularity, and a Twitter page, too. Each week, people 'like' or comment on a picture posted by AltaPointe or watch a video created by the public relations office. AltaPointe's Facebook page has garnered more than 300 fans with an average of five new 'likes' added each week.

A Facebook post about an upcoming Mental Health First Aid class reached nearly 600 people. A Facebook post about Dr. Praveen Narahari speaking at a NAMI monthly educational meeting reached more than 540 people.

The power of social media even made the holidays brighter for the residents of AltaPointe's transitional age homes. Susie Boucher, centralized services center coordinator, posted a simple message to her own page about the need for Christmas gifts, which read:

"The kids in our transitional living program (17-21 year olds with serious mental illness and often no family) need some Christmas help. The angel tree with their requests is still FULL. Most of these kids want \$20 gift cards. These are kids who live in group homes. Because they are teenagers and young adults, they are often overlooked. Please let me know if you would like to contribute a gift. If you are looking for a way to brighten someone's holiday, this is your opportunity."

Immediately, she got responses, from people as far away as the states of Washington and Connecticut, all eager to help brighten

Visit the AltaPointe Facebook page to become a fan and follow us on Twitter @AltaPointeHS.

Think about this...

Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

— Albert Einstein

