



*"Saving Lives in Tennessee"*

**TSPN Emeritus Group  
Conference Call Meeting  
Thursday, October 20, 2016  
10 AM Central / 11 AM Eastern  
Call-in number: (605) 477-2100  
Access code: 403540#**

## **Minutes**

### **Members Present**

Jodi Bartlett, Ed.S, LPC-MHSP, Community Advocate (Upper Cumberland Regional Chair, Emeritus / Past Emeritus Chair)

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

Carol Burroughs, Lexington County Schools (Rural West Regional Chair, Emeritus)

Clark Flatt, President/CEO, the Jason Foundation, Inc. (Advisory Council Member, Emeritus)

Jennifer Harris, St. Thomas Hickman Hospital (Advisory Council Chair, Emeritus)

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

Madge Tullis, Co-Founder and Past Advisory Council Chair, TSPN (Advisory Council Chair, Emeritus)

### **TSPN Staff Present**

Vladimir Enlow, MTS, Executive Assistant

Scott Ridgway, MS, Executive Director

### **Proceedings**

- Shugart called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM and turned the floor over to Ridgway for an update from the TSPN central office.

### **TSPN Update**

- There were about 20 different events across Tennessee associated with this year's Suicide Prevention Awareness Month campaign, with over 2,000 in attendance total.
  - TSPN members have procured 117 Suicide Prevention Awareness Month proclamations, representing 85 counties. This compares to the 110 proclamations from 86 counties obtained last year. Ridgway anticipates receiving additional proclamations at the next East Tennessee regional meeting.
- The TDE Commissioner has signed off on the model school suicide prevention policy necessitated by the "Jared's Law" expansion to the Jason Flatt Act of 2007. Once it is e-mailed out to the state's 141 school districts, the Network will share it with the Advisory Council, the Emeritus Group, and TSPN staff.

- Ridgway commented that the document is only three pages long, but involved the input and cooperation of several state departments, mental health stakeholders, and other agencies—TSPN included.
- Ridgway noted that the Tennessee School Board Association had drafted a policy of its own with one key difference: it required students who received inpatient therapy at a mental health facility following a suicide attempt to obtain a note from the facility or a therapist certifying that they were no longer a danger to themselves before allowing them to return to school.
- Such policies had been adopted by school districts in various parts of the state (this point had come up in recent regional meetings). But the problem is that most facilities and therapists are reluctant to sign such statements for confidentiality reasons. Consequently, the model policy put out by TDE does not include this requirement. Ridgway encouraged Emeritus Group members to spread the word about the updated policy, specifically that it does not require these statements.
- A reception honoring outgoing TDMHSAS Commissioner Doug Varney was held at Tennessee Tower on Friday, with about 250 people in attendance. Incoming Commissioner Marie Williams served as emcee and Governor Bill Haslam was among those present.
  - Ridgway anticipates Williams naming deputy commissioners at a later date.
- TSPN staff and volunteers have provided some form of suicide prevention training to over 7,500 people since July 1. This number represents more people than TSPN trained during the entire first half of FY 16.
- The Network's upcoming focus will involve scheduling of QPR instructor (T4T) trainings and, in advance of these sessions, collection of QPR kits from inactive trainers.

### **Role of the Emeritus Group**

- Shugart, with assistance from Harris, recapped the discussion during the June retreat regarding a more active role for the Emeritus Group within the Advisory Council, one that best makes use of their expertise and experience.
  - The idea that received the most interest from Emeritus Group members was the prospect of mentorship and orientation for newly appointed Council members, with the objective of providing them with as much information and understanding about their roles and responsibilities ahead of their first meetings. Emeritus members could meet with these newcomers in person and communicate with them by conference call.
- Ridgway recalled that during one of the past February meetings, he held an orientation for new Council members during the committee meeting segment. Future TSPN retreats (funding for which has been assured for the next two years) are an option for meetings like this in the future.
- Shugart asked about the schedule for appointments to the Advisory Council; Ridgway said that as these appointments are made at the discretion of the Governor's Office, members can be appointed to the Council at any point in the calendar or fiscal year. However, it is the intent of the Governor's Office to make these appointments close to the end of September, as this is when terms end. Ridgway noted that four letters of reappointment came into the central office just this week. Burroughs supported the idea of conference call consultations, as it works well with her schedule—she noted that scheduling conflicts frequently preclude her in-person attendance at regional and Advisory Council meetings.
- Bartlett and Tullis also voiced support for idea, noting the potential for increased bonding between new Council members and Emeritus members. Flatt also liked the idea, pointing

out that some people are appointed to the Council without a full understanding what it means or what they are supposed to do.

- Harris said that the retreats offered a prime opportunity for orientation, with other provisions made for those who cannot attend.
- Shugart suggested that the mentorship should occur on two levels, since the retreat may not be the first Council function a new member is available to attend. Emeritus members can contact the newcomers by phone or in person, making a personal contact ahead of any formal orientation process.
- Ridgway explained that all new Council appointees receive e-mails from Enlow with information on upcoming regional and Council meetings, as well as contact points for the regional chair and Regional Coordinator. The Executive Director also tries to contact them personally as well.
- With the development of the Advisory Council binders, these can be provided to new members to review ahead of meetings. Regional Coordinators can also meet with them over lunch. Adding an extra layer of outreach and welcome will increase the probability of their long-term involvement with the Council and TSPN.
- Shugart asked about the role of the Regional Coordinators in meeting with new Council members; Ridgway explained that this task was incorporated into the Coordinators' new job plans. However, Emeritus Group members can also provide useful insights as they have more experience with the Network—the Coordinators are relatively new to TSPN. There should be little duplication of information.
- Flatt suggested that these meetings could be an opportunity for new Council members to learn about their roles and how they can contribute to the Council, and to come up with ideas for new projects which the Emeritus members could run past Ridgway or the Coordinators. Both of these parties should be included on these decisions and any follow-up.
- Shugart explained that the precise role of the Emeritus Group member as mentor, such as logistics and reporting back to the central office, can be worked on outside of this conference call.
- Ridgway recalled that the TSPN evaluation study conducted by Lockman earlier this year found that new and existing TSPN members/volunteers appreciate personal contact and engagement with each other, and that this is in fact one of the organization's strengths—why people stay involved.
- Harris offered to take one or more sections of the “Roles and Structures” document and explain the finer points to new members.
- Ridgway recommended the Emeritus members review their copies of the binder, which includes this document and others besides, to refer back to as needed. Any Emeritus member who does not have a binder should request one from the central office.

### **Assignment of Tasks**

- Shugart asked for volunteers who could develop a brief description of the Emeritus mentoring role to include the purpose of welcoming and engaging new council members. Anderson and Burroughs offered to take on this task. This will be a draft to use for beginning the discussion at the next conference call.
- Bartlett and Harris volunteered to go through the binders and highlight areas that should be highlighted or discussed in depth during the orientation meetings. This will also be a

draft for discussion at the next conference call. (Shugart observed that all Emeritus members may need to review the binders themselves first.)

- Harris requested that Enlow prepare a listing of the Emeritus members with their locations to see which TSPN regions are not currently represented within the group. Ridgway said that this could be added to the Emeritus roster on the website as well. These listings will be provided to the Group.
- Shugart asked for contact information of any Emeritus members not on the current call so she could approach them about involvement in this Emeritus group.
- Ridgway noted that Rush was currently on her honeymoon, no current phone or e-mail contact was available for Johnson, and the e-mail address on file for Leonard kept bouncing.

### **Scheduling of Next Meeting**

- Members discussed plans for regular meetings of the Emeritus Group to discuss this project. Quarterly meetings were initially suggested, but in the end the group decided on monthly conference calls to capitalize on the momentum of the current call.
- After review of schedules, Group members agreed on another conference call for 9 AM Central / 10 AM Eastern on Friday, November 18.
- Volunteers for the mentoring description and binder subcommittees should provide the central office with any materials to be provided to the group no later than the 11<sup>th</sup> so that these can be attached to the reminder announcement for the meeting, alongside the corresponding agenda.
- Enlow will include the meeting date on the forthcoming transmission of the minutes as well as during the November 11 reminder message.
- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:51 AM.