

BRIDGING THE GAP: REIMAGINING JUSTICE AND MENTAL HEALTH COLLABORATION

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PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

- Expectations of community/partners
- Lack of coordination among partners
- Revolving door – hospitals & jails
- Stepping Up
- Individual Meetings with Stakeholders
- Training





SHELBY COUNTY PARTNERS

- Central Alabama Wellness
- Probate Court
- Shelby County Commission
- Baptist Health Shelby Hospital
- Shelby County Sheriff's Office
- Municipal Police Departments/City Courts – 17 cities within the county
- District/Circuit Court – treatment courts
- Shelby County Community Corrections
- District Attorney's Office
- Public Defender's Office





RESOURCES

- Central Alabama Wellness – Probate Court Liaison, Stepping Up Case Manager, ACT Team
- Probate Court – Judge & Chief Clerk on-call
- Shelby County Commission – Mental Health Liaison
- Baptist Health Shelby Hospital – Adult & Geriatric Psych Units
- Shelby County Sheriff's Office – Social Worker, contract with CAW jail services
- Shelby County Community Corrections – Case Manager
- Public Defender's Office – Social Worker



COMMITMENT PROCESS

Petition Recommended



1. Complete Report of Concern and file with Probate Court
2. Provide caller with contact information for attorneys that file commitments

Petition Not Recommended



1. Complete Report of Concern and file with Probate Court
2. Provide caller with contact information for appropriate resources, if any

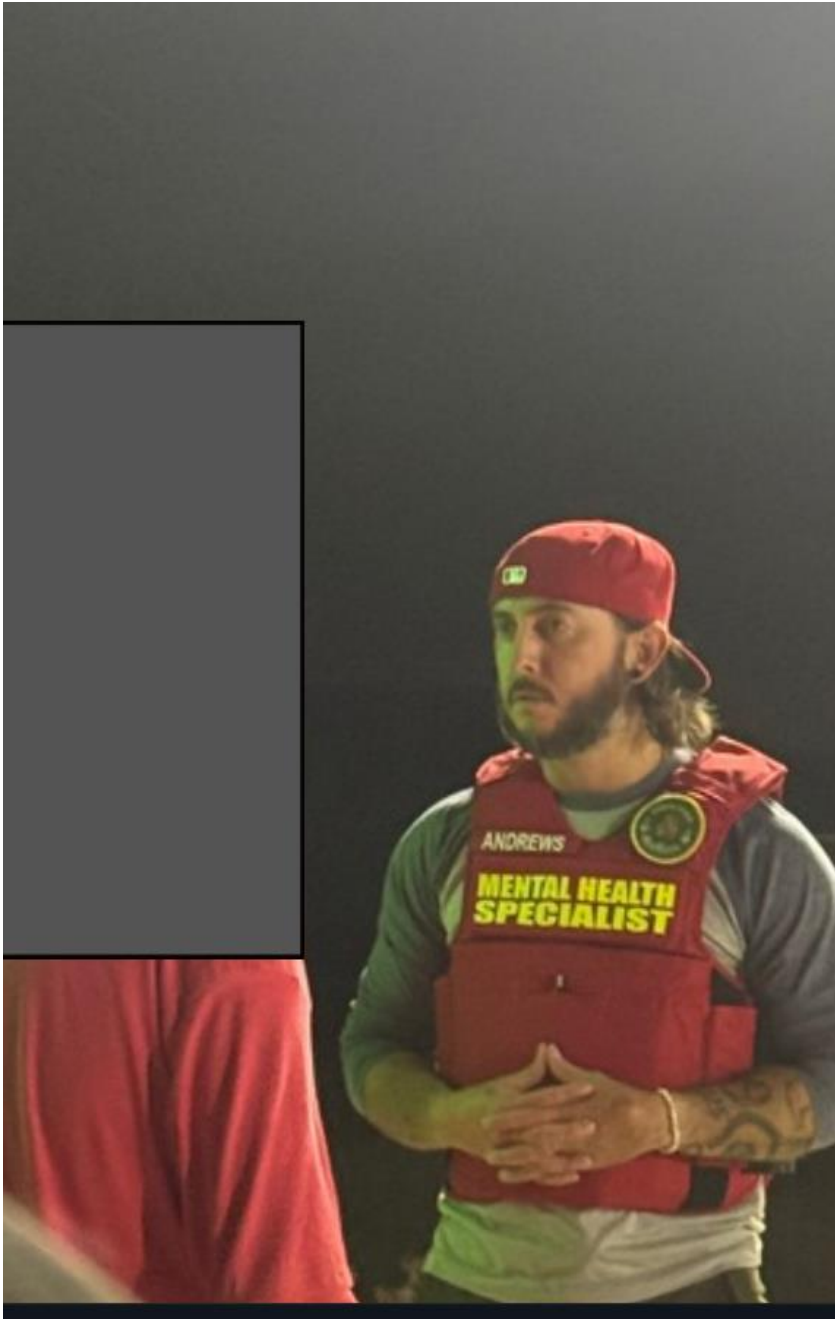
COMMITMENT PROCESS – PETITION FILED

- Court enters pickup and hold Orders immediately upon filing and review of the petition
- Respondent is picked up by Sheriff's Office and transported to ED of local hospital
- Mental Health evaluation is performed by hospital staff and/or Central Alabama Wellness (CAW) Probate Court Liaison
 - Hospitalization Recommended based on evaluation(s) – court is notified that no action is necessary
 - Probable cause hearing held no later than 7 days
 - Hospitalization Not Recommended based on evaluation(s) – the evaluation(s) is/are filed and reviewed by the Court
 - Petition dismissed
 - Hospital hold released, Respondent is required to report to court for hearing

COMMITMENT PROCESS – HEARING & OUTCOMES

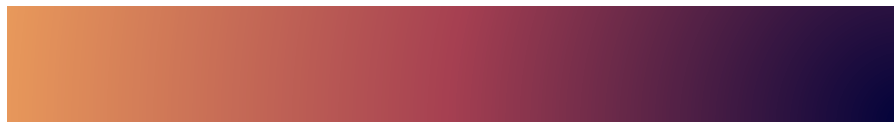
- Hearings held weekly
- Hearing Outcome –
 - Dismissal
 - Inpatient Commitment to Department of Mental Health
 - Outpatient Commitment
 - Monthly OPC review dockets





COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH LIAISON

- Bridge between mental health services and law enforcement
- Assists law enforcement in identifying and managing individuals experiencing mental health and behavioral crisis by providing consultation, resources and follow-up care and coordination
- Helps educate LEO on mental health conditions to help reduce repeat encounters and improve long-term outcomes for those with mental health needs (CIT Program)
- Works to divert individuals from jail/emergency departments when appropriate (SB240)
- Tracks mental health referrals/documentation for the Shelby County
- File petitions on behalf of law enforcement
- Spend 97% of my time in this role



MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

- Authorized to initiate a temporary court hold to have an individual evaluated at the hospital (similar to ACT 353)
- Collaborate with law enforcement on scene during crises
- Assess situations for legal and clinical criteria
- Works to divert individuals from jail/emergency departments when appropriate (SB240)
- One of the “hats” worn by the CMHL (3% of the job)



HOW CAN I BE A RESOURCE?

- Consultation on mental health concerns
- Outreach to individuals known to law enforcement
 - ie: repeat or chronic consumers
- Connection to services
 - ie: therapy, substance use treatment, housing, case management, etc
 - Central Alabama Wellness (CAW) is the primary local mental health agency
- On-scene crisis response
 - Able to come into the field, do assessments, authorize/initiate temporary court holds

INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT / PETITION PROCESS

REPORT OF CONCERN/MENTAL HEALTH REFERRAL

General Public *Report of Concern*

1. Calls the Probate Court (205.669.3710)
2. Probate Court sends contact info to Central Alabama Wellness (205.651.0077)
3. CAW takes a Report of Concern and determines if it meets criteria for a petition
 - a. **“Yes” meets criteria**
 - 1) CAW provides caller w/ contact information for attorneys
 - 2) A petition is filed.
 - 3) Person of concern is picked up by SCSO and transported to SBMC for evaluation to determine if criteria is met for admission to the psych unit
 - a) **“Yes”** – admitted to the psych unit in which a court hearing will be held Thursday morning to discuss the case (testimony from petitioner, CAW liaison, doctor’s rec)
 - b) **“No”** – (1) petition is dismissed outright (2) hospital hold is dismissed but will still have probable cause hearing on Thursday
 - b. **“No” does not meet criteria**
 - 1) ROC is filed w/ the probate court where the case will remain open for 90 days
 - 2) Provides other options and resources

Law Enforcement *Mental Health Referral*

1. Completes Mental Health Referral and sends to CMHL
2. CMHL reviews and determines if it meets criteria for a petition
 - a. **“Yes” meets criteria**
 - 1) CMHL files a petition.
 - 2) Person of concern is picked up by SCSO and transported to SBMC for evaluation to determine if criteria is met for admission to the psych unit
 - a) **“Yes”** – admitted to the psych unit in which a court hearing will be held Thursday morning to discuss the case (testimony from petitioner, CAW liaison, doctor’s rec)
 - b) **“No”** – (1) petition is dismissed outright (2) hospital hold is dismissed but will still have the probable cause hearing on Thursday
 - b. **“No” does not meet criteria**
 - 1) MH Referral is filed w/ probate court where the case will remain open for 90 days
 - 2) Provides other options and resources
 - 3) Tracks information
 - 4) CAW is notified for potential follow-up

SB240

- Expands the involuntary commitment criteria to include individuals w/ co-occurring substance use disorder alongside a *primary* mental illness.
- Enables probate judge to open discussions with district or municipal courts to suspend ongoing criminal proceedings so respondents can enter or remain in mental health treatment.
 - Only applies to misdemeanors or violations **NOT** felony charges
- Process:
 - Arrest is made.
 - Report of Concern or Mental Health Referral is completed.
 - If criteria is met, CMHL files a petition.
 - Probate Judge discusses case w/ district or municipal court judge.
 - City Jail = individual is transported to SBMC
 - County Jail = CAW evaluates individual at the jail
 - CAW evaluates the individual to determine if inpatient or outpatient treatment is most appropriate



2025 METRICS

AS OF 10/31/2025

| | |
|---|-----|
| Mental Health Referrals | 154 |
| Referrals into Petitions | 43 |
| Total Petitions | 151 |
| SB240 (Justice Involved) | 35 |
| MHO Call-Outs | 17 |
| MHO Temporary Holds | 12 |
| Currently on Outpatient Commitment | - |
| Currently on OPC w/ Justice Involved | - |

OUR STORY OF BUILDING A
BRIDGE FROM CRISIS TO
COLLABORATION