

A newsletter for and about AltaPointe Health's Employees

AltaNews

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Successful mergers benefit communities

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From our CEO...

Working in behavioral healthcare is not easy. There are challenges each day that are unique to our field, and require us to be at our best with every patient interaction. For us to provide this level of exceptional care, our employees' health must be a priority. Taking great care of our staff allows them to continue to take great care of our patients.

Keeping this in mind, we have a renewed focus to provide our staff with affordable, accessible and high-quality primary healthcare by board-certified physicians and nurse practitioners. Our initiative to promote a culture of whole body health led to the creation of Accordia Health & Wellness. It is our state-of-the-art employee-centered clinic on Hillcrest Road in Mobile that strives to treat more than an individual's symptoms. Accordia coordinates treatment, medications, referrals and any other aspect of care required to maintain the wellness of employees and their families.

Healthcare is an important issue for many individuals and families, but rising costs and access to appointments that work with busy schedules have created challenges in finding appropriate care. Accordia aims to ease these burdens. It offers access to convenient and efficient primary care at a reduced rate for employees and their families covered under AltaPointe's health plan.

Many AltaPointe staff members have already taken advantage of Accordia's services, scheduling same-day appointments for a sick child who woke up with an earache, or a teenager with a sore throat. I've visited Accordia as a patient and experienced why others have trusted this team of professionals to care for themselves and their families. The staff at Accordia was compassionate, informative, and truly seemed to care about my well-being.

As Accordia Health & Wellness evolves, so will our ability to provide primary care through telehealth capabilities. Telemedicine makes it possible for healthcare professionals to evaluate, diagnose and treat certain illnesses at a distance using telecommunications technology. It is becoming an increasingly important part of the American healthcare infrastructure, and Accordia is at the cutting edge. These are exciting times for AltaPointe as we navigate a complicated healthcare landscape flooded with rising costs, rapidly evolving technology, and escalating patient needs. The challenges are many, but thankfully, so are the opportunities. Working together, we will successfully manage both. I invite you to visit Accordia Health & Wellness and experience all it has to offer first-hand.



Tuerk Schlesinger, CEO

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On our cover

Mergers lead to a larger, stronger AltaPointe Health primed to provide even better and more successful care to the communities it serves.

Board-certified child psychiatrist making a difference in the Sylacauga region

After six months as the only full-time child and adolescent psychiatrist in AltaPointe's Sylacauga Region, **Edgar Finn, M.D.**, has settled into his new role and also is enjoying living closer to his extended family.



Edgar Finn, M.D.

"Working in Talladega and living in Pell City feels a lot like moving back home for me, as I grew up only a few miles from here in Shelby County," he said.

Dr. Finn joined the region's medical staff in July. His office is in the Talladega outpatient office, and

he also treats patients via tele-health in Sylacauga, Clay County and Randolph County.

"I find the work interesting and fulfilling. I believe that the role of the child and adolescent psychiatrist as a member of a team – which includes parents or guardians, teachers, therapists, pediatricians and any others working with the child – is an important role, and allows for meaningful interaction and intervention to better the lives of children and families," Dr. Finn said.

The four-county region is benefitting from Dr. Finn's presence, in that the addition of a full-time child and adolescent psychiatrist has improved access to care. "Time and transportation are insurmountable hurdles for many families, some of whom simply could not travel to Birmingham for psychiatric outpatient care," he added.

As was the case when he practiced in AltaPointe's southwest counties, Dr. Finn said he is concerned about the effects on young

people of social media and the onslaught of modern technologies such as cell phones, internet access and video games.

"The jury is still out regarding the onslaught of electronic devices now in the hands of many children and adolescents," he said. "Currently, the generation of teenagers is the first to go through their youth into adolescence with their cellphone in hand. There are certainly some positive things that come from such ready access to communications with parents and friends, but there are obvious negatives also."

According to Dr. Finn, the American Academy of Pediatrics

recommends a maximum of two hours daily screen time for entertainment. "It is not unusual to find children and adolescents far surpassing this recommendation," he said. "It is reasonable and important for parents to set limits on screen time, in particular about certain times of the day (such as meal times) and to set firm limits to prohibit the use of screen devices

during nighttime hours when children should be sleeping."

Dr. Finn joined AltaPointe in 2012, having earned a bachelor's in economics from the University of Alabama in Birmingham and his medical degree from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. For more information on Dr. Finn and other members of our medical team visit altapointe.org.

"I find the work interesting and fulfilling. I believe the child and adolescent psychiatrist is a member of a team that works to better the lives of children."

Edgar Finn, M.D.



A mental health crisis is not always obvious.

Mental Health First Aid will teach you how to:

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- Offer support to someone in emotional distress
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**MENTAL
HEALTH
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Robotic technology providing higher level of care in pharmacy

Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy (IHP) opened in early 2017 and currently fills around 6,000 prescriptions a month. The joint venture between AltaPointe Health and Northrock Pharmacy based in Oklahoma City means patients have a convenient choice for obtaining their medication and helps to increase their adherence to their medication compliance. New technology found in the pharmacy (located inside of AltaPointe's adult outpatient services in Mobile) will only further enhance productivity.

Julie Bell, director of pharmacy, says she was excited to learn that the automated system would be added to the pharmacy. "We were very excited about having the automation as part of our workflow in filling the group home medications," Bell shared. "It packages and labels medications in the blister cards for dispensing to our group home residents."

IHP serves programs throughout AltaPointe including adult outpatient services, BayPointe Hospital residential, the two adolescent transitional age group homes, as well as the residential programs across the seven-county continuum. It is supplying psychotropic and primary medications.

Bell says the machine ensures the correct medication is packed in the correct card and for the correct patient. The machine holds 60 different medications in 60 separate canisters. "We have extra canisters that we can swap out to utilize as many additional medications as we need," Bell added.

The continued growth and success of Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy is related to AltaPointe's commitment to being a technology-driven healthcare provider. **Tuerk Schlesinger**,



Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy's new technology further enhances productivity. Medication is dispensed in blister packs such as this for patients.

AltaPointe CEO, says it is vital to harness the power of technology to deliver the utmost in care.

"Implementing new technology such as the DOSIS L60 enhances our efforts to improve our delivery of care," Schlesinger added. "We are able to streamline our processes to be more efficient and ensure quality."

Nine staff members work in the Integrated Healthcare Pharmacy, including two pharmacists, six pharmacy technicians and one pharmacy clerk.

Free medication-assisted treatment program expected to grow to help fight the opioid crisis

AltaPointe Health continues its efforts to help people struggling with opioid addiction. AltaPointe teamed up with WKRG in Mobile to host two opioid help hotlines during the evening newscasts. AltaPointe staff members served as experts answering phone calls from concerned viewers from across the country, and promoted AltaPointe's medication-assisted treatment program.

Halie Jones, LPC-S, substance abuse services assistant director, says more people are taking advantage of AltaPointe's free medication-assisted treatment program. "Nearly 250 people are enrolled in our medication-assisted treatment program, and I believe that number will increase as more attention is given to addiction, death rates from opioid overdoses and word spreads that help is available," Jones said.

Data gathered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that the number of deaths from suicides and unintentional overdoses together is on the rise, killing American adults at twice the rate today as they did just 17 years ago. According to the CDC, opioids are a key contributor to that rise.

However, reports show it's more than opioids. The National Institute on Drug Abuse says more than 30 percent of overdoses

in the nation involving opioids also involve benzodiazepines, or "benzos." The Alabama Medicine magazine devoted its cover article to the issue, "It's Not Just About Opioids," and quoted **J. Luke Engeriser, M.D.**, AltaPointe's deputy chief medical officer.

"Benzodiazepines are very effective medications for the treatment of acute anxiety, just as opioids are very useful for the treatment of acute pain. But also like opioids, benzodiazepines will cause the development of physiologic tolerance if used regularly, and this often causes a loss of therapeutic effect if the dose is not continuously escalated. For this reason, they are not ideal medications as the primary treatment of chronic anxiety," said Dr. Engeriser. "Benzodiazepines are most useful when prescribed for brief periods when someone is going through a major crisis or an exacerbation of symptoms -- for example, after the loss of a loved one. Ideally, regular use of the medication would only be for one or two weeks."

In March 2016, the CDC issued new guidelines for the prescribing of opioids, which included a recommendation to avoid prescribing benzodiazepines concurrently with opioids when possible.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment program proves to be life-changing

Thirty-five-year-old Margaret Rodgers was diagnosed with depression at the age of 16 and then bipolar disorder. She would struggle to cope with her mental illness for decades. Rodgers said she would experience manic episodes and crying episodes, would go on lavish spending trips and wasn't taking care of herself. It all came to a head in January 2018 and involved a shotgun.

"I was in a hard spot not taking care of myself or taking my meds, and became suicidal. My family became concerned," Rodgers said. "I did not have insurance and was not in a good position financially. My family reached out to AltaPointe, and I have been a part of the program ever since."



Margaret Rodgers lives with depression and bipolar disorder. After suicidal thoughts and a near attempt, Rodgers went before a judge and entered assisted outpatient treatment, also known as involuntary outpatient commitment. She now sees a therapist once a week, and a nurse at AltaPointe Health Inc., a community health center, gives her a shot of an antipsychotic drug once a month. (Photo Meggan Haller for KHN)

"I was in a hard spot not taking care of myself or taking my meds, and became suicidal. My family became concerned, and reached out to AltaPointe, and I have been a part of the program ever since."

Margaret Rodgers

Rodgers is one of 77 people enrolled in AltaPointe's Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program. AOT is a court-ordered outpatient treatment program serving Baldwin and parts of Mobile counties. It is aimed at helping individuals who typically have a difficult time maintaining stability in the community.

People who meet criteria for the AOT program are all diagnosed with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or schizoaffective disorder. Typically participants have multiple hospitalizations, possible encounters with law enforcement, difficulty taking medication without extensive support, limited access to healthcare and other functional impairments.

"The AOT program can be an alternative to hospitalization or a step down following hospitalization," said **Cindy Gipson**, assistant director adult intensive services. "The goal is to reduce the

number of involuntary hospitalizations, interactions with law enforcement and unnecessary trips to local emergency departments for psychiatric or primary health care reasons, and to improve their ability to continue treatment and maintain healthy, happy lives."

The program uses a team of individuals such as a nurse, therapist, case manager and nurse practitioner to provide in-home services and monitoring in a partnership to improve outcomes for that person. "All of these services are in addition to other services such as day treatment, substance abuse services, housing or employment, which already exist in AltaPointe's

continuum. The program is a safety net for individuals who need a little extra support."

Even though it is a court-ordered program, participants report a high level of satisfaction with the program and the staff, and there is still a high degree of autonomy and cooperation. Rodgers admits she didn't enter the program of her own free will, but credits it with saving her life.

"I am doing much better. I am learning about being mindful, staying busy and not focusing on the things I cannot change – things that have already happened that cannot be changed," Rodgers said. "I am making long-term goals, and I was not doing that before."

Gipson said the program is beneficial for people such as Rodgers because it is an opportunity to intervene in a different way than previously possible.

"In this last year alone, the number of hospitalizations of participants totaled 54 in the 12 months before enrollment and only five in the 12 months since enrollment. That's amazing and life-changing when you think about it," Gipson said. "That's 49 fewer times the sheriff's deputies picked someone up and transported them to the hospital against their will. Seventeen participants are now employed. That's what makes this program so special; people get their lives back."

Today, Rodgers encourages others to seek help, because it is available and it can be life-changing.

Successful AltaPointe Health merger

A model for the future: increased services, decreased wait times and costs



AltaPointe Health's outpatient office in Clay County.

Two years have passed since AltaPointe Health merged with the former Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center, and leaders of both entities are lauding the merger as highly successful.

Cindy Atkinson, former director of Cheaha Regional Mental Health Center and now associate executive director of community mental health for the Sylacauga region, said the merger has been “wonderful” for the four-county community as well as for staff members.



Cindy Atkinson

“It’s remarkable how far we have come in two years,” she said. “Every area of our work has been impacted in a positive manner by the merger.”

AltaPointe’s investments in programs and technology, she said, have freed up clinicians and therapists who previously were responsible for a variety of administrative tasks.

“We have been able to restructure our clinical services in a manner that allows our clinicians to focus exclusively on service delivery,” Atkinson said. “This has decreased wait times and substantially increased services – while reducing overall administrative costs for both regions.”

When it was finalized in August 2016, the merger brought four counties– Talladega, Clay, Coosa, and Randolph – under the

AltaPointe name and umbrella. Since then the counties – referred to collectively as the organization’s Sylacauga region – have nearly doubled in the number of people they’ve served.

“Our shared vision was that through this partnership we could improve and enhance services in our Sylacauga region,” said **Tuerk Schlesinger**, AltaPointe CEO. “That vision has been realized. The merger could not have gone more smoothly.”

In particular, the Sylacauga region’s school-based therapy programs have blossomed.

“We currently have eight master’s level therapists in six school systems and will continue expanding the program this year,” Atkinson said. “We also have two program sites in Talladega County for after-school and summer day treatment services for children and adolescents, and we hope to expand these programs into other counties in the Sylacauga region.”

Moreover, the region has added a full-time child and adolescent psychiatrist and two full-time nurse practitioners. “With AltaPointe’s state-of-the-art telehealth equipment in all our outpatient locations, they are providing care across the Sylacauga region with significantly reduced wait times,” Atkinson added.

Schlesinger said AltaPointe’s immediate plans for the region include new outpatient treatment facilities in Randolph and Clay counties plus a half-million-dollar capital investment project in Talladega County.

Olivia Nettles, AltaPointe's clinical director for children's outpatient services, said the Sylacauga region's strides in school-based therapy have been "tremendous, considering that they've been able to do all this in just two years."



Olivia Nettles

"It means so much to the schools and to families," Nettles said. "Now the children have easy access to therapists. Also, they don't have transportation issues and they don't have to miss a lot of school to keep their appointments. Plus the therapists can coordinate with teachers and administrators."

AltaPointe, Alabama's largest and most comprehensive behavioral healthcare and psychiatric hospital system, serves approximately 30,000 people in its seven-county area and employs nearly 1,500 clinical and non-clinical staff members. As a public not-for-profit entity, AltaPointe is governed by a board of directors as outlined in state law. The board comprises 24 voting members – 12 from the Sylacauga region and

12 from the South Alabama region – appointed by the elected officials of the city of Mobile, Mobile County, Washington County, Baldwin County, Clay County, Coosa County, Randolph County and Talladega County. AltaPointe's board also includes 11 advisory members. The board is responsible for planning, coordinating and developing the mental health service system for the regions it serves.

Edward Hall, Ph.D., former CRMHC board member, serves on the AltaPointe board of directors. Dr. Hall believes the merger has been productive for all parties involved.



Edward Hall, Ph.D.

"We are making great strides in service to our clients, and it has benefitted our employees as well," Hall said. "I am elated to see the growth in Clay and Randolph counties, and the improvements in infrastructure to the existing facilities in Talladega. I consider the merger a great success."

Milestone merger continues to increase services for Baldwin County

AltaPointe Health's merger with Baldwin County Mental Health Center in 2014 made history as the first community mental health centers in Alabama to merge. Overnight, AltaPointe



George Noonan

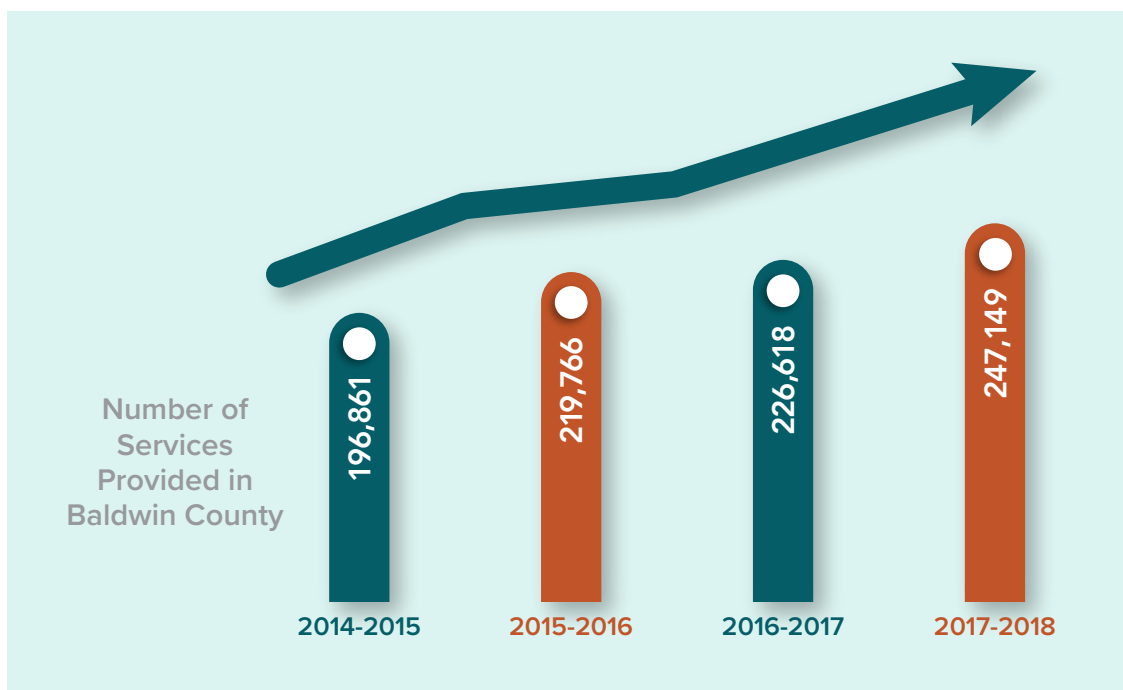
experienced growth in the number of seasoned staff members, services and community relationships.

"The historic merger brought expanded services for children and adults who call Baldwin County home," said **George Noonan**, former BCMH board member who serves on the AltaPointe board of directors. "This means more individuals can

benefit from those services and lead higher quality lives, which was something we strived for as BCMH."

The merger allowed for more in-home teams and case managers for children's outpatient, additional school-based therapists, the introduction of electronic medical records and telehealth services. The partnership improved access to intensive adult services and AltaPointe's two psychiatric hospitals, EastPointe and BayPointe.

The growth continues today with the number of services provided in Baldwin County increasing each year, as the graph depicts.





The Gift of SELF-CARE

The start of a new year usually ushers in motivation for change – be it a change in spending, a change in eating, a change in scenery. Let's be honest, though. Making lasting lifestyle changes takes serious commitment.

I'll go a step further and ask you: How long does it usually take before you throw in the towel? Not very long? I want you to know that reaching your health goals doesn't have to be that way.

You don't have to go to excessive lengths to be healthy. I tell my patients, the key to long-term success is forming and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits. Not sure where to start? Accordia Health and Wellness wants to help you create a wellness plan you can stick to throughout the year. Your first step should be to schedule a physical exam.

Annual physical exams are essential to your ongoing health. I believe physical exams are one of the best ways to identify and treat health issues

before they get worse. Plus, these visits can help you track your progress toward your individual health goals for the New Year.

A visit to the primary care physician's office can provide an all-access pass to your overall health. It could start with screenings for high blood pressure or cholesterol, or testing your glucose levels. These tests can identify underlying conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates 610,000 people die of heart disease in the United



Ashlen Aggen, M.D.



States every year. Did you know it is the leading cause of death for both men and women? Do your heart a favor and schedule a physical exam. Make it a New Year's tradition you practice each year, in place of a resolution.

If the New Year brings a new adventure such as traveling abroad, you will need to be up to date on all of your vaccines. A visit to the primary care physician's office for a physical can take care of that and have you on your way in no time.

Perhaps you want to kick the habit in 2019. The CDC reports cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths per year in

the U.S., including more than 41,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure. This is about 1,300 deaths due to smoking every day. We offer tobacco cessation to help you achieve your goal of becoming smoke-free in the New Year. After all, good health is the best gift you can give yourself and your family. Ignoring your body's health could spell trouble.

If you do not have a primary care team, contact Accordia Health and Wellness. We would love to take care of you. Give us a call at (251) 824-8320. Our office hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

BayPointe Hospital introduces new technology

BayPointe Hospital treats more than 1,000 children each year. The typical stay is 7 to 10 days. To make sure kids aren't falling behind in school while receiving psychiatric treatment, BayPointe has hired a certified teacher and initiated an online learning program using GradPoint.

"We want to make sure we are treating the whole patient, and that includes taking care of their psychiatric as well as educational needs," **Jarrett Crum**, chief hospital officer, said. "These kids are struggling in many facets of their life, and our goal is to help them live their best life possible."

Each weekday, children use Chromebooks to work on the GradPoint curriculum, which meets all Alabama State Department of Education standards and is compatible with what they were learning at school before being admitted to BayPointe Hospital.

"It is a way for teachers to ensure that students are presented with the same rigorous curriculum expected from schools around



Children at BayPointe Hospital use Chromebooks to complete school work while receiving treatment.

the state," said **Nicolette Harvey**, assistant director of BayPointe Hospital. "Working online also gives students the opportunity to learn how to use technology appropriately for school and professional purposes."

Harvey said the addition of Chromebooks and GradPoint to the hospital provides an even more structured environment carving out time for individual, group and recreational therapy, as well as education.

"Our focus on education demonstrates it is a priority. We treat children who struggle with issues such as truancy and non-compliance, and who may have difficulty receiving and following directions. These traits make them less

successful in a traditional school setting. Our attention to school work shows them that no matter where you go, education is important," Harvey added.

Child and adolescent programs expanded in Sylacauga Region

The addition of two new child and adolescent programs in the Sylacauga Region is making a difference to students and families.

AltaPointe's school-based therapy program has been introduced into the Talladega County Schools, Talladega City Schools, Coosa County Schools, Sylacauga City Schools, Randolph County Schools and Clay County Schools. "Having a therapist located in the schools allows students to interact with the therapist regularly and helps alleviate transportation, financial and social stigma issues," said **Brandy Richardson**, AltaPointe's associate clinical director for the Sylacauga region.

Charla DeLeo, Ed.D., Clay County School's Special Education Coordinator, said, "Without AltaPointe's school-based mental health services, many of our students would never receive the clinical support they so desperately need." Blair Tindell, a Central Coosa school counselor, agreed. "School-based therapy has been a wonderful addition, and I have seen positive results from the collaboration between the teachers, counselors and the therapeutic services the students are receiving," she said.

The response to AltaPointe's day treatment program in the Talladega and Sylacauga city schools has been equally successful. "The day treatment program has been just amazing," said Wendy B. Arnold, RTI specialist with Sylacauga City Schools. "We are seeing so many improvements in our students who attend, not only emotionally but academically as well. We are so thankful for our partnership."

The day treatment program currently works with students at the end of the school day and also during school breaks. AltaPointe's goal is to expand service hours and locations.



Eric Richardson, behavioral specialist in AltaPointe's Sylacauga day treatment program, works with a child on a therapeutic activity.

Bravo!

David Benavidez, M.D., served as presenter and panel expert during the 2018 OPEN MINDS Consumer Engagement Technologies Summit. Dr. Benavidez focused on AltaPointe's use of telehealth as a technology enabler to drive improved consumer access to care, from within the emergency department and acute care settings.



David Benavidez, M.D. speaking at the OPEN MINDS Consumer Engagement Technologies Summit.

Congratulations to child psychiatry fellows, **David Benavidez, M.D.**, and **Jamie Nguyen, M.D.**, for passing their Adult Psychiatry Boards. Board certification demonstrates a physician's exceptional expertise in a particular specialty and/or subspecialty of medical practice.

Barb Leigh, LPC-S, NCC, CCTP, BC-TMH, received board certification in TeleMental Health, a national certification under the credentialing of the National Board for Certified Counselors. She was also a presenter at the Alabama Counseling Association's annual state conference in Birmingham. Her seminar was titled, "The Digital Client: Creating Therapeutic Relationships in TeleMental Health."

Somaly Murrill, adult outpatient services' practice manager, earned a master's in business administration from Franklin University. Murrill holds a bachelor's degree in business from Huntingdon College in Montgomery.

Stephanie Pope, LMFT, will serve on Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey's task force related to behavioral and reading issues. Pope is a school-based therapist serving children in Saraland and Satsuma city schools. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.



Congratulations to **Charles Graham** on winning the Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama's 2018 White Wolf Award. This award recognizes excellence in service toward ending homelessness in Alabama. Graham serves as a project manager in AltaPointe's permanent housing program.



People & Positions



Julie Bellcase, MBA, has been named vice president of operations. She joined AltaPointe Health, then known as Mobile Mental Health, in 1981 and has held a variety of positions, including chief operating officer and director of human resources. She earned a bachelor of science and a master's in business administration from the University of South Alabama.



Steve Dolan has been named vice president of administrative services. He joined AltaPointe Health in 1987. He has more than 35 years' experience working in the technology field both at the development and executive levels. Dolan first served AltaPointe as a programmer analyst, senior analyst and director of information technology.



Alicia Donoghue, SPHR, has been appointed to the role of chief human resources officer. Donoghue, a native of Mobile, earned her undergraduate degree in human resource management with a minor in psychology from the University of South Alabama. She has also earned her Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) certification.



Jarret Crum

Jarrett Crum has been named chief hospital officer and has assumed oversight of EastPointe and BayPointe hospitals and AltaPointe's transitional age residential program.

Crum received a bachelor's in psychology from the University of Alabama and a master's in social work from the University of Southern Mississippi.



Ingrid Hartman

Ingrid Hartman, LPC, has been named director of quality. She has been with AltaPointe since 2008, serving as the assistant director of CarePointe, coordinator of children's outpatient services and assistant coordinator for children's outpatient case management and in-home services. She received a bachelor's in communication studies and a master's in human development counseling from Vanderbilt University. She is also an Alabama licensed professional counselor.



Maria Hamilton, M.D.

Maria Hamilton, M.D., a graduate of the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, joins AltaPointe's medical team. During her residency, she received the Narahari Award, an award given to the student who earns the top score on the Psychiatry Resident-In-Training Examination (PRITE). She is board-certified in child/adolescent psychiatry from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.



Mollie Dean, CRNP

Mollie Dean, CRNP, joins the AltaPointe medical team. She earned a bachelor's in nursing from the University of Alabama's Capstone College of Nursing. She earned a master's in nursing with a Family Nurse Practitioner track from Auburn University of Montgomery. She is board certified under the Alabama Board of Nursing and the American Board of Nurse Practitioners.



Christina Talerico, M.D.

Christina Talerico, M.D. joins AltaPointe's medical team. She is a graduate of the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. She is board-certified in general psychiatry from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Jennifer Gregory, LPC, has been named CarePointe assistant director. She joined AltaPointe in 2007, working with children and adolescents in various programs. She earned a bachelor's in psychology and a master's in community counseling from the University of South Alabama. Gregory is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a National Certified Counselor.

Emily Jackson, LPC, will assume the role of coordinator for children and adolescent services in Mobile. Previously, she worked as a therapist in the day treatment, outpatient and intensive programs at AltaPointe. She earned her master's in clinical mental health counseling at the University of South Alabama and is a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Andrea Yohn has been promoted to assistant director of health information. Yohn joined AltaPointe in 2013. She holds a master's in science and master's in education from the University of South Alabama.

Lauren Elmore, LPC, is now the clinical coordinator for AltaPointe's Zeigler outpatient services. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a member of the Alabama Counseling Association. She earned a bachelor's in psychology from the University of Mobile and a master's in community counseling from the University of South Alabama.

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From the hallways to the airways, millions hear about AltaPointe's programs

AltaPointe's school-based therapy program has gained statewide attention. AltaPointe hosted the Department of Mental Health's School-Based Mental Health Collaboration peer review in the fall of 2018. The event brought school system employees from across the state to AltaPointe's corporate office in Mobile to learn more about the collaboration and how it benefits students. AltaPointe's school-based therapy program touches every school in its seven-county continuum, providing services to thousands of children.

Saraland Schools Superintendent Aaron Milner had nothing but good things to say about the school-based therapy program, telling Lagniappe, a Mobile-based publication, that Saraland "couldn't do without it" at this point. He said therapists are often able to identify what a student needs to be successful, whether it's in school or at home.

During 2018, AltaPointe employees participated in more than 70 community events from Bayou La Batre to Childersburg and all stops in between. Events supported programs such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Sylacauga City Schools, Youth Leadership Mobile, Washington County Hospital, the American Heart Association and more.

AltaPointe answers the call for help daily. **Oyin McCracken** and **Victoria Nix**, children's outpatient in-home therapists, provided on-site help following a deadly shooting at a Mobile apartment complex at the manager's request.

Each month AltaPointe takes care of an estimated 6,000 men, women and children. News of AltaPointe's use of technology to provide the best patient care possible, its dedication to ending the opioid crisis, success in its outpatient programs and efforts to raise suicide awareness reached an estimated 300 million people across the United States in print, television, in person and online.



Oyin McCracken, left, and Victoria Nix, children's outpatient in-home therapists.

AltaPointe Health remembers Dicinia Naves and Robert Tageant

Dicinia Naves was known to family and friends as "Lady Di." She worked in Bay Minette with adult substance abuse services for 11 years. Coworkers and patients remember her as a compassionate person whose humor and positive outlook always lifted them up. They say they will miss her warm smile and encouraging words.

Robert Tageant, crisis outreach specialist on the Crisis Response Team, is remembered as a stellar case manager who helped train all new CRT staff. "He was a good listener who had a way of putting consumers at ease and getting them to come in for services, take their medication or go to the hospital if needed," said **Cindy Gipson**, assistant director adult intensive services. "He had a kind heart and could put himself in anyone's shoes. Our patients loved him."



AltaPointe Health teamed up with WKRG to host an opioid crisis hotline. Staff members answered calls from across the country from people seeking information and help for opioid addiction.

CarePointe
Call • Connect • Care

CarePointe, AltaPointe's
access to care, answered
86,819
calls in FY 2018.

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

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