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Steve Hamerdinger, Editor

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# SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH



## REGIONAL COORDINATORS HIRED IN HUNTSVILLE, MONTGOMERY

Regional coordinators have been hired in Huntsville and Montgomery it was announced by Steve Hamerdinger, ODS Director.

**Mental Health Center of Madison County** tapped Scott Staubach, formerly of Gilsum, NH, where he was the Clinical Coordinator for Deaf Services at the Community Council of Nashua. Staubach (pictured at right) will begin his duties there in April. Scott brings a wealth of clinical experience to his position that will greatly benefit consumers throughout the state.



His particular area of expertise is Cognitive Behavior Therapy with Deaf consumers.

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**Montgomery Area Mental Health Authority** has announced the appointment of William Olubodun, Ph.D, of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, as the Region III Coordinator,

Dr. Olubodun (pictured at left) received his Doctorate from the University of Nebraska Lincoln program in Higher Educational Administration. He has spent most of his professional life working in the areas of advocacy, education and empowerment with people who are deaf, hard of hearing and have other disabilities. He enjoys learning and encourages others to pursue their interests be it in academic or vocational realm. His passion is building coalitions of professionals and stakeholders in resolving community issues. He brings a strong background in research to Deaf Services.

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*We See What You Are Saying*



## ODS Regional Offices

### Region 1: Northern Alabama

**Scott Staubach, Coordinator**

Huntsville-Madison  
Mental Health Center  
4040 South Memorial Pkwy  
Huntsville, AL 35802  
(256) 533-1970

### Region 2: Central Alabama

**Shannon Reese, Coordinator**

J-B-S Mental Health Center  
956 Montclair Road, Suite 108  
Birmingham, AL 35213  
205-591-2212 (Voice)  
205-591-2216 (TTY)  
205-591-2214 (FAX)

### Region 3: Wiregrass Region

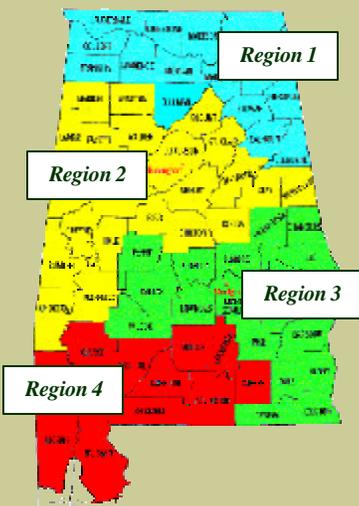
**William Olubodun, Coordinator**

Montgomery Area  
Mental Health Authority  
101 Coliseum Boulevard  
Montgomery, AL 36109  
(334) 279-7830

### Region 4: Mobile

**Vacant, Coordinator**

Mobile Mental Health  
2400 Gordon Smith Drive  
Mobile, AL 36617  
(251) 450-5901



## ODS, ADMHMR PARTNER WITH SPRINT TO SET UP STATEWIDE VIDEO-CONFERENCING

In an effort to increase access to appropriate mental health services the Office of Deaf Services has partnered with Sprint Relay to set up a network of internet based video-conferencing sites throughout Alabama. Using D-Link I-2-Eye devices ODS is able to link up with facilities and providers so that people who are deaf can access clinicians and interpreters. Currently six sites are operational with more coming on line weekly.



*Commissioner Sawyer talks to Deaf consumers by video-conferencing*

## As I See It....

“The more things change the more they stay the same...” This old maxim comes to mind regularly as we work to improve services for people with mental illness and hearing loss.

Recently while researching something else we came across a review of Indiana’s Division of Family and Children (DFC) performed by the Federal Health Care Finance Administration (which is now called Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) was interesting to us for a number of reasons. (See <http://www.healthlaw.org/pubs/HCFAsatereviews/Indiana.pdf>) Besides the usual attraction/revulsion to a horrific situation, we noticed a rather familiar twinge of “We’ve been here before...”

Among the problems cited in this review were: thinking that the consumer was responsible for providing an interpreter, documents that were written in language above what most consumers could read, staff did not have training in the use of TTY, Relay services or telephone interpreter services and failure to post notices that interpretive and translation services were available. No surprise there. What turned our heads though was the following quote, “It appears children as young as eight years old have been used as translators.” The report goes on to say that, “One caseworker indicated that based on her recent cultural diversity training, she was aware that the practice of using children as interpreters was inappropriate; however, according to 17 caseworkers, this practice continues to be common.”

The report called this “unacceptable.” No kidding. Yet as we work with people across the state we hear versions of this story all the time. One young woman confided to me not long ago that she did not want to go for counseling because they asked her abuser husband to interpret for her. Case managers have gone on home visits to residences under watch for suspected abuse and asked the perpetrators to interpret for deaf victims.

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## REGION II OPEN HOUSE DRAWS SRO CROWD

The official opening of the new JBSMHA Deaf Services Office took place on January 21, 2004, with both deaf and hearing people in attendance. It was an exciting moment for mental health services in Alabama to have the first "special place" for deaf consumers open. Much has already been accomplished in this area and more is to come, especially with the support of those interested in seeing services provided for deaf and hard of hearing clients.



*Shannon Reese, Region II Coordinator of Deaf Services (right) with Dr. Richard Craig, CEO of J-B-S Mental Health Authority*

With the conversation about, and visualization of, what the program could grow into, there was an air of excitement among the people in attendance at the Open House. Among these were board members from the Executive Board of JBSMHA, in addition to directors from several community mental health centers and Greil Hospital.

At this time, the office staff includes Shannon Reese, Regional Coordinator, Rhonda Suddreth, Intern therapist, and Nancy Hayes & Angel Dahlgren, certified sign language interpreters. They can be reached by calling 205-591-2212 (voice) or 205-591-2216 (tty).

Please spread the news of this new service to our community so that anyone in need will know where to receive help.



*Dr. Craig, Steve Hamerding, and Shannon Reese cut the ribbon*

## HUNTSVILLE RCD HIRED

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Mr. Staubach received his baccalaureate degree from Gallaudet University (Class of 92) and his master's degree in counseling psychology from Antioch University in New Hampshire. He is also an instructor in American Sign Language.

Mr. Staubach is married and has three young children. He enjoys competitive cycling and mountain biking and relaxing with his family.

### THOUGHTS OF A HEARING PERSON IN A DEAF WORLD

*By Susan Chambers, Facility Director,  
Greil Memorial Psychiatric Hospital*



*Mrs. Chambers (right) with Interpreter Charlene Crump*

I recently had the opportunity to attend an Open House to celebrate the establishment of the Regional Office for Deaf Services in Birmingham. As I made my way up the interstate to Birmingham, I began to anticipate the sights and sounds of this celebration. I wondered who would be present and what type food would be served. Based on past experiences, I envisioned people socializing, laughing

and enjoying refreshments. I was really looking forward to this event!

Upon my arrival, there were indeed lots of conversations being held. Small groups of people were socializing throughout the office. Some were gathered around a table, obviously discussing the variety of delicious foods. However, they were conversing in a language that I did not understand. My confidence began to waver, as I nervously entered the room. How would I maneuver my way through this maze of people that I could not communicate with? I wanted to be a part of the celebration, but our language differences were an obvious barrier. For a brief moment I felt isolated and alone. Within moments, I received the assistance of an interpreter. The anxiety disappeared and my confidence returned. I was able to communicate with all in attendance. Oh, what a relief!

Driving back to Montgomery, I reflected upon that experience. Do you suppose that persons who are deaf have similar emotions when placed in an environment within which they have no means of communication? What is it like to have a mental illness and be unable to communicate with your caregivers? What had seemed so obvious to me all along became more clearly understood that day.

## ODS ANNOUNCES 2004 MHIT TRAINING

The 2004 Mental Health Interpreter Training will be held August 12- 14 and 19 – 21, Charlene Crump, Mental Health Interpreter Coordinator announced.

Leading an exceptional faculty are Robert Pollard and Robyn Dean from Rochester, NY. Dr. Pollard, one of the most prolific researchers and writers in the field of mental health among deaf people, has teamed up with Ms. Dean to create a model of interpreting in mental health settings that is quickly becoming the “gold standard.” Their “Demand-Control” theory gives interpreters tools to help them deal with the incredible demands of interpreting in mental health.

Also returning this year will be Roger Williams of South Carolina. Mr. Williams is recognized as an authority on both interpreting and clinical services for mentally ill deaf people.

The training will be divided over two weekends, with the first weekend being held in Montgomery and the second weekend in Tuscaloosa. The format will allow participants to experience a variety of mental health settings and situations.

Admission to the training is on a competitive basis. It is open to certified interpreters (RID or NAD 3 and higher) and is free to Alabama licensed interpreters. Out of state interpreters are welcome to attend if accepted and will be charged tuition for the training. For more information, contact Ms. Crump at [ccrump@mh.state.al.us](mailto:ccrump@mh.state.al.us) or 334.353.4703 (Voice/TTY).

## FOCUS ON THE STAFF CHARLENE CRUMP



Charlene Crump has been the Mental Health Interpreter Coordinator since February 2003. She came to ODS from Department of Rehabilitation Services where she was the statewide coordinator of interpreter services. Before that she has worked at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind and as an educational interpreter in Jefferson County Schools.

A native of Morris, Alabama, Charlene learned to sign while attending college at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where she took her first sign language class “on a lark.” Her lark turned into a life-long love of learning and studying ASL and an enduring passion to work with deaf people.

A listing of Charlene’s accomplishments would include things such as being chair of the Alabama Board of Interpreter and Transliterators where she helped the Board become a force in the field of interpreting. She revamped sign language instruction at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, creating a model program for how to help an institution carry out a goal to become truly bilingual. She was also the state interpreter coordinator for the Department of Rehabilitative Services for 2 years. An ASLTA certified instructor, she continues to teach ASL at Auburn University at Montgomery.

A critical eye for detail and a winning personality has made it possible for Charlene to achieve goals that seemingly were naively ambitious, even politically impossible. She was a major force in helping to pass Alabama’s Mental Health Interpreter Standards; the nation’s first such clearly defined expectations for mental health interpreting.

She has been extremely instrumental in helping Alabama’s new Office of Deaf Services get started and has been a trusted advisor to the ODS director. It is no exaggeration to say that without her skill as an interpreter, her experience as a staff member and her wisdom as a life-long native learned in the nuances of Alabama politics, the Office of Deaf Services would not have accomplished nearly as much as it has.

In her spare time, Charlene loves cooking and her “lemon things” are the talk of the office. She enjoys reading, movies, and scrap-booking and dotes on her 5 year old nephew, Andrew.

# HUNTSVILLE DEAF GROUP CONTRIBUTES TO DEAF UNIT

The Huntsville Chapter of the Alabama Association of the Deaf raised \$250.00 to help with purchasing items needed for the Deaf in-patient unit at Greil. This donation will be used to purchase artwork from deaf artists to help create a culturally affirmative environment in the unit.

Chapter President, Jerry Smith, remarked at the chapter Christmas Party that "The community wants to help people who have mental illness." With approximately 50 people in attendance ODS Director Steve Hamerdinger presented a certificate of appreciation to the Chapter. In his remarks he praised the involvement of the Deaf



*ODS Director Steve Hamerdinger presents a certificate of appreciation to Huntsville Chapter President Jerry Smith)*

Community. "Deaf People with mental illness have not received appropriate services in the past, but because you got involved that is changing."

The Huntsville Chapter is one of six local chapters of the Alabama Association of the Deaf. Association President, Judith Gilliam remarked, "It is a thrill for the association to witness action in an advocacy sense. The Huntsville Chapter has demonstrated a great lead and I hope that the other chapters will follow the same suit."

In the coming months a campaign to create special group of volunteers patterned after the "Friends of Greil" model will be announced. This activity will be aimed at recruiting volunteers to assist with activities and special events as well as soliciting donations for the unit.

## Montgomery Area MHA Taps Dr. Olubodun

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Deaf since the age of 14, Dr. Olubodun is a naturalized citizen who was born in Nigeria. He came to the United States to attend Gallaudet University and has been here ever since. He is the proud father of two teenagers at the University; one is a senior majoring in mathematics, and the other an Electrical Engineering major. He enjoys and cherishes his time with the kids whose conversations at the dinner table usually revolve around mathematics.

As of press time, the Mobile Mental Health Center has not filled its vacant coordinator position (Region IV). Interested applicants are encouraged to contact the Human resources office at the Mobile Mental Health Center.

## As I See It....*(Continued from page 2)*

We do not for a minute think this arises from malfeasance. Rather it points to a tremendous need for service providers to be trained in working with people who have limited English proficiency. This includes those who are deaf or hard of hearing. One of the major goals of the Office of Deaf Services is to raise awareness among providers of the challenges of working across culture and across languages. We will be offering workshops around the state through our regional coordinators and we really encourage providers to take advantage of them whether they are working with deaf or hard of hearing consumers or not. What we teach can be generalized to many consumers with limited English proficiency.

It can be tempting at times to look at how much work still has to be done and despair. The needs are so great and the progress made thus far sometimes seems to be miniscule. It's a daunting task, but a necessary one. But we are making progress. Just the other day we received a letter from one of our consumers who thanked us for being there to help him. He went on to talk about how hopeless things were before and how, now he has a real chance to live a productive and happy life. **As I See It**, that's a good reason to keep going on.

## April Is Child Abuse Prevention Month

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month in 1983 due to the great need for public attention to prevention of child abuse. Many children, including those with disabilities, are being neglected or abused physically, mentally, and sexually. Children with disabilities are 4 times as likely to be abused as non-disabled children. Each year children die from abuse. This month reminds us to focus on the need for increased awareness and building protective factors in children's lives. We need to no child should be left alone or be hurt.

### Why is there a Blue Ribbon Campaign for this month?

A woman whose grandson was murdered by his mother's boyfriend adopted the color blue and incorporated it into a ribbon to symbolize her loss in 1989. The color blue represents all the bruises suffered by abuse inflicted on the children and serves as a constant reminder of our responsibility to fight for protection of our children.

The grandmother's full story can be found at this link: <http://www.preventchildabuse.com/blue.htm>

What you can do for April National Child Abuse Prevention Month:

- Be a nurturing parent
- Help a friend, neighbor, or relative
- Get INVOLVED
- Volunteer your time to work with children
- Vote with children and families in mind
- Wear a blue ribbon throughout the month of April and let people know what it symbolizes



**REMEMBER:** A child is helpless – you are not.

If you are interested in receiving additional information about this critical issue, you may contact Shannon Reese, Coordinator, Region II at [sreese@jbsmha.com](mailto:sreese@jbsmha.com) or phone 205-591-2212 (voice), 205-591-2216 (TTY).

## What I learned in Mental Health Interpreter Training (MHIT) 2003

By Charlene Crump

- Presenters like to wear khaki.
- People who work in deafness role-play psychosis well.
- If you role play an "interfering hearing family member" at a counseling session, the deaf participants will want to beat you up afterwards.
- Caffeine is your friend, and apparently a DSM-IV classification.
- Don't wear tight clothes to interpret a meeting for sex offenders.
- Directions are never foolproof.
- Wash your hands before you eat.
- Participants like freebies.
- Your "game face" should not be Mad Gab, Sorry, Spin the Bottle, Outburst, Twister or Barrel of Monkeys.
- Never argue with the man who holds the key at a psychiatric facility.
- A psychiatric facility is not the place to look for a date.
- Never plan a conference on football weekend in Alabama.
- The professional should never be sicker than the patient.
- There's no such thing as too much candy.
- If you don't understand what the client says, sometimes it's because it makes no sense.
- If you understand the answer, someone will change the question.
- Mental Health interpreting is never dull.