A NEW MODEL FOR A NEW YEAR

As the new year opens up, there are many uncertainties in the state of Mississippi.

Declining revenues have forced drastic budget cuts, and those cuts have left many question marks about the new year in many people’s minds. One thing is for certain though:

Mississippi State Hospital, and the Department of Mental Health as a whole, will strive to continue offering the same quality services that it has offered in the past, and following the trends of recent years, that means a continued commitment toward community-based treatment and the recovery model of care.

“Recovery focuses on asking patients what they want from treatment and discusses ways to meet those goals,” MSH Clinical Services Director Dr. Lydia Weisser said.

“Proponents of the recovery model indicate that this model allows consumers to be ‘more engaged’ in their treatment and produces better overall outcomes.”

In the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, that means a shift away from institutional care and a move towards community-based services. The recently-adopted ten-year strategic plan clearly lays out that goal; mental health professionals across the country are still searching for an exact definition of the word “recovery,” but the DMH plan calls for more involvement from families and expanding community support and programs.

This strong emphasis on community care and recovery differs from the traditional medical model in that it focuses on the patient having a voice in decision making. It is a person-centered approach, rather than one in which the physician or mental health professional makes all the treatment decisions, Weisser said.

The benefits to the model are bringing about early recognition of signs and symptoms of mental illness and pro-actively treating individuals before they decompensate and require institutional care. It is also designed to maintain those with mental illness in more familiar environments close to home.

Mississippi State Hospital and DMH have been moving towards more local, community services for years now.

The system for 15 community mental health centers across the state was established in 1966, but for most of the state’s history, Mississippi State Hospital at Whitfield and East Mississippi State Hospital at Meridian were the only state-run psychiatric treatment facilities.

But in 1995, the state Legislature authorized the creation of regional state hospitals, and North Mississippi State Hospital in Tupelo and South Mississippi State Hospital in Purvis opened their doors soon after.

In the following years, the Legislature further approved for the operation of seven, 16-bed crisis intervention centers: Two operating under North Mississippi State Hospital, one under South Mississippi State Hospital, another with Central Mississippi Residential Center in Newton and three that operated under Mississippi State Hospital. One of those, located in Grenada, is now contracted out to LifeHelp in Grenada through a pilot program.

With treatment centers spread across the state, family, friends and the community can more actively support the treatment, recovery and aftercare of the patients. This community-based view of mental health treatment goes hand in hand with the recovery model – helping patients have more control over their treatment will help them have more control over their lives.

“It is in a community-based mental health setting where individuals practice and learn the skills and actions needed for their recovery journey to living a meaningful life in the community of their choice,” said Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Director of Community Services at MSH. “We see them regain independence in all areas of their lives while becoming successful role models.”

Johnson said the transition to the recovery model of care will require change at all levels of the mental health treatment system. She said mental health professionals are working hard to find ways to engage individuals in mental health care and become a true person-driven service delivery provider.

Even as those changes occur, there will still be a need for the institution-based services offered by facilities like Mississippi State Hospital. However, as the recovery model is embraced, the individual’s voice, hopes and dreams become the overarching goals of treatment and recovery from mental illness, Johnson said.

“As we continue to move towards implementation of recovery-based services we focus more on hope for the future, not just survival and maintaining the status quo,” she said.
MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL
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MISSION
Mississippi State Hospital facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines.

VISION
We will be a customer-driven organization.

CORE VALUES
Respect - Teamwork - Trust
Communication - Commitment

MEMBER OF
Mississippi Department of Mental Health
American Hospital Association
Mississippi Hospital Association
Southern States Psychiatric Hospital Association

ACCREDITED BY
The Joint Commission

It’s January now, and while that means another year has come and gone, that also means there is a fresh new year waiting with new opportunities for us. In this issue of Mental Outlook, you can read about just a couple of those opportunities. The Legislative Breakfast has been in the planning stages for weeks already, and so has the annual Employee of the Year recognition ceremony. Both of those will be next month, and you can find out more about them in these pages.

You will also be able to read about the tremendous 2009 we had here at Mississippi State Hospital. It was a record-breaking year in regards to volunteers. Over the past two months, 137 different volunteer groups gave their time to help make some truly joyous holidays for our patients and residents, more groups than we’ve ever had before. Of course, dozens more came to the hospital for Santa Day, and hundreds of people donated clothes, gifts and other goods for our patients and residents here. I would like to thank everyone who gave of themselves, and let them know it is truly appreciated. Now that we had a great close to 2009, it’s time to move into the new decade. Working together we will continue to provide valuable services and accomplish great things.

Sincerely,

James Chastain

MARGO HEMPHILL TO SPEAK AT
MSH 2009 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

Mississippi State Hospital is pleased to announce that Margo Hemphill will be the guest speaker at the 2009 Employee of the Year program, to be held in the Dr. Albert Randel Hendrix Treatment Center on February 5, 2010.

The Florence resident is well-known in the area for her mix of down-home humor and thought-provoking insight and guidance. It is that mix that has her in demand as a motivational speaker not only around the state, but around the country as well.

Hemphill is the author of “They’re Only Teenagers, What Do You Expect?!?,” which uses her trademark humor to relate stories about her experiences raising her three children. A graduate of Millsaps College, Hemphill has a degree in chemistry. In 1999, she was recognized as a “Hometown Hero” by a local television station, and just this year, the Mississippi Business Journal recognized her as one of the state’s Top 50 Women in Business.

An annual program at Mississippi State Hospital, the Employee of the Year event not only announces the selection of three employees who will receive the top honors at the legislative Breakfast, but it recognizes all of the Employees of the Month who have been honored throughout the year. Each month, the Employee Recognition Committee selects three employees per month from the three hospital divisions (Licensed Clinical, Direct Care and Support Services). At the end of the year, the committee votes for one Employee of the Year in each category.
2009 EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 5 2010
1:30 p.m.
Dr. Albert Randel Hendrix Treatment Center
Building 202, Gymnasium
Whitfield, Mississippi

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Mississippi State Hospital staff, Department of Mental Health employees and legislators from all over the state will be gathering next month for the 22nd Annual Legislative Appreciation Breakfast.

Sponsored by Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, the breakfast will be Tuesday, Feb. 2 at 7:30 a.m. at Galloway United Methodist Church, located at 305 N. Congress Street in Jackson. MSH and DMH employees will gather to honor and thank state legislators for their continued support. Staff members of the hospital, Jaquith Nursing Home and DMH employees are all invited to attend, as are all members of Friends.

“It is a great way to let the legislature know what the needs of the Department of Mental Health are and to showcase all the good work that has been done,” said Ray Wallace, president of the Friends organization.

A non-profit charity organization dedicated to promoting the work of the hospital and informing the public about mental illness, Friends helps enhance the quality of life for MSH patients by offering a variety of programs and events for patients, Jaquith Nursing Home residents and individuals served in the community.

It takes a lot of community support, donations and volunteer hours to make that happen, and the breakfast is simply their way of saying “thank you” to many of the legislators who support the hospital.

“It is an opportunity to connect and help the legislators to put a face with a name and for us to do the same,” Wallace said.

The Legislative Appreciation Breakfast originally came about through the hard work of former Friends president Gladys Jackson and former MSH Director James Stubbs, who served as director from 1975 to 1988.

“This was their special way of thanking our state legislators for their continued support of the hospital and the Department of Mental Health,” Friends office manager Sheila Shows said. “That tradition has continued for more than 20 years, and we’re glad to be able to show our appreciation.”

Since its inception in 1985, Friends of MSH has grown to a dedicated and caring membership of 575 individuals from the hospital staff and support personnel, members of civic and service groups, family members of patients, and individuals from communities in nearly every county served by MSH.

The organization dedicates 100 percent of its funds to support a variety of programs and activities, such as an annual patient fishing rodeo, watermelon cutting, an Independence Day fireworks celebration, educational field trips and employee recognition programs.

To purchase tickets, complete the reservation form below and return it to: Friends of MSH, P.O. Box 75, Whitfield, MS, 39193. For more information, contact Sheila Shows at (601) 351-8377, or visit the MSH web site at www.msh.state.ms.us.

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**FRIENDS OF MSH SPONSORS 22ND ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST**

**YES! Make my reservation for the 2010 ... MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATIVE APPRECIATION BREAKFAST!**

I have enclosed $_____.00 for ____ reservation(s) at $12.00 per person.

Name__________________________________________________________

Mailing Address_________________________________________________

City_________________________ State_______ Zip_____________________

Phone Number (_____) __________ Email______________________________
DMH HONORS BOBBY STEPHENS

Bobby Stephens, well known at Mississippi State Hospital for his decades of work here and his service with Friends of MSH, was honored at the Mississippi Department of Mental Health’s annual MHMR conference last month with the 2009 James C. Stubbs Service Award.

The James C. Stubbs Service Award honors a person who has demonstrated a continuing interest and effort in providing volunteer and advocacy services to citizens of Mississippi with mental health needs and/or mental retardation. The award is named in memory of James “Jimmy” Carlton Stubbs, who served as Director of Mississippi State Hospital from 1975-1988.

Stephens has given more than 36 years of his life, first as a professional and continuing today as a volunteer, to activities which promote improvement in the quality of life for persons with mental illness. Prior to his retirement, he served as the Director of Rehabilitation Services and Community Services at Mississippi State Hospital, where he continuously looked for opportunities and activities to be directly involved with patients and residents, such as volleyball and pet therapy, and he continues to do so today as a volunteer. Numerous Mississippi State Hospital patients and residents still ask about Stephens and recall days when he dropped by their building to play a game or join an activity.

He has left a long legacy of programs and services for others to follow, and an even longer list of employees and volunteers he mentored, encouraged and inspired. His achievements represent the dedication, commitment, work ethic, passion and creativity born from a true desire to make the world a better place.

DMH HONORS JAQUITH DIRECTOR MARC LEWIS

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health honored Jaquith Nursing Home Director Marc Lewis at October’s annual MHMR Conference in Philadelphia, Miss. with the Bradley A. Sanders Service Award.

The award honors a person who has made outstanding contributions in the field of behavioral healthcare management in Mississippi. It is named in honor of Bradley Sanders, who worked in state government for more than thirty years, much of it in the field of mental health services.

Lewis has been employed with the Department of Mental Health since 1996, and has often served in key roles where new services and programs have been in development.

Between 1996 and 2000, he served as part of the leadership team responsible for opening North Mississippi State Hospital in Tupelo and South Mississippi State Hospital in Purvis. In 2000, Lewis accepted the position of human resources director at Mississippi State Hospital, where he served until he was appointed as director of Jaquith Nursing Home in 2005.

During his time there, he has improved Jaquith Nursing Home programs and services, established the annual “Jaquith University” referral conference, and developed a program to include and encourage family participation at Jaquith Nursing Home.

He has continuously pursued opportunities to further his education and understanding of mental health and administration. He has frequently been called upon to take on difficult tasks and always accepted the challenge, and more importantly, accomplished the objective.
It’s been known as the “Greenville Bus” for years, even though they didn’t come on an actual bus this year.

But a couple of dozen people from Greenville still showed up on Saturday, Dec. 12, loaded up in large passenger vans that were packed with people, gifts and other donations for patients and residents of Mississippi State Hospital and Jaquith Nursing Home.

The donations from the Greenville area and the Washington County Mental Health Association have been a fixture of the holidays at MSH since the 1960s.

“Every year, without fail,” said Helen Worsham, coordinator for the “Gifts for Whitfield” project, who has been participating since the mid 1990s.

This year, she and everyone else with the “Greenville Bus” brought 45 packages to the clothing donation center, some already festively wrapped and decorated by the organizations that donated them.

“We start in November,” said Jo Ann Lee, treasurer for the Washington County Mental Health Association. “We send out letters to churches and other groups –and they’re expecting it – and we tell them it’s time for the gifts.”

The Washington County Mental Health Association is a non-profit group that not only sponsors the program, but they provide a free trip to MSH for friends and relatives of patients and nursing home residents. They also provide assistance to programs that offer rehabilitation services to residents of Washington County.

The project to bring gifts to Mississippi State Hospital began with a nurse named Virginia Lytle, who realized a need and did something to help fill it.

“She organized the Washington County Mental Health Association, and this project became a part of that,” Lee said.

Worsham and other community volunteers spend the Thursday and Friday before their trip packing up the gifts and other donations. It is a community effort, Worsham said, as people purchase items they know are needed, like books, games, socks and other personal care items.

“This brings everybody together for a common cause,” Worsham said.

But for many people, the most important part of the trip from Greenville to Rankin County is getting to see friends and family who are receiving services at Mississippi State Hospital.

“We have 17 people who are coming to visit their family this year,” Lee said. “For some of them, this is the only time of the year they get to visit.”

That’s part of the reason Bennett McCullum comes down every December. He’s been the bus driver for the past several years. There wasn’t a charter bus this year, but he still made the two-and-a-half hour trip through the rain, sitting in the driver’s seat of one of the vans.

“I love outreach. That’s kind of my area. I’m pretty well involved in outreach, and I enjoy coming down here and seeing everyone at the hospital. I always look forward to seeing everyone here. It’s a good atmosphere,” McCullum said.

Besides bringing the gifts and donations, McCullum visited a church member who now resides in Jaquith Nursing Home, and he said he was glad to be able help other people visit their loved ones.”

“This is a time for everyone to be of one accord,” McCullum said. “We should show love to one another. This is the season where we celebrate our Lord’s birth, and we need to remember everything he did and show good will towards all men.”

Vernice Evans, manager of the clothing donation center at Mississippi State Hospital, said her department sees plenty of good will during the holiday season every year.

“We’re able to do what we do only because of the donations of groups like this,” she said. “A lot of the patients here wouldn’t have a Christmas at all if it weren’t for the generosity of these people. We completely rely on these donations.”

The “Greenville Bus Day” is as much a tradition for Mississippi State Hospital as it is for the Washington County Mental Health Association, Evans said.

“We were looking forward to it this year, and we’re going to be looking forward to it next year,” she said.
After weeks of celebrating holiday cheer across the campus, the Christmas season at Mississippi State Hospital came to a close with Santa Day on Tuesday, Dec. 22. Dozens of MSH staff members, community leaders and elected officials all came to the campus to distribute gifts to MSH patients and Jaquith Nursing Home residents. Each patient, resident and individual served in the community received a gift bag containing clothes, personal items, fruit and candy. Those dressed as Santa Claus went out and personally delivered the gifts to each patient and resident building on the MSH campus.

Santa Day was the end of almost a month of festivities that kicked off Dec. 4, when the hospital hosted its annual Christmas parade. Patients, residents, staff and visitors to the hospital braved temperatures that dipped into the 30s to come catch glimpses of a parade full of marching bands, antique cars, pet therapy animals, carriages and, of course, Santa tossing out some Christmas candies. Joel Ross, director of the Rankin County Division of BankPlus and a board member for Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, was the grand marshal.

The hospital’s yearly Christmas program even featured a delightful twist. Dubbed “A Christmas Pastiche,” it was a literary collage of entertainment that showcased musical and comedy work, along with just the right amount of Christmas sentiment. The highlight was a reading of “A Cajun Night Before Christmas,” which featured Santa wearing muskrat fur and riding in a flat-bottomed boat pulled by eight alligators.

More than a thousand volunteers visited the campus with church and civic organizations to host Christmas parties this year, coming in 137 different groups. These parties, which include food, gifts and caroling, began visiting the campus in November this year, coming from all over the state to spread Christmas cheer and good will.

Photos of the MSH Christmas activities – including the surprise snow that blanketed the campus the weekend of Dec. 5 – can be found online at www.msh.state.ms.us.
JAQUITH RESIDENTS STAY BUSY

Jaquith Nursing Home residents have been busy over the past three months, as those who attended the most recent Jaquith Family Council meeting found out. Forty-seven family members attended the quarterly meeting to not only visit with their loved ones, but in order to meet with JNH staff and administrators and hear an update on resident life.

October was a fun month for JNH residents, as many of them took part in the annual pumpkin decorating contest. Jaquith Inn won the award for most resident involvement. They transformed the building into “Crossbones Inn,” complete with forbidding signs and a ghastly greeter awaiting visitors at the front door. Building 48, Adams Inn, received the best presentation award for becoming “Ghosts and Goblins Ranch.” The most creative award was given to Building 33, Jefferson Inn, whose residents turned their pumpkin into a spooky white ghost. The scariest award went to Building 34, Madison Inn, which featured a ghastly pumpkin with grisly tastes.

Family Council attendees also heard about the many Christmas-related activities that have been going on at Mississippi State Hospital since the beginning of the month. Residents participated in the annual Christmas parade, the annual Christmas program and 600 volunteers have visited the nursing home, throwing a total of 38 Christmas parties for residents there.

In addition to those Christmas activities, JNH residents had a Senior Citizens Banquet, took a trip to the Mississippi State Fair in October, and they took part in a western-themed festival and hayride at the campgrounds on the MSH campus in November. Plans are already in place for several events early this year, including a parade to honor Martin Luther King Day, a Valentine’s Day event, and a St. Patrick’s Day event.

A CURE FOR THE HOLIDAY BLUES

It’s not uncommon for people to get a little down, have a little less energy and want to sleep a little bit more during the cold winter months. It’s just something a lot of people have come to expect.

But at the Dec. 12 Jaquith Family Council meeting, Dr. John Askew gave a presentation on Seasonal Affective Disorder that went over signs and symptoms of the condition, and also handed out some tips on how to cope with those holiday blues.

“Seasonal depression, Christmas depression, Christmas blues, whatever you want to call it, is a fairly common occurrence,” Askew said. “Most people are familiar with it.”

It can affect anyone, Askew said, people who are already have a mood disorder as well as people who are normally happy and cheery during most times of the year. Strangely enough, it is more prevalent at higher latitudes, or the farther away from the equator someone is.

It is related to the shift in the seasons; as days shorten, that affects the body’s internal clock.

“During the shorter winter months, your internal biological clock can sort of get out of step with your daily schedule,” Askew said. “The shift is partly related to the length of the day.”

That shift can bring about a variety of symptoms in people – increased sadness, irritability, anxiety, decreased energy, sleepiness, or increased appetite.

“Of course, if you have all of these things, you’re going to have more trouble concentrating on any task at hand, and of course, all of these result in social and interpersonal strain,” Askew said.

The good news is that the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder can be reduced through a lot of the simple things your doctor usually tells you to do: go outside, get more exercise, and eat more fruits and vegetables.

“For people who suffer from this particularly, you can even try to arrange your home and workplace to get more sunlight,” Askew said.

Askew said that was because Seasonal Affective Disorder has been linked to increased levels of the hormone melatonin, which affects the body’s natural sleep cycle. When exposed to more levels of natural light, the melatonin levels taper off. But when the days shorten, melatonin production increases earlier than usual. We get tired earlier in the day, and that can be part of the whole cause of SAD.

Even going outside on cold, cloudy days will still get more ambient sunlight and help counteract the effects of the shorter days. Light therapy can prove quite effective, he said. People who live farther north, such as Alaska, where the winter days may bring only a few hours of sunlight, use fluorescent lights that mimic natural, outdoor sunlight.

Though SAD can affect many people, it can easily be taken care of, Askew told the audience.

“Watch what you eat, watch the alcohol or the sugar consumption, get more exercise,” he said. “This is a very common thing for people to experience.”
Mississippi State Hospital Community Services observed not only the annual Opportunity House Christmas luncheon, but also celebrated the program’s 20th anniversary on Friday, Dec. 11.

Founded in 1989, Opportunity House is based on a rehabilitative clubhouse model in which members have a chance to learn and strengthen skills they can use to live independently. It provides opportunities for individuals to return to the job market in a gradual and less stressful environment.

“This program is a shining star for community services in so many ways,” Community Services Director Dr. Cynthia Johnson told those at the luncheon. “If anyone is ever feeling down, all they have to do is come over here, see what’s going on and they’ll feel better instantly.”

At the Christmas luncheon, Community Services staff served the Opportunity House members and recognized them for their work and contributions over the past year, waiting on them and handing out certificates, gift cards and holding one grand prize drawing.

“They are the guests today. They are the designated VIPs,” Johnson said.

Community Services provides psychiatric medication management, psychiatric nursing services and psychological services. Psychology staff also provides individual and group counseling, and vocational training instructors provide daily living skills training.

Opportunity House began as a pilot program, and has now become one of the longest running psycho-social rehabilitation programs in the state.

“This has grown tremendously in the 10 years I’ve been here. It’s become a true clubhouse,” Opportunity House Director Charlie Hardy said. “Over time the individuals have become very motivated. They take pride in the program, they enjoy coming and this is member-driven, because they run it with support from staff.”

The program has been growing steadily in recent years, Hardy said. He said they are looking to become certified by the International Center for Clubhouse Development. That certification serves as a symbol of quality and commitment. As of January 2009, there were only 138 ICCD certified clubhouses in the country.

About 70 members came to the luncheon, with everyone recognized for their participation in the program and some receiving certificates for their involvement in the transitional employment program. There are about 45-50 members who come to Opportunity House daily.

“And we’ve got over 500 total members,” Hardy said. “Once a member, always a member.”

Johnson said being in the program requires active participation.

“You can’t just come and sit. It’s about doing,” she said. “These folks are working to make this program run.”