

# AltaNews

AltaNewsOnline.org

## AltaPointe celebrates 60 years of community mental health

Page 4-5



### Presidential Retrospection Mobile Mental Health

More than just an advisory body, the Board of Directors is actively involved in the very life of the Mobile Mental Health Center. The demands of time and effort are voluntary in addition to full-time obligations. Frequently, this responsibility has been awesome.

Yet, one of the most remarkable characteristics of the Center's leadership is the longevity of its dedication on the board and their initial election twice.

In honor to recall the progress, each of us was asked to give a glimpse of his Mobile Mental Health term of



clinic. But since he has been in office much

corner, Carl Haag, Henry Weiss, Gary Aldridge, Joe Langan, Harry Riddick, Leonard Wyatt, Albert Tully, Arthur Hudson, Harris, Joel Swanson, Lyman Holland, W.T. Marx, Stanley Ruth, Oliver Latour, and William C. Doty.

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... was authorized to receive \$1,000 per month, but it would be reduced to \$500 when a psychiatrist was hired.

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From our CEO...

## AltaPointe Health: Sixty years and counting...

The legacy of AltaPointe Health was born from a need for mental healthcare services 60 years ago when local authorities established Mobile County Community Mental Health. In late 1957, almost 325 people received services from its five-member team that operated from a two-story house on Springhill Avenue with a \$36,500 budget.

Reflecting on our 60-year history gives us many reasons to celebrate the journey we have made. It is humbling to remember the dedicated efforts of the many executive administrators, board members, and clinicians who helped to set the stage on which AltaPointe now performs.

Today, AltaPointe's more than 30,000 individuals receive services from hundreds of clinical professionals that operate from dozens of locations across seven counties on an \$83 million budget. We have expanded as the needs have grown and are pleased that others recognize this organization as a leader in behavioral healthcare. We cannot, however, rest on our reputation for being successful.

Just as our predecessors met challenges that enhanced the care they provided, we must continually improve by facing and conquering challenges for the sake of the people with disabilities whom we serve today.

## Sixty years later

Our industry has benefited from overcoming many challenges over the years. Now, there are two major challenges whose innovative solutions have made the greatest impact on the direction of behavioral healthcare.

First and foremost, finding the best psychotropic and other medications has always been a major task. This challenge is being met by the formulation of new, more effective prescriptions that allow patients to live healthier in the community.

In addition, access to care continues to be a challenge. However, advanced technology is satisfying consumers' desires for greater access through alternative means such as telehealth. Can you imagine how much easier it would be for some patients to receive care at home instead of having to go into one of AltaPointe's offices? *(See page two for more on telehealth.)*

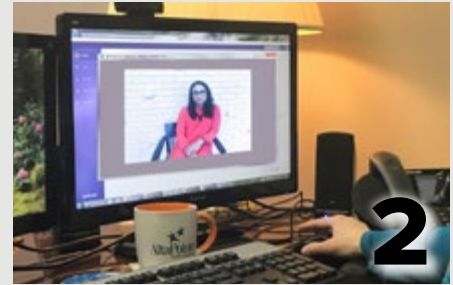
Along the same line, when patients admitted to acute hospitals need psychiatric consultations, AltaPointe can utilize mobile telehealth units. We launched this model in one area hospital recently and hope to expand it to all hospitals where we provide consultation services.

The need for mental health services is increasing at an even faster pace than it was 60 years ago. We may pause to glance back so we can understand the past. But, we are obligated to build our legacy as a leader by looking forward to find more effective ways to increase access, accelerate assessment and treatment, and create positive outcomes.



**Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO**

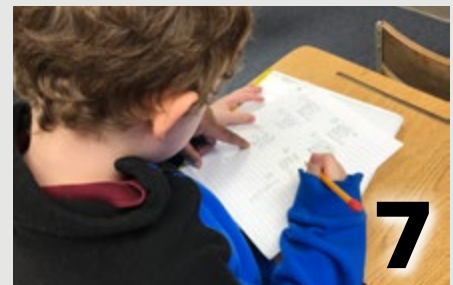
# Contents



**Telehealth helps patients access care**



**AltaPointe staff share stories of service**



**BayPointe day treatment experiences growth**

**3 Bravo!**

**9 People & Positions**

**10 AltaPointe in the Community**

## On our cover

A timeline of AltaPointe's 60-year journey demonstrates the steady growth of programs, staff, and budgets. It has grown from a small organization, founded in 1957 as Mobile County Community Mental Health that served 325 clients in its first year, to one that six decades later serves more than 30,000 individuals annually in seven counties (p. 4).

Cover design by Steven Lutz, Pixallure Design

# ADMH Commissioner Beshear visits AltaPointe Health

AltaPointe Health hosted Alabama Department of Mental Health Commissioner Lynn Beshear in October 2017. Beshear joined AltaPointe's leadership team to learn more about the programs and services offered in its seven counties. Her visit also included a tour of CarePointe, which serves AltaPointe's two hospitals and more than 14 outpatient clinics and 92 programs. Beshear was able to see firsthand the system in place to handle the more than 89,000 calls CarePointe received in Fiscal Year 2017.

**Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe CEO, accompanied Beshear on her tour of CarePointe, which was followed by a tour of EastPointe Hospital in Baldwin County. EastPointe is the area's only free-standing adult psychiatric hospital.

Schlesinger called Beshear's visit an incredible opportunity to show the care our continuum can provide, and our focus on technology.



Lynn Beshear, ADMH Commissioner, visited CarePointe for a first-hand look at access to care.

"Commissioner Beshear was able to see firsthand how embracing technology has allowed us to expand in areas we could not have before," Schlesinger said. "Patients having accessible treatment available at their fingertips whether by phone, computer or walking into an open-access clinic are incredibly important to their well-being."

Beshear shared her vision for the Department of Mental Health, including plans to focus on recruitment and retention of mental healthcare workers. **Sandra Parker, M.D.**, chief medical officer of AltaPointe Health, shared with her AltaPointe's role in the University of South

Alabama College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry. AltaPointe's psychiatrists are faculty for the department. All of the psychiatrists are either board certified or preparing to take their board examinations.

## Peer support helps behavioral healthcare providers improve delivery of service

Behavioral healthcare providers often face unique challenges associated with providing care to individuals living with mental illness, such as inadequate funding and overcoming stigma. Schlesinger, recognized those challenges and became involved with mhca, formerly known as Mental Health Corporation of America, an invitation-only national association of innovative, entrepreneurial behavioral healthcare organizations working collectively to bring profound change to the delivery of care. The mhca is made up of nearly 150 behavioral healthcare



organizations from 34 states. Schlesinger is a member of a peer support group within the organization.

In November 2017, members of Schlesinger's peer support group visited AltaPointe Health to learn more about its programs and services from division leaders.

The mhca guests included Verna Kay Foust, Red Rock Behavioral Health Services CEO; George Patterson, Texana Center CEO; and Phillip W. Weaver, Hope Network President & CEO.

## Historical Timeline of AltaPointe Health

**1957**

Mobile County Community Mental Health (MCCMH) services is established with a staff of five, 325 clients and \$36,500 budget.

**1965**

A staff of 15 served 862 clients with a \$69,000 budget.



**1967**

Alabama Legislature passes Act 310 creating the opportunity for cities and counties to form Regional Mental Health Authorities.



**1968**

A staff of 36 served a client base of 1,700 with a budget of \$164,193. Gateway alcoholism program began.





# Telehealth helps patients access care

Telehealth first brought AltaPointe psychiatrists and patients face-to-face through videoconferencing technology in 2007. Used at AltaPointe daily, thousands of patients now access care remotely each year, according to **Steve Dolan**, AltaPointe's chief information officer.

"The advantage for individuals living in rural or other areas where no psychiatrists are based, is that they no longer have to travel hundreds of miles, making telehealth a convenient, efficient and effective diagnostic and treatment tool," explained Dolan.

Telehealth equipment is set up at the majority of AltaPointe outpatient sites as well as at its two hospitals. Guidelines describe the setting from which a clinician "sees" a patient via telehealth.

"Lifesize, the platform we use, makes it possible for doctors to connect with patients from just about anywhere — on an iPad, a laptop or desktop computer," Dolan continued. "Telehealth appointments are scheduled as usual except the patient will be at one AltaPointe location and the clinician at another."

This spring, AltaPointe and Springhill Medical Center will begin an initiative to connect via telehealth from the hospital's emergency department. "This will make wait times to see a psychiatrist much shorter," said **Sandra Parker, M.D.**, AltaPointe's chief medical officer. "Using telehealth in this manner improves assessment, processes, timeliness and outcomes for patients and the hospital."

## Electronic prescriptions for controlled substances

Physicians not only assess and monitor patients via technology; they also write and send prescriptions to pharmacies electronically. While physicians have had e-prescribing capability for years, AltaPointe recently adopted a solution called "electronic



Patients receive telehealth at several AltaPointe locations across the seven-county service area.

prescriptions for controlled substances" (EPCS) developed by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) that gives practitioners the option of writing and transmitting prescriptions for controlled substances electronically. This rule helps address the problem of prescription drug abuse in the U.S.

When a pharmacy receives an EPCS, the prescriber must validate his identification through a two-factor authentication process. The DEA requires practitioners to have an EPCS license. AltaPointe is in the process of having all CRNPs licensed for EPCS.

## Self Sign-in at BayView

Most everyone who visits a dentist's or doctor's office has used self sign-in technology, which gives the patients direct control of recording their personal information. Thousands of BayView Professional Associates patients have signed in this way at both the Mobile and Fairhope offices for nearly one year.

The system uses a computer kiosk that is protected to maintain confidentiality. The process frees up front desk staff by gathering demographic information, notifying the practitioner the patient is waiting, and collecting fees. Most important, the software pushes pertinent health questions to patients and saves valuable time when the patient is with the practitioner. For instance, patients can indicate they are trying to stop smoking or, even more seriously, that they are having thoughts about suicide.

"The clinicians have commented on the improved flow of patients with the clinic," **John Conrad**, BayView's assistant director, said. "When things get busy, it would be easy to lose track of a patient who has checked in early. This system prevents this from happening, assures we stay on time with our patients and allows us to provide good quality services."

## Historical Timeline of AltaPointe Health

**1969**

Construction began on facility at 2400 Gordon Smith Drive in Mobile. MCCMH first inpatient unit opened at Mobile General Hospital (USA Medical Center).



**1971**

Added drug abuse services/ Methadone clinic.



**1972**

Opened Libra House outpatient services for adolescents 13 to 18.



# Bravo!



Susie Boucher & Caroline Hale

**Susie Boucher**, assistant director of the AltaPointe Centralized Services Center, and **Caroline Hale**, utilization management specialist, conducted Leader Training for *Living Well Alabama*, also known as the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP). The four-day training, held Oct.

24 at the GM&O building in Mobile, was a joint project with the Area Agency on Aging and was conducted for AltaPointe staff and Area Agency on Aging volunteers. Boucher and Hale are certified Master Trainers for the CDSMP, an evidence-based program originally developed at Stanford University that has been proven to help older adults better manage their chronic conditions, improve their quality of life and lower healthcare costs.

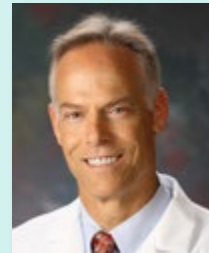
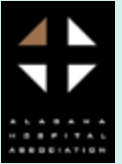


Marianne Saitz

originally from Pittsburgh, Pa. Saitz received a Master of Public Health in epidemiology from Emory University in 1996 and graduated from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2000. She graduated from her adult psychiatry training at East Carolina University in 2004. She is board certified in adult psychiatry.

**Marianne Saitz, D.O., MPH** has been named the assistant medical director of outpatient services at AltaPointe Health. Before this, she was the assistant medical director of community mental health and the medical director for the methadone clinic at AltaPointe. Saitz is an assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry. She is

**Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe CEO, was named to the Alabama Hospital Association's telehealth Task Force. The group's purpose is to identify potential telehealth solutions for hospitals and explore ways to implement and support them.



W. Bogan Brooks

Congratulations to **W. Bogan Brooks, M.D.**, on his publication in *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. Brooks' article "Development of Geriatric Mental Health Learning Objectives for Medical Students: A Response to the Institute of Medicine 2012 Report" appeared in the Oct. 2017 edition.

**Craig Cruikshank**, performance improvement coordinator, and **Melissa Smilie**, coordinator of Baldwin County adult outpatient, have been certified to teach Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). MHFA is an in-person training that teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness. AltaPointe currently has seven trainers.

Congratulations to **David Roberts** on his retirement. Roberts was a familiar face to many, serving as a messenger with our finance and accounting department for the past 13 years.

For more information on MHFA, visit our website at [AltaPointe.org](http://AltaPointe.org).



## Historical Timeline of AltaPointe Health

**1983**

Corporate name changed to Mobile Mental Health Center, Inc. (MMH).



BayView Professional Associates formed.



**1993**

West Mobile office for adult day treatment services is opened, and senior adult services program established.



**1995**

MMH purchases the building on Bishop Lane.





# AltaPointe celebrates 60 year



Vision. Structure. Culture.

Those are the attributes – indeed, the essence – of AltaPointe Health's ability to provide mental health services across southwest Alabama and in the Sylacauga region of east-central Alabama.

They've allowed it to grow from a small organization, founded in 1957 as Mobile County Community Mental Health that served 325 clients in its first year, to one that six decades later serves more than 30,000 individuals annually in seven counties.

AltaPointe Chief Operating Officer **Julie Bellcase** sums up the organization's vision thusly: "If it has to do with the overall mental health of our communities, then AltaPointe wants to be involved either in supporting it or doing it ourselves."

The success AltaPointe currently enjoys, including its growth, financial stability, and reputation for excellence, did not come without painful struggles and crucial decisions, however. When CEO **Tuerk Schlesinger** came aboard in 1998, he was tasked with fixing a nearly broken organization that was losing money and had been forced to close its only hospital, BayCare.

"When BayCare shut down that was a cue to the board of directors to act fast," Schlesinger recalled. "In those first few weeks after I started, we moved people and programs, and set about first and foremost to determine the actual cost of every program we had."

Within three years, the organization was prepared to purchase the former Charter Hospital and reopen it as BayPointe Hospital serving children and adolescents in psychiatric crisis. BayPointe's opening marked Mobile Mental Health as the only community mental health center in Alabama to operate a free-standing psychiatric hospital.

## Glancing at 60 years of strategic moves, changes

A timeline of AltaPointe's 60-year journey demonstrates steady growth of programs, staff, and budgets in the 1960s, 1970s and

1980s. The 1960s were highlighted by Act 310 of the Alabama Legislature, a landmark bill that established regional mental health authorities to govern the planning and operation of all mental health programs in the state. With the opening of its headquarters on Gordon Smith Drive, AltaPointe, then Mobile Mental Health, launched the state's first comprehensive community mental health program.

In the 1970s, the agency began emphasizing services to children and adolescents, including day treatment, residential programs, and outpatient services. It also introduced adult programs for the treatment of drug and alcohol addictions.

Growth continued in the 1980s and 1990s with the opening of additional programs for young people, transitional group homes for adults, BayCare psychiatric hospital and a Washington County satellite office.

Mobile Mental Health also created BayView Professional Associates to meet the community's needs for private counseling and psychiatric services.

Not long after the board hired Schlesinger as CEO in 1998, the agency implemented its Access-to-Care telephone triage service that today is known as CarePointe. Shortly thereafter, Mobile Mental Health earned state hospital licensure for BayPointe Hospital. In addition, it launched a partnership with the University of South Alabama's College of Medicine to train its psychiatric residents.

In 2007, the rebranding of Mobile Mental Health to AltaPointe Health Systems signified a dedication to providing exceptional mental healthcare for patients and a promise of growth within the organization. Less than a year later, AltaPointe applied to the State of Alabama for a certificate of need to operate a second hospital to serve mentally ill adults. Located in Daphne, EastPointe Hospital began admitting patients in 2012. As part of that commitment to patients and their families, AltaPointe entered into two significant mergers with Baldwin County Mental Health Center in 2014, and

## Historical Timeline of AltaPointe Health

**1997**

BayCare Hospital closes its doors.

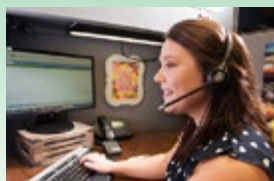


**1998**

MMH Board of Directors names Tuerk Schlesinger as MMH Chief Executive Officer.



Access-to-care, a telephone triage service, is established. Zeigler Lodge, a day treatment and outpatient facility opens.



**2001**

MMH merges with Act 310 Board, purchases the former Charter Hospital (now BayPointe Hospital), achieves Joint Commission Accreditation, contracts with the University of South Alabama to train psychiatric residents, and establishes Assertive Community Treatment and Bridge teams.



# s of community mental health

Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center in 2016. Prior to these mergers, both centers had experienced the inability to provide services previously offered to patients.

The mergers have yielded increased efficiencies in the cost of delivering services, expanding programs and adding staff where needed, Schlesinger said. With annual revenue of more than \$83 million, AltaPointe employs about 1,450 people, including 23 psychiatrists and 12 certified nurse practitioners.

As for AltaPointe's culture, its leadership team works to maintain an atmosphere of excellence where employees have opportunities for growth and advancement and consumers receive state-of-the-art treatment and services.

"If you have the financial and technological infrastructure in place, you can grow exponentially. That has always been and continues to be our philosophy," Schlesinger said. "Every day, we must continue to focus on quality as if it were our first day of operation."

## AltaPointe staff share stories of service

In its 60 years of service to southwest Alabama and, more recently, the Sylacauga region in east-central Alabama, AltaPointe has seen significant growth in its staff, its facilities and – most important – the services it provides to patients. Long-time employees praise AltaPointe for offering opportunities for professional growth and, also, for its commitment to the people for whom it cares.

Here are some of their stories.



**Bill Hamilton**, who grew up in Philadelphia, spent 12 years as a U.S. Army infantry soldier, including service in Operation Desert Storm, before earning bachelor's and master's (sports medicine and counseling, respectively) from the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

"I never thought I would be a counselor," he recalled. "But while doing a sports medicine internship with Spring Hill College's baseball team, I felt like I was doing more counseling with the players than I was athletic training. I enjoyed it, so I enrolled in graduate school to study counseling."

He began his career at AltaPointe in 1999, first as a child and adolescent therapist at LeMoyne School and later as a child therapist on the boys' residential unit, adult therapist with the adult residential unit and, eventually, assistant coordinator for Lakefront Immediate Care Facility. Now he is coordinator of AltaPointe Adult Residential Services.

Hamilton finds job satisfaction in the fact he and other AltaPointe staff members directly affect patients' futures.

In addition, he said the organization offers great advancement opportunities "if you work hard and further your education."

"Whenever a training opportunity is available to further my expertise, AltaPointe sends me," he said. "Then I, in turn, will teach others what I've learned."



**Charles Graham** describes himself as a "people person," and says he always believed he would end up in a job where he could help others. He started working at AltaPointe in 1994 as a case manager. Now, he works to find housing for the chronically homeless as a permanent housing project manager of permanent housing.

"The job has its challenges, but it is also very rewarding," Graham said. "There is no greater feeling than handing a key to someone who was homeless and watching his expression as he opens the door to his new residence. Not only does our program help with ending homelessness; it changes people's lives."

Reared in Mobile, he attended the University of Mobile. Having spent nearly 25 years at AltaPointe, he said he's witnessed the company grow by leaps and bounds.

"I remember the days before electronic records and time clocks," he recalled with a chuckle. "I've also seen the general population's attitude toward mental illness improve due to AltaPointe's ongoing efforts to educate the community. Now the public is learning about various diagnoses and symptoms that may accompany them. Also, family members have become more

### Historical Timeline of AltaPointe Health

**2002**

BayPointe Hospital and Children's Residential Services opens in Mobile



**2007**

MMH rebrands as AltaPointe Health Systems and observes 50 years of service.



**2008**

Grant makes telehealth technology possible at AltaPointe.



**2010**

AltaPointe becomes first in Alabama to offer Mental Health First Aid training.





involved in care and treatment of their loved ones. And probably one of the greatest factors in treatment is the improvement in medications.”



**Olivia Nettles** began her career with AltaPointe 25 years ago at its Child Life Center, which treated children ages 2 to 13. Since then she has served in a variety of positions, including supervisor and therapist at the LeMoyné School, assistant director of children’s outpatient programs, director of performance improvement and director of BayPointe Hospital and children’s residential services.

Now she is clinical director of children’s outpatient services, overseeing the clinical programming of AltaPointe’s child and adolescent outpatient clinics and intensive outreach services, the transitional age residential services and BayView Professional Associates.

Nettles said AltaPointe’s collegial atmosphere helps bring out the best in its employees.

“We really strive to be the best we can be,” she said. “At AltaPointe, we’re very creative and innovative. We find a way to get things done.”

Supervisors encourage mentoring and are eager to help people advance into other roles, including management, Nettles added.

She grew up in Tuscaloosa and earned a bachelor’s in business and marketing and a master’s in counseling, both from the University of Alabama. She recalls “always being a helper,” a factor that she said drew her naturally into community mental health.



**Sherill Alexander**, AltaPointe’s director of performance improvement, calls her department “the underbelly” of the organization.

“It is the thread that touches every, single thing we do at AltaPointe,” Alexander said, citing its oversight of risk management, infection control, safety, employee health, consumer

needs, medical records, employee training and certification, and Joint Commission and other accreditations.

She said AltaPointe’s advanced technology allows the performance improvement staff to handle such a broad array of duties effectively.

Reared in Birmingham, Alexander is a graduate of the University of South Alabama College of Nursing. She joined AltaPointe in 1995, holding a variety of positions over the years including consumer needs specialist, nurse manager and staff nurse.

“I love my job, and I love the culture at AltaPointe,” she said. “We try to be the best we can be, in whatever position we’re in, so we can deliver the best care to our consumers. There’s opportunity for people to grow in their jobs, to find new approaches to old problems.”

Among the changes she has seen over the years are the conversion to electronic medical records and significant improvements in the drugs used to treat mental illnesses, Alexander said.

“The medications we’re able to use now can give our patients a life that’s as close to normal as possible,” she said.



**Yolanda Williams** well understands the potential and opportunity for growth as an AltaPointe employee. She began working for the organization in 1992 as a clerk typist/medical records clerk in adult outpatient and outreach programs. Sixteen years later, she joined the accounting department in billing.

Now she is an accounting clerk in accounts payable.

“Generally, my job is to process invoices and issue payments for services provided to AltaPointe,” she said. “I also allocate charges on the company credit card statements and perform other duties as needed.”

Working in accounting calls for attention to detail and a willingness to meet deadlines, said Williams, who embraces the requirements.

“That’s what I like about my job — the challenges,” she said. “I have deadlines that I have to meet on getting reimbursements and payments out to the vendors as well as to staff members.”

A resident of Prichard, Williams attended Blount High School, 20th Century Business College and Bishop State Community College.

“My first job was working in the accounting department at the Corps of Engineers,” she said. “That’s where I found an interest in working in this field.”

Williams said she has enjoyed witnessing AltaPointe’s growth over the past 26 years.

“I have seen the transition under our current CEO, Tuerk Schlesinger,” she recalled. “I was here when our name changed from Mobile Mental Health Center to AltaPointe. I have seen new facilities purchased, renovations completed, and new programs opened.”

[Visit AltaNewsOnline.org](http://AltaNewsOnline.org) to hear more AltaPointe staff stories.

## Historical Timeline of AltaPointe Health

### 2012

In July, EastPointe Hospital opens in Daphne serving adults in psychiatric crisis.



Searcy State Psychiatric Hospital closes in October.



### 2013

AltaPointe’s school-based therapy program is established.



### 2014

AltaPointe merges with Baldwin County Mental Health Center.





# BayPointe Hospital day treatment expansion

BayPointe Hospital's day treatment program has undergone extensive changes this school year. The LeMoyne School, BayPointe's joint program funded by the Mobile County Public School System, has expanded classes to include high school students through the twelfth grade. BayPointe has also added a classroom dedicated to North Mobile County students comprised of Chickasaw, Saraland and Satsuma city school systems.

AltaPointe has provided school-based therapy in North Mobile County for years, but taking the next step to having a separate off-campus educational and therapeutic component was another matter. Sheila Smith, special education coordinator with Satsuma City Schools, had worked in the MCPSS for years and was the case manager for several students who had been placed in the LeMoyne School. She knew the success of the program and had seen firsthand the difference it made in students.

"When Satsuma City Schools broke off from MCPSS in 2012, there was a great need for students with mental health needs as well as behavior issues in our school system," Smith said. "Our resources were limited, and a program like the LeMoyne School was the only avenue to serve those students. Teachers are taught to educate. They are not mental health professionals."

Smith found allies in the neighboring community school systems: Amy Pippin, special services coordinator with Saraland City Schools, and Angie Lewis, director of special education and special programs with Chickasaw City Schools, who were onboard with the program. "The goal in mind was to create a jointly funded classroom between the three school systems to provide appropriate behavioral/therapeutic services to our student with significant needs," Pippin said. After years of working out the logistics and crunching numbers, the program was ready to start.

The city system's day treatment program offers classes for students in first through 12th grades and follows the Alabama



Students from North Mobile County work on math problems while attending BayPointe school.

Course of Study guidelines to meet each student's academic needs, but it does so in a therapeutic classroom environment that is designed to meet the emotional and behavioral needs of the students. Students who are referred to this program exhibit a combination of behavioral problems that prevent them from functioning in a public classroom setting.

"By the time students are referred to this program, we have exhausted every option available to us," Pippin said. "By this time, parents are aware of this step and recognize that we have tried everything." Each student

is assigned a case manager who ensures he or she receives the AltaPointe and community services necessary to improve the student's educational and emotional conditions.

The program addresses both the needs of the child and the family by providing individual, group and family therapy as well as family support and education. "Our goal is to improve each child's behavior by identifying and addressing the underlying causes of the behavior," said **Jarrett Crum**, BayPointe Hospital administrator. "Our team works to help each child reach academic success and, upon completion of the program, transition back into the regular classroom setting."



BayPointe expanded its day treatment program to include high school students, and students from North Mobile County.

[Visit AltaNewsOnline.org](http://AltaNewsOnline.org) to learn more about BayPointe day treatment.

## Historical Timeline of AltaPointe Health

### 2015

BayView, a division of AltaPointe, hires former Alabama Psychiatric Services (APS) staff following the abrupt closure of APS.



### 2016

Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy (IHP) opens in the lobby of adult outpatient services on Gordon Smith Drive in Mobile. IHP is a joint venture between AltaPointe and Northrock Pharmacy based in Oklahoma City.



### 2016

AltaPointe merges with Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center.



### 2017

AltaPointe marks 60 years of behavioral healthcare services.



# School-based therapy expands to AltaPointe's northern region

On a daily basis, teachers face the sadness and hurt of children with mental health issues that often have root elsewhere and come into focus in the classroom. Aware of the problems involving their students, the Sylacauga and Talladega City School Systems, along with the Clay and Coosa County School Systems, have partnered with AltaPointe Health to offer school-based therapy to qualifying children.

School-based therapy calls for a therapist to work within a school and help students overcome behavioral, emotional or social problems that can interfere with their success at school and home.

Carol Martin, Sylacauga City Schools director of instruction and intervention, said school-based therapy allows for as little interruption as possible for children and allows them to be seen at school instead of having to check out.

Martin added that school-based therapy also provides a unique opportunity for therapists to see children in their environment and how they interact with their peers, teachers and others.

"We love having a therapist as a resource for our students and families," she said. "We have 50 students and their families enrolled in school-based therapy. We continue to refer more."



School-based therapy has the potential to reach thousands of students in AltaPointe's northern region.

Martin said children feel comfortable visiting the therapist during the school day. She considers the service an educational enhancement.

"We think one of the best parts of having an AltaPointe therapist on campus is that families can go through the process of becoming a client if needed," she said. "AltaPointe is one more resource we have to offer our families."

## Future expansion on horizon

**Brandy Richardson**, associate clinical director for Sylacauga Region, oversees the school-based therapy program for AltaPointe's northern region.

"We knew there was a need for school-based services in our region," she said. "We worked closely with our colleagues in Mobile to develop and implement a plan. All of our schools have been welcoming and excited to partner with AltaPointe."

There are more than 7,000 students enrolled in the school systems where school-based therapy is offered in AltaPointe's northern region. Richardson said schools continue to reach out to AltaPointe about adding school-based therapy.

## When you need it most, our solution-focused counseling can offer hope.

Sometimes children facing emotional challenges may experience erratic behaviors such as aggression or difficulty concentrating, mood swings, even changes in appearance. If your family is struggling with issues like these, call BayView today. Our confidential, supportive professionals can help you restore your family's quality of life.

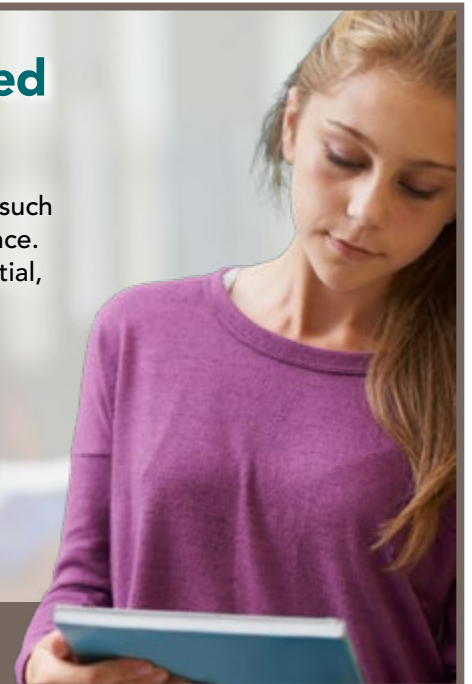


**Fairhope**  
374 S. Greeno Road • Fairhope, AL 36532

**Mobile**  
1015 Montlimar Dr. • Mobile, AL 36609

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BayView accepts most major insurances including PEEHIP and AllKids.





## People & Positions

AltaPointe expands its hospital consultation services in Baldwin County with **Candace Perry, M.D.**, providing services as the Baldwin County consultation/liaison psychiatrist. Since joining AltaPointe in 2015, she has worked on the EastPointe Hospital Involuntary Unit. She is a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Medicine. She is board certified in psychiatry and psychosomatic medicine.



**Lori Lowthert, M.D.**, has joined AltaPointe's medical team. She is a graduate of the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. She completed residency training in adult

psychiatry at the Department of Psychiatry of the Yale University School of Medicine, followed by a fellowship in chronic mental illness research through the Yale Department of Psychiatry. Lowthert comes to AltaPointe via the University of Connecticut Correctional Managed Healthcare system, where she provided psychiatric services to male inmates in the Connecticut Department of Corrections. She is board certified in adult psychiatry.



**Chereta Beverly, CRNP**, comes to AltaPointe Health with more than 14 years of experience in nursing, including psychiatric healthcare. She is a graduate of the University of Mobile

with a bachelor's in nursing, and Faulkner State Community College in Bay Minette

with an associate's in applied science. She graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a master's in nursing, specializing in psychiatric mental health. Beverly has been a member of the United States military for more than 15 years and is board certified through the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.



Mary Lee

**Mary Lee, CRNP**, has joined AltaPointe as a psychiatric nurse practitioner. She earned a bachelor's in physical education and nursing from the University of Alabama at

Birmingham and a master's in nursing. Lee comes to AltaPointe via the VA Medical Center in Birmingham, where she completed a postgraduate residency. She is a veteran of the U.S. Army and currently serves in the Army Reserve as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner. Lee is a board-certified mental health nurse and family psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner. She is also board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center and is an active member of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.



Alicia Todd

bachelor's in nursing from the University

**Alicia Todd, CRNP**, has joined the staff at BayView Professional Associates. She is a graduate of Bishop State Community College with an associate's in nursing, and a

of Mobile. Todd graduated from the University of Alabama with a master's in nursing with specialization in a dual nurse practitioner concentration in psychiatric mental health and family nurse practitioner. She is a member of the American Nurses Association and the Bay Area Nurse Practitioner Association. She is board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner.

**Edward J. Pratt III** is named coordinator of the day treatment program at Fairhope children's outpatient services. Pratt earned a bachelor's in criminal justice/psychology from the University of South Alabama and a master's in counseling and psychology from Troy University.

**Jameron "Deon" Gatson** joined the team at BayPointe Hospital as coordinator of children's day treatment. He previously served as coordinator of case management and in-home services for children's outpatient.

**Caitlin Kirby** has joined the staff at BayPointe Hospital as the clinical coordinator of the children's hospital acute unit. She worked as an acute therapist at BayPointe Hospital for more than two years before relocating to Dallas, Texas.

**Oriel Logan, R.N.**, is now the nurse coordinator for the hospital's day treatment and residential program. She started with AltaPointe in 2014 and most recently worked as the nurse for onboarding training and education at BayPointe.

## We're Hiring

Visit [AltaPointeCareers.org](http://AltaPointeCareers.org) to apply.



Find expanded news and features, videos, photo galleries, external links and more on [AltaNewsOnline.org](http://AltaNewsOnline.org).

# AltaPointe experts help fight the opioid crisis

America's opioid epidemic is so brutal and pervasive that it's contributing to lower life expectancy across the nation. AltaPointe Health has spearheaded a media campaign aimed at raising awareness about opioid misuse and the treatment options available.



Christe Damico talks with FM Talk 106.5's host Sean Sullivan during Midday Mobile live broadcast.

**Christe Damico**, substance abuse services therapist, appeared as a guest on FM Talk 106.5's Midday Mobile show to discuss AltaPointe's program offering free medication-assisted treatment and Suboxone to qualifying patients struggling with opioid addiction. Damico joined host Sean Sullivan for the live show to answer questions from listeners about the drug's impact on our society and AltaPointe's services. It's estimated 20,000 people listen to the show each day.

**Christina Talerico, M.D.**, appeared as an expert guest on Fox 10's Studio Ten to promote AltaPointe's substance abuse services and programs. The show reached an estimated 23,000 people in Alabama and Florida. Talerico also appeared as a guest on the 4 p.m. newscast to raise awareness and promote the free program.

## Mission ambassadors

Staff members across the continuum served as mission ambassadors for AltaPointe by training law enforcement in Mental Health First Aid, educating teenagers about the warning signs of suicidal behavior, and participating in a Mental Health Summit held in Montgomery. **Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe CEO, spoke to the Mobile County Commission to advocate for more funding for mental healthcare.

## Social media gains

AltaPointe's social media presence can connect thousands of people to programs and services. AltaPointe was recognized by Mental Health First Aid USA as a contributor in a Twitter chat focused on mental health goals for the new year. People and organizations from across the U.S. participated in the online event, including The National Council for Behavioral Healthcare. AltaPointe's video series offering coping skills for holiday stress and avoiding alcohol reached thousands of Facebook users across the state.



Ingrid Hartman, CarePointe assistant director, was featured in a video about the holiday blues. The video reached thousands of people and was shared by the Alabama Department of Mental Health on its Facebook page.

**"I need help..."**

**Struggling with alcoholism or a drug addiction can make recovery seem impossible.**

**We believe sobriety is possible.**

**No Waiting List!**

Medicaid Accepted • Reduced Rate Plan  
Priority is given to pregnant women and intravenous drug users.



**(251) 450-2211 • AltaPointe.org**

**Serving Mobile and Baldwin Counties**

**BAY MINETTE**

1507 US Highway 31 S. • Bay Minette, AL 36507

**FOLEY**

200 E. Fig Ave. • Foley, AL 36536

**MOBILE**

4211 Government Blvd. • Mobile, AL 36693

**CarePointe<sup>SM</sup>**  
**CORNER**

**FY 2017**

89,312 Total Calls

7,443 Average Monthly Calls

2,793 Total After-Hours Crisis Calls

233 Average Monthly After-Hours Crisis Calls

516 Total Calls Referred to Community

**If you or someone you know needs help, please call CarePointe at (251) 450-2211 or (888) 335-3044.**

**Chief Executive Officer**

Tuerk Schlesinger

**Chief Operating Officer**

Julie Bellcase

**Editor**

April Douglas

**AHS Writers & Photographers**

April Douglas

Donna Glover

Carol Mann

Frances Coleman, contributing writer

**Design & Production**

Pixallure Design

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