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Moundville pastor named to mental health board

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TUSCALOOSA | A Moundville pastor who is also a former Bryce Hospital facility director has been appointed by Gov. Robert Bentley to the board of trustees for the Alabama Department of Mental Health.

David Bennett, who retired in 2008 as the state mental health department's associate commissioner for the Division of Administration, spent more than 17 years working in the Alabama Department of Mental Health. A graduate of Stillman College, Bennett earned his master's degree in guidance and counseling from the University of West Alabama. He now serves as pastor of First Missionary Baptist Church in Moundville and is president of the Congress of Christian Education for the New Antioch Bethlehem District of Tuscaloosa and north Hale County.

"David is a real good friend, and he's been one of the most valuable people that I've ever worked with," said Jim Reddoch, commissioner of the state mental health department. Reddoch has known Bennett since 1992, when Reddoch came to work at Bryce. Later, Bennett served as Reddoch's executive assistant and director of facilities at Bryce.

"He is totally reliable, and totally responsible to take care of anything he's assigned to do," Reddoch said. "He's just a great helper in every respect and a very good man."

Bennett's background and career within the department will give him an in-depth view into helping guide mental health in the state, Reddoch said.

"He, of course, will be much more aware of the overall operation of the department than perhaps many of the other board members, in that he's worked in so many arenas and had the opportunity to view the operations from so many angles," Reddoch said. "He will come with a wealth of knowledge and experience and that will be very valuable to me and other members of the board."

Bennett, who was one of three appointments to the board, replaces former trustee Cecil Hopkins. Bennett's appointment, which started Sept. 7, will run through April 2015. Bennett could not be reached for comment.

Bentley made two other appointments to the board of trustees this month. Crenshaw County Probate Judge Jim Perdue was appointed as a trustee and Mobile attorney Wade Perry Jr. was re-appointed. Perry will serve through April 2015.

Perdue, who will serve through April 2014, has served as probate judge since 2002. Before that he worked as president and CEO of Perdue-Folmar Co. He is also the outgoing president of the Alabama Probate Judges Association.

There are 16 members of the Alabama Department of Mental Health board, including the governor, who serves as its chairman. Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey, House Speaker Mike Hubbard and Reddoch also serve on the board.

The remaining 12 members are appointed and represent either their congressional district or the state at large.

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