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# MMH Celebrates Half-Century Mark



This year Mobile Mental Health is 50 years old. We will celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary throughout the year with special

observances and events. Most important, we will recognize how healthcare for people living with mental illness, mental retardation and substance abuse has improved dramatically over the decades.

In 1957, most Americans would not have consulted a mental health professional or accepted prescription medications or psychotherapies because of the public's perception of mental illness. Today, Americans' attitudes about

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mental illness, its causes and treatment seem more sophisticated. Yet we must still deal with high levels of stigma and a lack of understanding.

What was society facing 50 years ago when the view toward mental health was beginning to change? It was a very different place and time. Some might say that 1957 was the "best of times, and it was the worst of times," to borrow Charles Dickens' opening

sentence from *A Tale of Two Cities*. Most

Americans enjoyed a family-focused, predictable way of life.

For people living with mental illness in Alabama's Mobile and Washington counties, 1957 marked the beginning of state-approved community mental health services, which changed the face of human services for the better in this region.

## 1957 Cultural Milestones

- Dwight Eisenhower was in his second term as US president
- The Cold War was in full swing, the USSR launched Sputnik I and II
- Congress passed the Civil Rights Act
- Elvis and Ricky Nelson were the two hottest rock & roll singers
- The '57 Chevy was the car of choice
- The cost of a first class stamp was three cents
- Dr. Seuss wrote *The Cat in the Hat*
- The White House forcibly integrated Little Rock schools
- Mao Tse Tung was in power in China
- Juan Batista was in control in Cuba
- TV favorite *I Love Lucy* was in its last year of production
- Hank Aaron was the National League's most valuable player
- AP voted the Auburn Tigers, 10-0-0, the number one football team in the country



2400 Gordon Smith Drive as seen in the 1960s.

# LLC Develops Plan For Psychiatric Hospital In Baldwin

Hospital service expansion has been part of Mobile Mental Health's strategic plan for many years. When the State approves a certificate of need (CON) application filed earlier this year, that expansion plan could become a reality.

Mobile Mental Health has joined with Gulf Health Hospitals and Baldwin County Mental Health Center to create Gulf Coast Psychiatric, LLC, which has developed plans for a 66-bed psychiatric hospital for adults to be constructed in Baldwin County. The LLC filed the required CON application with Alabama's State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) in January.

"Our LLC arrangement with Baldwin County Mental Health and Gulf Health Hospitals will create a hospital that will offer a less costly, more efficient, more appropriate and more effective alternative than the

existing system of psychiatric care in this area," Tuerk Schlesinger, MMH CEO, said. "This hospital will complete a comprehensive, regional inpatient psychiatric system of care that will provide for crisis stabilization, increased capacity to serve involuntary patients, an emergency department for walk-ins, and 24-hour screening and evaluation services for Mobile, Baldwin and Washington counties."

## The CON approval process

When more than one application for similar facilities is filed during the same timeframe, either of the applying entities may oppose the other's application. That has happened in this case. MMH has contested the CON application of Tennessee-based Senior Health for a proposed 48-bed psychiatric hospital in Baldwin County.

Senior Health, likewise, has contested our application.

A contested case requires intense preparation, according to Schlesinger. "However, we believe it is vital that the State allows construction of only one psychiatric hospital in Baldwin County," he said.

The approval process could take several months to complete.

## Our Focus Must Be On Quality



Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO, right, consults with Sherill Alexander, Performance Improvement Director. Alexander is responsible for making sure all staff members understand the expectations about quality.

People frequently ask me about our focus. The answer is always the same: "We focus on *quality*." We reinforced that focus when we sought and achieved Joint Commission accreditation. Your hard work reaffirmed this during the recent Joint Commission visit.

We must always focus on quality despite the distractions of funding issues, regulatory changes and the unique difficulties of our work. Quality sets us apart. It defines the experiences of those we serve. Quality is what the public should think when they hear "AltaPointe."

The aftermath of Virginia Tech illustrates that it may take a tragedy to reveal the public's dependence on us. It is our responsibility to be prepared to respond to crises in the community.

If we can accomplish this, no matter how hectic and challenging our days become, then we always can say, "AltaPointe's number one focus is *quality*."

## Bayou Office Opens At Mostellar

Mobile Mental Health has begun providing outpatient services to children, adolescents and adults residing in Bayou La Batre and the surrounding south Mobile County areas. MMH opened its offices in a building adjacent to Mostellar Medical Center in February.

Physicians noted an increased demand for mental health services in South Mobile County since Hurricane Katrina devastated Bayou La Batre in 2005. "The stresses of losing homes, schools and jobs are difficult and present challenges no matter what your age," Maggie Posey, clinical director for child/adolescent services, said.

Posey worked with the Mostellar administration to set up the office. Diane Hall, MS, assistant coordinator for child/adolescent services, supervises the South Mobile office staff, which includes one full-time therapist, one part-time therapist and an office professional. Hall also supervises LeMoyne West child/adolescent outpatient services.



"We already are seeing more consumers than we expected," Posey said. "We consider it a privilege to make sure these residents receive the quality care they need and deserve."

After one month's service, 88 children had received services at the South Mobile office.

# Introducing AltaNews

Welcome to the first issue of AltaNews. This quarter's issue will help you catch up on news that affects the entire organization.

With your help and input, the next issue will include more employee and program-related news. Please send your articles or suggestions to Carol Mann, director of public relations, [cmann@mobilementalhealth.com](mailto:cmann@mobilementalhealth.com). Or, you may send them via internal mail addressed

to Public Relations Office, Administration. Submission deadline for the fall issue of AltaNews is August 1. Make sure to include your contact information.

**Of special note:** Fiscal year 2007-2008 will mark Mobile Mental Health's 50th year of service to the community. All employees will have an opportunity to participate in special activities celebrating this anniversary. Watch for more details over the coming weeks. - CM

## Employees Contribute To Process MMH Anticipates Name Change Soon

After nearly eight months of discussion and meetings, the announcement of a new name for Mobile Mental Health is finally here. MMH has a new name – AltaPointe Health Systems, Inc. The public announcement of the new name will come after the approval process is complete.

The new name process began with a friendly competition among our employees, who submitted more than 200 new name ideas. Top new name ideas submitted by employees include: "Aspire" – Carrie Finch Moore, LeMoyne Center; "Monarch Healthcare," Bill Hamilton and Shelly Cole, Lake Front; "Prestige" – Brom Vinson, West Mobile; "Pinnacle Healthcare" – Cynthia Stargell, Women and Children; "Optimum Healthcare" – Jacquese Fails, ACT; "Nexus Healthcare" – Kathy McPherson, Senior Adult Services; "Attente Healthcare" – Phyllis Mason, BayPointe; "Summit" – Sharon Beatty, Administration; and "Dynamic Healthcare" – Sheila Wimberly, LeMoyne Center.

From that long list, MMH Leadership Team chose the top names and awarded gift certificates to the employees that suggested

them. MMH Leadership chose the name, AltaPointe, after many, many ideas.

Next, the MMH Board approved the name and revised the articles of incorporation that included the name, AltaPointe. The articles were then submitted to the following for approval: The Department of Mental Health Commissioner, Mobile City Council, Mobile County Commission and Washington County Commission. The Mobile County Commission will be the last governing body to approve; we anticipate that will happen before the end of June.

We will make sure you know when it is time to modify telephone greetings, order new business papers, put up new signs, or make any of the hundreds of changes that go along with a corporate name change.

We also have a plan to reveal the new name and inform our consumers, their families, our partners, referral sources and the public. We will be asking for your assistance as we move forward.

Call Carol Mann, director of public relations, at 662.7317 for more information.

## LOOKING BACK: THE MOBILE MENTAL HEALTH CHRONICLES

**1957** — Local authorities established Mobile County Community Mental Health Services. The first office was in the two-story Holcombe house at Springhill Ave. Dr. Dixon Myers served as director. A staff of five saw 325 clients with a budget of \$36,500.

**1959** — MMHC moved to 854 Dauphin Street; its second location. Florida State University selected MMHC as a training site for graduate social work students.

**1965** — MMHC moved to its third location at 1616 St. Stephens Road. A Staff of 15 served 862 clients with a \$69,000 budget.

**1967** — ACT 310 of the Alabama State Legislature formalized mental health authorities.

**1968** — A Staff of 36 served a client base of 1,700 with a budget of \$164,193. Began Gateway alcoholism program

**1969** — MMHC first inpatient unit opened at Mobile General Hospital (USA Medical Center). MMH was instrumental in acquiring Hilburton funds to build the 7th floor of the University of South Alabama Medical Center. The 7th floor was the inpatient psychiatric component for which MMH provided full physician and clinical services.

**Next issue — more MMH Chronicles**

**The word Alta translates to "highest" or "utmost."  
"Pointe," spelled with an "e" to add uniqueness and connect  
with "BayPointe," means a "place" or "status."**



# Employee Kudos

## Parker Named Alabama Health Care Hero



Dr. Sandra Parker

Congratulations to Dr. Sandra Parker for being named an Alabama Health Care Hero by the Alabama Hospital Association. She was recognized for her dedication and compassion along

with six other healthcare workers chosen from among hundreds of applications statewide.

Certified in general psychiatry and child/adolescent psychiatry, Dr. Parker has been instrumental in developing a liaison between child psychiatrists and pediatricians to better coordinate mental health services for children. In addition, she supports the training of medical students, having them rotate through BayPointe, instilling in many a passion for psychiatry.

“Dr. Parker is a tireless advocate for mental health services for everyone in our community and educates the public on mental health issues,” Tuerk Schlesinger, MMH CEO, said. “We depend on her expertise and leadership to identify gaps of service in the community, create innovative solutions and to make sure our consumers receive the best possible quality of care.”

## AltaPointe Announces New Positions

AltaPointe has created and filled two new positions aimed at increasing efficiencies for better residential services and enhancing staff development and training.

### DIRECTOR OF ADULT RESIDENTIAL SERVICES



David Beech

David Beech, MS, LPC, MBA, is the new Director of Adult Residential Services, a position that takes the supervision of residential services out of the adult outpatient service program and places it as part of the Leadership Team. Beech manages all aspects of adult residential services including, but not limited to, therapeutic group homes, specialized behavioral and medical services homes, foster homes, supervised community

living home services, senior adult services, and others.

He most recently served as assistant director for adult outpatient services before accepting this position. In the new position, Beech reports directly to the chief executive officer.

### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEARNING



Kathy McMaken

AltaPointe has recognized a growing need for staff development and education and has created a new position to fill that need. Kathy McMaken, LCSW, PIP, is the new AltaPointe Assistant Director of Learning, reporting to the director of human resources. McMaken previously was the coordinator of child/adolescent outpatient services at the LeMoyné Center.

Through this position, McMaken will help employees at every level increase their knowledge base and lay the groundwork to develop career paths for all employees. This will provide opportunities for them to learn about their careers, to express interest and begin training in other areas, and to help administration identify and groom future leaders and increase employee retention.

AltaPointe is working to make training and education processes web based through a system called NetSmart University. This will allow employees accessibility to training after business hours and the ability to track their training needs and explore other training courses.

# Think about This

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As the old man walked the beach at dawn, he noticed a youth ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally, catching up with the youth, he asked him why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun. "But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish," countered the old man. "How can your effort make any difference?"

The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to the safety of the waves. "It make a difference to this one," he said.

*Resource: Brian Cavanaugh, The Sower's Seeds*

## LAURENCE, SCHREIBER WIN 'RESPECT'



Norris Laurence, left, and Faye Schreiber

explained that the award's name stands for Responsive, Expediting, Sensitive, Prioritizing, Encouraging, Caring, and Thoughtful.

Each year the Alabama Directions Council selects deserving individuals that embody these attributes as they relate to providing mental health

Norris Laurence, LCSW, and Fairlie "Faye" Schreiber, LCSW, both longtime therapists in the adult outpatient services program at Gordon Smith Drive, recently received the RESPECT Award. Mobile Mental Health consumer, Ronald Hunt presented the award and

services and advocacy. Laurence and Schreiber's nominations were chosen from among 150 others statewide. Twenty-four people received the award in Alabama. Congratulations to you both!

## CAMPBELL IS 'OUTSTANDING' STUDENT



Rachel Campbell

Congratulations to Rachel Campbell who recently received the Outstanding Community Counseling Student of the Year Award from the University of South Alabama. An addictions counselor/case manager at Gordon Smith AOP, Campbell is in her second year of course work for a master's in community counseling from USA's College of Education.

# Blast from the Past!



## NAME THIS LONGTIME MOBILE MENTAL HEALTH EMPLOYEE...

...and an opportunity to win a gift card to Panera Bread®. Submit your answer in writing along with your name, title, department, and office phone number to Carol Mann, director of public relations (c/o Jan DeMouy) at the Administration Building before July 20.

*Blast from the Past!* is a fun way for employees to test their memories as part of our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Each newsletter will include a photo of a person or place related to Mobile Mental Health. Employees that submit the correct answer will have their name placed in a drawing for a prize.





From left, Steve Dolan, CIO; Julie Bellcase, COO; Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO; Dr. Sandra Parker, CMO; and Jean Williams, MMH Board President display RUS grant check at board meeting.

## RUS Grant Allows Telemedicine Technology At MMH

Thanks to a \$72,000 Rural Utilities Service grant disbursed through the US Department of Agriculture, Mobile Mental Health can offer better access to services through telemedicine for consumers living in rural areas.

MMH has begun development of technology systems necessary to implement a telemedicine program that will serve five rural areas in Mobile and Washington counties.

Through telemedicine and distance learning technology, MMH employees can achieve what is required of them without leaving their offices.

Through telemedicine and distance learning technology, MMH employees can achieve what is required of them without leaving their offices. to receive the care they need without leaving their communities.

They also can gain access to group discussions, specialty training and other educational opportunities that previously were cost prohibitive.

Through this technology, consumers living in rural areas will be able to receive the care they need without leaving their communities.

According to Steve Dolan, MMH Chief Information Officer, technology systems and hardware to support the telemedicine and distance-learning program should be in place by June.

## Online Address Book Helps Locate Employee Information

Next time you need to find the phone number of a Mobile Mental Health employee, you can just link to the new MMH Address Book from your computer and gain access to a directory of all MMH employees. The user-friendly MMH Address Book is a collaborative effort of the Public Relations, Information Technology and Human Resources departments.

To get to the MMH Address Book, type in [www.mobilementalhealth.com/ab](http://www.mobilementalhealth.com/ab) through the Internet Explorer web browser. Once accessed, users may download the Help Manual (pdf) for full directions.

Each employee can log on to his or her information to check for accuracy and

add phone and fax numbers, which the database does not automatically update. To make changes, employees should click on *edit address book* and type in their social security number. When the individual's information and photo appear, then click on *edit current record*, make necessary changes and then click *update record* to save the changes.

Power Users for the MMH Address Book have access to department or program employee information.



## The Power Users

**Administration** – Jan DeMouy

**AOP Gordon Smith** – Laura Durgin

**BayPointe** – Holly Moody

**BayView** – Burma Bozeman

**LeMoyné** – Sonya Smith

**LeMoyné West** – Ashley Henderson

**Washington County** – Amanda Allday

**West Mobile** – Jackie Jackson

**Zeigler Residential** – Yolanda Williams

Other Power Users are Tisha Myers and Frankie Frinzi.

Please call IT for more information at 450.5906.