



*"Saving Lives in Tennessee"*

**Advisory Council Meeting  
Wednesday, September 9, 2015  
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
Trevecca Community Church  
335 Murfreesboro Pike  
Nashville, TN 37210**

### **Minutes**

#### **Advisory Council Members Present**

Tim Tatum, MA, LPC-MHSP, Director of Behavioral Health, Pine Ridge Treatment Center  
(Advisory Council Chair/Southeast Regional Chair)

Karyl Chastain Beal, M.Ed., Retired/Community Advocate (Advisory Council Co- Chair / South  
Central Regional Chair / Outreach Committee Chair)

Jennifer Harris, MS, Director, Senior Care Program, St. Thomas Hickman Hospital (Chair,  
Hickman-Perry Suicide Prevention Task Force)

Anne Stamps, Center Director, Cumberland Mountain Mental Health Center/Dale Hollow  
Mental Health Center (Advisory Council Co-Secretary / Upper Cumberland Regional Chair)

Anne Young, MS, CAS, Program Director, Young Adult and Residential Relapse Recovery  
Program, Cornerstone of Recovery (East Tennessee Regional Chair and Advisory Council  
Co-Secretary)

Sabrina Anderson, Executive Director, Boys and Girls Clubs of Jackson-Madison County (Rural  
West Regional Chair)

John B. Averitt, Ph.D., Upper Cumberland Psychological Associates/Police Psychological  
Officer, Cookeville Police Department

Kathy Benedetto, LPC, SPE, LMFT, Senior Vice-President, Tennessee Child and Youth  
Services, Frontier Health

Vickie Bilbrey, Marketing Recruiting Coordinator, OAKPOINT Center

Brenda Harper, Community Advocate/Retired

Cindy Johnson, Community Activist

Eve Nite, Business Development Specialist, Mental Health Cooperative of Chattanooga

Stephenie Robb, Executive Director, Behavioral Health Initiatives, Inc.

Katie Rosas, Community Outreach Specialist, Focus Treatment Centers

Kim Rush, Ed.S., LPC-MHSP, Vice-President of Operations, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care  
System

Kandi Shearer, Clinical Director, Youth Villages Specialized Crisis Services

Jack Stewart, MA, President, NAMI Greene County

Becky Stoll, Vice President of the Crisis and Disaster Management, Centerstone

Ellen Stowers, Assistant Director, Contact Lifeline

Angie Thompson, Metro (Nashville) Public Health Department (Davidson County Suicide  
Prevention Task Force)

**Intra-State Departmental Group Members Present**

Michelle Bauer, Suicide Prevention Program Manager, Tennessee National Guard  
Jacquelyn S. Bruce, Planning and Grants Management Supervisor, Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability  
Gwen Hamer, MA, Director, Education and Development, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services  
Shannon Hall, MA, Grants & Special Projects Director, Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security  
Terrence (Terry) Love, MS, CPC, Injury Prevention Manager, Division of Family Health and Wellness, Injury and Violence Prevention, Tennessee Department of Health (Intra-State Departmental Group Chair)  
Delora Ruffin, MA, Program Specialist, Division of Child Health, Tennessee Department of Children's Services  
Melissa Sparks, MSN, RN, Director, Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention, Division of Mental Health Services, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

**Advisory Council Members Absent**

Ursula Bailey, JD, MBA, Attorney, Private Practice  
Renee Brown, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Memphis VA Medical Center  
Patsy Crockett, BSW, Case Manager IV, Tennessee Department of Children's Services  
Harold Leonard, MA, LPC-MHSP, Cognitive Behavioral Specialists of the Tri-Cities (Northeast Regional Chair)  
Mike LaBonte, Executive Director, Memphis Crisis Center  
Rita McNabb, Coordinated School Health Director, Cocke County Schools  
Christopher Morris, Ed.S, Assistant Principal, North Side High School  
Waring Porter, Pastor, All Saints Presbyterian Church (Memphis/Shelby County Regional Chair)  
Christen Thorpe, MS, CRC, CATSM, Child and Adolescent Therapist, Pastoral Counseling Centers of Tennessee (Mid-Cumberland Regional Chair)  
Tabi R. Upton, Community Activist

**Intra-State Departmental Group Members Absent**

John Allen, Director of Behavioral Health Services, Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration  
Mark Brece, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs  
Teresa Kimbro Culbreath, Litter Grant Program, Statewide Coordinator, Highway Beautification Office, Tennessee Department of Transportation  
Sherlean Lybolt, M.A., Mental Health Programs Coordinator, Tennessee Department of Correction  
Melissa McGee, Council on Children's Mental Health Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth  
Michelle Ramsey, RN, State Public Health Nursing Director, Tennessee Department of Health  
Capt. Noel Riley-Philpo, Risk Reduction, Resilience and Suicide Prevention Manager, Joint Force Headquarters, Tennessee National Guard  
Jacqueline Talley, Treatment Specialist, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services,

Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

**TSPN Advisory Council Emeritus Group Members**

Jodi Bartlett, EdS, LPC-MHSP, Volunteer Behavioral Health (Upper Cumberland Regional Chair, Emeritus)

Sam Bernard, Ph.D., the PAR Foundation (Advisory Council Chair, Emeritus)

Anna Shugart, Director, Emotional Health & Recovery Center, Blount Memorial Hospital (Blount County Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Alliance Chair, Emeritus)

**TSPN Staff Present**

Vladimir Enlow, MTS, TSPN Executive Assistant

Scott Ridgway, MS, TSPN Executive Director

**Guests**

Jonathan Driver, guest of Dr. Bernard

**Welcoming Remarks**

Tatum called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM.

**Approval of Minutes from Previous Advisory Council Meeting**

- Members reviewed minutes from the June meeting.
- In terms of corrections, Stowers noted a repeated passage on pages 4-5 of said minutes.
- Young motioned for approval of the minutes as amended; Rush seconded and there were no objections.

**Regional Reports**

**Northeast Region**

- Stewart reported that East Tennessee Regional Coordinator Scott Payne continues to lead QPR training sessions for staff at Frontier Health.
- The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Memorial Walk will take place this month at Warrior's Path State Park in Kingsport. About 100 people have committed to participating in this event.

**East Tennessee Region**

- Young is very excited about the upcoming "Diversity in Faith" conference planned for the 17<sup>th</sup> of this month, and the excellent speakers and panelists lined up for this event.
  - Registration is at capacity, having been raised above the original ceiling of 175 to accommodate 20 students from South College, site of the event.
  - She appreciates all the local agencies which have partnered with TSPN to sponsor and/or promote the conference.
- Young is equally excited about the work that is being done locally on the Zero Suicide Initiative. Several area BHOs have bought into the Initiative and are actively working to implement it.

**Upper Cumberland Region**

- Stamps discussed the region's representation in the panel discussion held during the Daniel Seal Suicide Prevention Forum held on August 18. The event, held at Stevens

Street Baptist Church in Cookeville, was attended by around 50 people.

- QPR sessions are ongoing in the area; these included a session at the Safe and Accountable Schools Conference at TTU in August. 250 people attended the conference, which also included an exhibit from TSPN.
- Stamps acknowledged Bilbrey's assistance in coordinating a two-day exhibit at the Healthy Living Expo at Volunteer State Community College.
- Over 100 people attended the annual "Light to Hope" event at the Cookeville Higher Education Campus on September 1.
  - This year's program included several new features, such as a presentation by Samantha Nadler on the lived experience movement, new musical performers, and the extremely popular floating lanterns that closed out the event.

### **Southeast Region**

- Nite announced that nearly every county and major city in the Southeast Region has signed off on a Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamation.
  - The proclamations stirred local interest in suicide prevention training, culminating in QPR sessions for all supervisory personally at the Hamilton County Jail coordinated by Wanda Mays of the HCSO—a priority since the latest report by the Treatment Advocacy Center (2014) shows someone in mental health crisis is ten times more likely to end up in jail than a mental health facility. The City of Red Bank also pledged the use of all their city's facilities (parks, community centers etc.) for use for Suicide Prevention trainings and events at no cost.
- Nite personally facilitated a three-day QPR session for Chattanooga's EMS responders and firefighters.
  - She explained that the training sessions for firefighters proved challenging, since they occasionally had to leave in the middle of training for emergency calls and because of the demographic involved—mostly male and often skeptical of the need for this training. However, all of the evaluations were positive and several made comments such as "I had incorrect thoughts about suicide, those thoughts are now changed".
- Preliminary anecdotal and statistical evidence indicates this may be a difficult year for the region in terms of suicides. Data from county medical examiners shows that suicide rates are on track to be 50% higher in the area over last year, and may end up 60% to 70% higher by year's end. Nite extended an appeal for members in adjacent regions to assist in outreach and training efforts.
  - According to the most recent data by the Commonwealth Fund, Tennessee has one bed for every 350 people in crisis in the region.
- Tatum added that Polk County recently lost two young people to suicide, and the local school system had been reluctant to accept offers of assistance. Tatum later found out that this was because immediately after word got about these incidents, the school system was bombarded by offers from consultants and other agencies who wanted money to provide counseling.
  - Ultimately the Southeast Region was able to get into the school system with the assistance of the local United Way, providing training to both high schools and one middle school. Next week a presentation has been scheduled for a high school

class with 50 students, and there has been talk of training for elementary school staff as well.

### **Mid-Cumberland Region**

- Johnson provided an update on the Montgomery-Houston-Humphreys Suicide Prevention Task Force, which she states is being invigorated by new members and newfound passion for the cause.
  - There were twelve people at the last Task Force meeting, compared to an average of four or five the past year.
- The Task Force has secured proclamations from all counties within the area, and media coverage has helped generate interest in suicide prevention training.
  - The *Leaf-Chronicle* out of Clarksville is planning to run an article on Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. In the meantime, Task Force activities have been covered by *Clarksville Now*, and TSPN PSAs are in steady rotation on 5 Star Radio affiliates.
- Local funeral homes have received questionnaires about their policies and needs in terms of dealing with survivors of suicide; this is a project Johnson would like to see expanded statewide.
  - Johnson has personally reached out to all such businesses in Montgomery County about the possibility of suicide prevention training.
- The new members of the Task Force include a pastor who may be able to help Task Force outreach to majority-white congregations the way Pastor James Hill has helped the group reach out to African-American houses of worship.
- Meanwhile, Thompson provided an update on developments within the Davidson County Suicide Prevention Task Force. Adam Graham has accepted the position of the Davidson County Task Force Chair.
  - Initially the Task Force wanted to review specifics related to suicide deaths in Davidson County to see if there were commonalities that could lead to focused primary prevention efforts within the county. Adam met with Melissa Sparks and learned that the State is working on gathering similar data. Consequently, the DCSPT opted not to pursue this as it would be duplicative.
  - The need for access to resources for individuals post suicide attempts emerged as a need in task force meeting discussion. Under Adam's leadership the DCSPTF is refocusing its efforts to develop a network/listing of providers that have expertise in working with survivors of suicide attempts.

### **South Central Region**

- Chastain Beal said that most work in this region has focused around the Centerville and Tullahoma areas. As such, she turned the floor over to Harris and Stowers to give updates on these respective localities.
- Harris spoke about the rejuvenation of the Hickman-Perry County Suicide Prevention Task Force, which is holding its annual Suicide Awareness & Prevention Walk/Program on September 12. Local suicide survivor and activist Rachel Moore is the keynote speaker.
- This year the Task Force is experimenting with having the annual walk on the same day as another annual event where it usually exhibits: the Grinder's Switch Music and Arts

Festival. For the first time in the Task Force's history, the group has enough volunteers to work both events.

- This also gives the Task Force the opportunity to exhibit at the National Banana Pudding Festival next month. This is a two-day event, and usually volunteers are too exhausted after working one or the other of the aforementioned events to take part.
- In other news, local schools have expressed interest in implementing suicide crisis protocols, and Harris would appreciate other Council members providing copies of their local schools' action plans.
- In regards to events in the Tullahoma area, Stowers said that recent personnel changes within Contact had freed her up to do more with TSPN. She has made several appointments for training with local police department in Bedford, Coffee, and Franklin Counties.
- Additionally, Franklin County will be the site of an Awareness Walk on October 3, to be held at the Old Franklin County Football Field in Winchester.
- Stowers noted that the event is creating an opening to discuss suicide prevention with local groups and individuals who had been previously unreceptive. This is especially true in Bedford County, which had been largely unreachable by Network efforts.

### **Rural West Region**

- Anderson reported that her region hosted the first of this year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Month events—the Suicide Prevention/Awareness 2-Mile Walk at Beech Lake in Lexington, which was very well-attended and an excellent follow-up to the awareness walk held in Jackson in July. She appreciated the efforts of Paula Terry from Pathways (this year's Regional Suicide Prevention Award winner) for taking the lead on this event.
- The region continues to grow thanks to free advertising by Amerigroup and the Jackson-Madison County Health Department. The group is now meeting at a new and larger location.
- Anderson spoke about the Regional Suicide Prevention Conference held on September 3 at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital, which featured three event tracks for participants. About 70 people registered for the general suicide prevention track while 30 others participated in one of the Mental Health First Aid tracks (one for youth and the other for adults).
- Anderson expressed her gratitude to the Jackson-Madison County Health Department for the four free billboard advertisements it provided to TSPN.

### **Memphis/Shelby County Region**

- Ridgway presented this report on behalf of regional chair Porter, who was unable to attend today's meeting due to personal matters.
- He recalled the "Psychology of Suicide" workshop held September 1 at Hope Church in Cordova, headlined by Dr. Alan O. Battle Chief of the Division of Clinical Psychology at the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. The three-hour workshop was attended by a capacity crowd of over 300 people.
  - AFSP also provided two speakers at the "Psychology of Suicide" event, as part of the developing partnership between TSPN and AFSP.

- TSPN will also have a booth at the local AFSP walk on October 17 at the Memphis Botanic Garden.
- This region has procured five Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamations, which is impressive considering the region only covers the one county. The documents came from Memphis suburbs as well as the city of Memphis and from Shelby County.
- Brown was unable to join us today as she is overseeing Suicide Prevention Awareness Month events at the Memphis VA. The facility has events almost every day this month, promoted via an events calendar patterned after our own “30 Days” calendar.
- Finally, the region is in the early stages of planning another regional event in the spring, presumably to be held at Hope Church.

### **Other Business**

#### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

- Ridgway was not able to provide the group with copies of the call volume spreadsheet, but did offer an overview of recent call volumes.
- There was a marked increase in calls to the Lifeline originating in Tennessee between June and July (from 2,159 to 2,411), which held steady through August (2,360). During these three months, only 26 of these calls “leaked”—that is, bounced to call centers in other states.
- Ridgway postulated that the reason for the increase might be due to increased local promotion of the Lifeline in advance of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

#### **TSPN Office Move**

- Ridgway provided an update on the office move, starting with a recap of the circumstances surrounding the office’s displacement.
  - MHAMT had been leasing an office from XMi Property Management. The property had previously been part of Draughons Business College, later the Daymar Institute. MHAMT was considering moving to another location, and as such was paying rent on a month-to-month basis.
  - In late June, the air conditioning unit broke, and XMi realized that the entire unit would have to be replaced. XMi apparently did not see the point of repairing the system considering that MHAMT might be leaving the premises. They not only refused to repair the HVAC, they also served MHAMT with an eviction notice, ordering them out of the Plus Park Boulevard property within 30 days. Ridgway adds that by the time the notice arrived, a week had already passed, requiring the agency to make immediate arrangements to pack and vacate the office by August 8.
  - Most MHAMT property, from brochures to furniture, is currently stored in portable storage units. MHAMT and TSPN staff, including Ridgway, was responsible for much of the packing.
  - This explains why today’s Suicide Prevention Awareness Day event was missing some subtle elements usually included in the ceremony, such as the TSPN banner and some of the quilts.

- MHAMT has signed off on occupancy of an office on Metroplex Drive off Harding Pike. Move-in is anticipated for some time in early or mid-October.
- All TSPN staff are currently working from home during the interim, which has posed logistical issues in terms of making copies and completing paperwork.
- The award Love presented to Ridgway and the TSPN staff on behalf of the Intra-State Departmental Group was intended to honor their efforts to put together the Suicide Prevention Symposium and today's event in spite of the recent difficulties.
- Ridgway requested a meeting with the Executive Committee immediately following the regular Council meeting to discuss certain aspects of the move and other issues.
- In other news, Ridgway announced that Payne has submitted his resignation from his post. His last day with TSPN will September 25.
  - Payne has been offered, and has accepted, the position of Executive Director of the Metropolitan Drug Commission in Knoxville, and will start on October 1. This agency provides substance abuse prevention resources for families, teachers, businesses, faith leaders and physicians in Knoxville, and is the city's only non-profit solely dedicated to evidence-based drug prevention. As Executive Director, he will supervise 10 office staff and work with a board of appointed city officials, including delegates from both the Mayor's and Sheriff's Offices.
  - In October, TSPN will begin taking applications for the new East Tennessee Regional Coordinator and will send out a notice to this effect. Members of the Council are encouraged to inform potentially qualified parties of this opportunity.

### **Statewide T4T Training**

- These courses were made possible by way of leftover funding from the Extended Follow-up Program grant, as well as a grant from the BCBST Foundation. Ridgway expressed his appreciation of Centerstone Research Institute for helping to make these courses possible.
- The funds are being used to embed trainers in AMSR, ASIST, and QPR within the community mental health agencies, state departments, and partners with the Tennessee Higher Education Suicide Prevention Network and the Zero Suicide Initiative.
  - The ASIST instructor course, which will be open to 24 new and existing trainers across the state. It will be held on October 5-9 in Nashville. It is closed to the general public and will be offered primarily to delegates of agencies associated with the Zero Suicide Initiative. Ridgway acknowledged Leitsch's assistance in coordinating this process.
  - The AMSR instructor training is open to 20 new trainers to train clinical staff. 15 seats are designated for delegates from community mental health centers across the state.
    - Ridgway explained that several applications submitted are having to be redone, and about four or five of those submitted have been rejected outright. Anyone who wants to complete an application on their agency's behalf but has questions should contact Ridgway.
  - The QPR instructor training is open to anyone from across the state. TSPN has assigned scholarships for 10 Zero Suicide Initiative participants, 10 state department employees, 10 regional members across the state, and 10 people associated with THESPN. Anyone else not already contacted can attend upon



- payment of the \$500 registration fee.
  - Courses are set for 8 AM-5 PM on the following dates and locations:
    - Tuesday, October 13 in Nashville, TBA
    - Monday, October 19 in Knoxville, Cornerstone of Recovery
    - Thursday, October 29 in Jackson, West Tennessee Healthcare
  - Ridgway mentioned that Hall is arranging for a delegate from TDSHS who will provide the training to Tennessee State Troopers.
- Ridgway conceded that coordinating the T4T registrations is a great deal of work, but will pay off in the long run; it will free up TSPN staff who might otherwise be involved with these training sessions for other projects. Meanwhile, the new trainers will help TSPN fulfill its grant and training outcomes.
- Ridgway cautioned that the QPR instructors will not only be responsible for facilitating courses, but also for turning in all their paperwork (i.e., the pre/post-test evaluation and demographic forms) to the central office.
- Ridgway also spoke about the “Suicide to Hope” pilot program. This is a course for those working directly with suicidal individuals. Nadler and Scott Hollenbeck will participate in this course, along with Crystal Henson from Centerstone (formerly the Program Manager for MHAMT). Hollenbeck is the director of the outpatient clinic at Frontier.
  - Each one of these instructors will be charged with training several hundred people across Middle and East Tennessee. Nadler will focus on Mental Health Cooperative and Volunteer Behavioral Health, Hollenbeck will start with Frontier Health, and Henson will work with Centerstone.
- These courses represent a great opportunity for the state of Tennessee, and Ridgway thanked TDMHSAS for its support during the process.
- Benedetto asked how soon AMSR applicants can get updates regarding their applications; Ridgway said that he received updates both today and yesterday. He also informed her that Chad Duncan, the candidate from Frontier, had been approved for the course.

### **TDMHSAS Update**

- Sparks discussed the work done with the contract vendors to arrange for disbursement of the leftover grant funding ahead of close of the federal fiscal year on September 30. The majority of the carry over funding is being reallocated to TSPN to ensure we reach our training goals. The AMSR and ASIST T4T programs were deemed necessary because even though QPR is an excellent program, clinicians need something more advanced.
- Sparks spoke about recent TDMHSAS activities to establish a Focus Group to assist with the development of a suicide prevention curriculum specific to crisis counselors. She acknowledged that suicide prevention training can be very expensive and to sustain efforts made to ensure every crisis counselor receives suicide prevention training, this curriculum is being created so that it can be offered free of charge. The curriculum will include skills needed specific to the crisis system such as (e.g., safety planning, means reduction education). Sparks acknowledged Murphy and Lygia Williams for taking the lead on this issue. The curriculum will emphasize the fact that not all people in crisis thrive in an inpatient environment and may actually get worse after leaving a controlled environment. The curriculum will focus on making the most of natural supports.

- Sparks acknowledged the efforts of Leitsch and the Zero Suicide Initiative Task Force for their work thus far on what is probably the largest initiative of its kind launched in this state, and the one with the most potential for transforming Tennessee’s behavioral health care system.
- Sparks mentioned that crisis workers are being encouraged to attend the First Episode Psychology Conference on September 2-3. This conference specializes in enhancing responses to clients who are suffering their first psychotic break. Sparks commented that crisis workers are often the first contact people have in these situations, and the interaction can “make or break” their potential for service linkage, follow-through and recovery.
- Sparks talked about the Department’s work on an educational brochure on means reduction, developed in partnership with TSPN and the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence. The brochure discusses how to conduct safety sweeps of a home or private residence. It will be distributed to crisis workers, emergency departments, and primary care physicians across the state.
- The Enhanced Follow-Up Programs associated with CONNECT and TARGET are live as of August 17, with the first referral made that very day. Stoll confirmed that there are upwards of ten participants in the program at present.
- Suicide prevention training has been added to the Mandatory Pre-screening Agent (MPA) training for professionals designated to complete the first certificate of need for emergency involuntary hospitalization. QPR will be provided until the crisis counselor curriculum is completed at which time it will also be added to the MPA refresher course required every two years.
- Mental health training for the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services is in the process of completion; it has suicide prevention training embedded in it.
- An article promoting TSPN and the Zero Suicide Initiative ran in the most recent edition of the Tennessee Nursing Association’s newsletter which has a circulation of 90,000 readers. The spot included a list of common suicide warning signs and risk factors.
- Sparks reported that during FY15, Mobile Crisis responded to more than 110,000 calls and assessed more than 72,000 people (adults and youth) in person statewide.
- Finally, Sparks announced that the number of recorded suicides in Tennessee declined in 2014, from 1,017 to 945.
  - Enlow added that this translated to a decline in the suicide rate from 15.7 per 100,000 to 14.7.

### **Intra-State Departmental Group**

- Love spoke about the strategic planning retreat the Group held on August 12, which included a brainstorming session about what individual departments are doing and should be doing in terms of suicide prevention.
  - General consensus was that the departments are not using EAP services enough, that staff members are not sufficiently trained in suicide prevention, and that there is poor communication about crisis intervention protocols among the rank and file.
  - As a result of this meeting, Group members resolved to form department-specific task forces to implement the ideas recommended by the Network. The

Department of Health has already started this process and has the Director on board.

- The CDC has announced Public Health Grand Rounds on December 15: “Preventing Suicide: A Comprehensive Public Health Approach”. The program will run about an hour, and will be recorded and archived. Love will send out the link once it becomes available.
- Love spoke briefly about the award presented to Ridgway and the staff during today’s ceremony. He noted that the award had been approved by the entire Intra-State Departmental Group.
- Love mentioned that Danielle Barnes, Legal Counsel for the State Department of Human Resources, has agreed to join the Intra-State Departmental Group. She shared that she had received questions regarding suicide, and she may be able to help TSPN put some policies in place.
  - Bruce mentioned that small agencies like hers have little influence over state policy and would appreciate this Department’s involvement in the process.

### **Executive Director’s Update**

- Ridgway announced that Thorpe’s daughter, Iris Leigh, was born on August 27. Thorpe is planning to rotate off the Council in order to spend more time with her newborn.
  - Thorpe’s intentions have been conveyed to the office of Boards and Commissions within the Governor’s Office, which is currently working with TSPN on the appointment process. Members of the Advisory Council may be contacted by the Governor’s Office in the coming months. Several other current Council members are planning to rotate off.
- Ridgway described this year’s Suicide and the Black Church Conference, held in Memphis in June, was one of the best staged thus far. The documentary *Mind/Game: The Unquiet Journey of Chamique Holdsclaw*, was very well-received.
- The Upper Cumberland Region was the first TSPN region to secure Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamations from all its constituent counties. As mentioned earlier, the Memphis/Shelby Region obtained five documents even though it only covers one county.
- Breakdowns of suicide numbers and rates by county, age, sex, and race are forthcoming and will be shared with TSPN members once they come in. There has been a delay in getting these numbers due to changes in procedure within TDH. Sparks and Ridgway have been working with Hongyan Ma, the Department’s new epidemiologist to get these data requests.
- Ridgway thanked Sparks for her assistance in arranging the promotion in the Tennessee Nursing Association newsletter.
- Ridgway provided a summary of materials and outreach figures for fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015).
  - 133 booths/displays statewide, serving an estimated 31,123 people
  - 82 Suicide prevention training sessions/presentations in Tennessee, with 4,627 total participants
  - 303 Training/presentations, which include QPR, A&D, TIP 50, THESPN, LGBT, ASIST, 9,500 total participants

- 28 radio, television, newspaper and/or online profiles, appearances, and/or references with reaching over 483,089 people
- 45,446 total people reached through TSPN presentations, training sessions, and exhibits
- 387 Gun Safety materials dropped off
- 13,553 resource directories statewide
- 9,173 TSPN/National Suicide Prevention Lifeline magnets
- Ridgway announced that the Network has received word of a suicide death affecting a high school in Murfreesboro and has provided consultation to the school. The Network is working with the Tennessee Department of Education on the rollout of “Connecting Youth to Hope” a statewide project to help school systems develop comprehensive suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention policies/procedures. Reports from the field indicate that in some school systems, staff members are largely uninformed about what to do with a student in crisis.
- Ridgway reported that tweets from the Suicide Prevention Symposium had 6 million impressions according to Symplur, a company that analyzes social media for healthcare organizations, and Hash tracking, which tracks hashtags for a nominal fee.
  - TSPN’s Facebook page continues to receive impressive traffic, but Ridgway acknowledged that Facebook is no longer the social media platform of choice for young people, and the Network is interested in exploring alternatives.
- Ridgway spoke about TSPN’s developing relationship with AFSP, thanks to leadership changes at the national level and the assistance of Hall, a member of its Middle Tennessee chapter. AFSP was a sponsor of the Suicide Prevention Symposium, is covering costs for Mental Health First Aid training, and is permitting TSPN to exhibit at most of its upcoming Out of the Darkness Community Walks. TSPN will have a particularly strong presence at the one held at Owen Bradley Park in Nashville this Saturday.
  - Hall said that she cherishes the relationship that her chapter has with TSPN, and notes that in the end, both organizations are working towards the same goal. She added that the Nashville walk is on track to have 1,000 participants, the most ever recorded for this event.
- Ridgway has been invited to speak at the Brady Campaign and American Public Health Association’s National Summit in Washington, DC, in October. He added that Tennessee now has a chapter of the Brady Center, and he plans to provide Council members with a link to its Facebook page.
- Ridgway has been in contact with Beth Joslin Roth, Policy Director for The Safe Tennessee Project, a newly formed, nonprofit organization focused on addressing the gun violence epidemic in our state through outreach, awareness, and advocacy. More information about this group is available on their website (<http://safetennesseeproject.org>).
- Harris mentioned that AFSP offers suicide grief support facilitator trainings, including one in late October in Indianapolis. A longtime member of the Hickman-Perry County Suicide Prevention Task Force will be attending this particular course. Hall expressed hopes that one will be held in Nashville soon.
- Averitt pointed out that the new state medical examiner, operating out of Johnson City, has asked for all law enforcement to have someone investigating all unattended deaths. In

Putnam County, a detective must investigate all such deaths and make a ruling as to the cause of death, and this is becoming common practice in many large cities in Tennessee. Considering this change in procedure, the drop in suicide numbers is particularly impressive.

- Ridgway notes that Karen Cline-Parhamovich was the first full-time state medical examiner for the State of Tennessee. Ridgway added that TSPN regions are receiving regular real-time data from local medical examiners, mentioning that the latest figures from Davidson County just came in the other day.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

- The next meeting of the Advisory Council will convene at 10:30 AM on Wednesday, February 10, 2016, Community Room, Metro Nashville Police Department Hermitage Precinct, 37076.