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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**LIFE THEN VS. NOW –
THE MIRACLES OF RECOVERY**

BY THOMAS MALONE, DPH
TMF President

Happy New Year! Spring is here (at least a glimpse) and I am once again excited to see God's creations unfold and blossom. Already this new year I was able to see the Eagles win the Super Bowl, University of Tennessee football not go to any bowl game, UT basketball share the regular season conference championship, and UT basketball go to the NCAA Tournament. I'm a UT fan if you haven't noticed. My wife and I downsized and moved less than a half-mile from our two grandchildren. Our children, for the most part, are healthy and doing relatively well. My wife and I will celebrate our 33rd anniversary this year. I celebrated my 41st year as a pharmacist. My business of 39 years had its best year ever last year. I have truly been blessed.

I am in no way trying to say that my

life is perfect. My intent here is to show how different my life was 25-plus years ago, before my recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. The last eight years of my active addiction was truly a blur. I don't remember many things about the changes in seasons or any holiday celebrations. I know UT sports were around during these years but I honestly don't remember much about them. I had two children before my recovery (we later had a son) but I certainly was not the father I should have been. My marriage was going downhill every day and I certainly was not the husband that I should have been. My license to practice pharmacy was revoked while in treatment and my business was close to bankruptcy. My disease was killing me and harming everyone around me. After treatment I contracted with the Tennessee Pharmacy Recovery Network and was given their first-ever five-year contract. Part of my contract required me to attend the Middle

(Continued on page 7)



TMF: THERE WHEN YOU NEED IT

BY MICHAEL L. TODD
Administrator

We all remember the tragic scenes following the 2010 Nashville flood where many citizens lost homes and possessions and had no flood insurance to replace their belongings. They lived in areas that weren't "supposed" to flood, therefore, having flood insurance was not a high priority. The Tennessee Medical Foundation (TMF) and the critical help it provides physicians through the Physician's Health Program (PHP) is like insurance: you don't think about it until you need it.

Generally, the Foundation's work to restore physicians with chemical dependency or other behavioral issues enjoys a low profile. Many healthcare stakeholders do not get passionate about physician health issues unless and until these issues touch them personally or negatively affect the work environment.

GROWING NEEDS & RESOURCES

Currently, the PHP is in a transition period defined by an effort to make the TMF become more proactive and less reactive. "We are carrying the message in 2018 that the TMF is a resource, not a punishment,"

(Continued on page 5)



TMF COMPLIANCE MONITORING GETS A TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

BY MICHAEL BARON, MD, MPH
Medical Director

Our supporters may not know that when a participant signs a monitoring agreement with the Tennessee Medical Foundation Physician's Health Program (TMF-PHP), they are agreeing to comply with a number of obligations. What's more, they are bound to comply with these obligation for the duration of their contract period – typically five years.

It is no small task to abide by a TMF-PHP monitoring agreement; it is also no small charge to do the monitoring. The TMF-PHP is taking a big step toward making this process easier, more efficient, and user-friendly on both sides. To this end, effective May 1, 2018, the TMF-PHP is partnering with Affinity eHealth. Our participants' compliance will be easier to carry out and more accurately monitored with the use of Affinity eHealth's new participant portal SPECTRUM.

WHY THE CHANGE?

Contract obligations with the TMF-PHP can include 12-step meeting attendance, Caduceus (support) group attendance, individual therapy, couples therapy, random and monitored toxicology screening, and more. Tracking all these elements of compliance in today's world requires the TMF-PHP to become more efficient and tech savvy. We need a user-friendly, web-based electronic health record that uses available technology to track compliance.

Affinity eHealth's core company is a drug toxicology company. Affinity uses the SPECTRUM portal to interface with participants for toxicology services. SPECTRUM also provides our participants with advanced technology and tools to support their TMF participation, including mobile access, alerts, online compliance reporting, and more.

Toxicology screens are a very visible and anxiety-producing component of our – indeed, any – Professional Health Program. The logistics involved are a major time drain to any professional's work day. Our participants' obsessional traits are very evident in this context. One of the first routines our participants establish is a daily call to find out whether they have been randomly chosen for a toxicology screen. Some of them even stay up until after midnight so they can check to see if they were picked for a toxicology screen the "next day." They will then sleep either fitfully or peacefully, depending on whether they were chosen. The usual reason for this amount of anxiety is not because they are using illicit drugs or alcohol and worried about a positive result or worried about a false positive result. Instead, most are anxious because of the schedule disruption these random screenings cause.

Physicians' schedules are not built to allow for random disruptions. Private practice office hours, hospital and ambulatory surgery schedules, and hospitalist and

emergency department shifts are all rigid instruments to keep physicians on task, on time, and on the job. Getting chosen for a random toxicology screen is much like having a car that won't start on a weekly basis – time for a new car or a new mechanic. Unlike having car trouble, our participants can't ignore or otherwise circumvent these random disruptions. They are required to fulfill the obligation.

Almost every new participant has trepidation when signing their agreement because of all the requirements. Eventually they learn to acclimate or surrender to these obligations, including the random disruptions. It has its positive side: learning to surrender is one of the more visible benefits to their recovery program. Many times we can accurately assess the progress a participant has made in their recovery program by the lack of defiance or opposition they voice to their obligations.

However, the TMF-PHP has always realized these random disruptions are a source of stress and strain, especially to newcomers in recovery. For many years, our current screening partner, National Toxicology Specialists (NTS), has helped minimize the intrusion caused by toxicology screening. NTS has also received much of the venom unfairly cast by some of our participants when they need to be elsewhere and are impatiently waiting to be screened. NTS has only reported the most vitriolic outliers to us.

This change is in no way reflective of any problems or concerns with NTS. In fact, NTS can still be used as a collection site under the new Affinity eHealth system. A very big thank you to Dr. Greg Elam and Chelsea Collins for their years of dedication, support and help. We wish them the very best.

TO OUR DONORS

Along with supporting the daily work we do with struggling doctors and other health professionals, your gifts help to fund this and other program changes as needed. We take these decisions very seriously and, as in this case, do our homework to ensure that what we are putting in place will be a wise investment and will improve our ability to carry out our mission. Thank you for making this improvement possible!

TO OUR PARTICIPANTS

We realize the anxiety that changing toxicology screening can cause; no other change in a monitoring contract would probably cause such discord. Please understand there should be little-to-no change to your ongoing toxicology

MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

obligations; we will make it as seamless as possible. Your current TMF-PHP requirements are not changing. The screening requirements will not be different after May 1. The participant costs for drug screening will also be comparable to the current cost.

If toxicology screening is obtained from other sources such as Vanderbilt WorkLife Connections, you will continue using that service; those toxicology screenings will not change. You will still need to register with SPECTRUM, as other compliance monitoring will be obtained through this portal. Every participant who is under contract or off contract but requiring or wanting advocacy needs to be registered with SPECTRUM.

By the time you read this article, all our participants should have received a packet from Affinity eHealth that contains all the necessary documents to create an online

SPECTRUM Account. If you have not received a packet by April 20, please contact the TMF-PHP office immediately to let us know. For more information, please visit www.affinityempowering.com/compliance.

The last day to access NTS will be April 30. Please do not order any more supplies from NTS. Please email Chelsea Collins at NTS to let her know how many chains of custody you still have (ccollins@drugtestinfo.com).

Thank you for your patience during this transition. There will be some bumps during the initial implementation but, eventually, documenting your compliance with contract requirements should become much faster and easier. This will improve our current monitoring systems and increase our serenity. †

Share your thoughts with Dr. Baron at michaelb@e-tmf.org.

PHYSICIAN BURNOUT PROFILED IN NEW TMF ARTICLE SERIES FOR SVMIC

Health professional burnout is rising at an alarming rate and the TMF Physician's Health Program is profiling this growing problem in a new article series in *The Sentinel*, the newsletter of State Volunteer Mutual Insurance Company (SVMIC).

Part 1 of the series, featured in the January 2018 edition, shares the story of a physician who suffered burnout with tragic consequences. TMF Medical Director Dr. Michael Baron authors the series and said the TMF is seeing an increase in referrals for burnout and related emotional and mental health problems.

"The prevalence of physician burnout is staggering; over 50% of practicing physicians have at least one burnout symptom," he said.

ADDRESSING BURNOUT

The TMF is working with partner organizations like SVMIC to address rising rates of burnout, depression, and suicide among physicians and other medical professionals in Tennessee.

Classic signs of burnout include emotional exhaustion, loss of the passion to practice medicine and being too drained to work effectively. Burnout includes depersonalization, loss of empathy, lack of efficacy and purpose, and loss of a desire to help a patient.

If you or someone you know is experiencing burnout, please don't wait until the problem becomes career- or life-threatening. Contact the TMF at 615-467-6411 or online at e-tmf.org/contact.

LEARN MORE

Read Part 1 of Dr. Baron's series, "Physician Burnout: Recognize the Signs," in the January 2018 edition of the *SVMIC Sentinel*, or find it on the TMF website at e-tmf.org; click on "Publications" and then "Other Articles." †

"CONFESSIONS OF A RECOVERING ADDICT" TMF HIGHLIGHTED IN SVMIC PODCAST PREMIERE



YOUR PRACTICE MADE PERFECT

"I always knew that I would be caught."

That from a TMF Physician's Health Program participant profiled in "Confessions of a Recovering Addict," the premiere episode of SVMIC's new podcast series, "Your Practice Made Perfect."

"Dr. Bob," as he is called in the podcast, details a 15-year addiction as a practicing physician and the events that led to his referral to the TMF Physician's Health Program by a hospital official. The TMF provided support and accountability, and helped him enter strong, consistent recovery. Dr. Bob credits the TMF with saving his life and his practice.

"The work of the TMF speaks for itself: this is one of many physicians who have found hope and healing through the Physician's Health Program," said TMF Administrator Mike Todd. "We are grateful to have SVMIC as a strong partner, and to all of those who support our critical mission of Saving Lives, Saving Careers."

ABOUT THE PODCAST

"Your Practice Made Perfect" was launched by SVMIC on February 1. Episodes will include interviews with experienced physicians and compliance, malpractice, and prescribing experts; topics will cover clinical issues, contracts, negotiations, and leadership.

The podcast is hosted by Brian Fortenberry, SVMIC assistant vice president of underwriting, who previously worked on the clinical side of medicine and in broadcast media.

The series is found on iTunes, YouTube, Google, and on SVMIC's website; click on "Resources" and then "Podcast" to listen online, see a transcript, or subscribe on your smartphone. †

JOIN US
2018 CADUCEUS RETREAT

June 22-24 | Four Points by Sheraton | Brentwood, TN
Register: June 1 | Rooms: May 25

REGISTER NOW

Registration is now open for the 2018 Caduceus Retreat, titled, "In Harmony with Reality: Developing Serenity Through Mindfulness."

TMF's 32nd annual retreat is scheduled for Friday, June 22-Sunday, June 24, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Brentwood, TN. Details and sign-up information are on the TMF Caduceus Retreat web page at e-tmf.org/2018-caduceus-retreat.

Attendance is required for current participants in the Physician's Health Program; graduates are encouraged to attend to continue learning and growing in recovery, and to connect with counterparts who are just beginning their recovery journey.

Each June, recovering health professionals and their families throughout the state of Tennessee gather for a weekend of sharing, renewing, and learning. The annual retreat allows networking with other healthcare professionals throughout the state and is a time totally devoted to recovery. Physicians newly under contract have the opportunity to

learn from those who have years of recovery. New ideas and old standards are shared in group and classroom venues. In addition, AA, NA, SA, Al-Anon, and S-Anon meetings are scheduled throughout the weekend. Family time is also built into the meeting schedule.

REGISTRATION & ROOMS

Registration cost for the meeting itself remains \$90 per person; *the deadline is June 1*. Registrations can be made on the TMF Retreat web page at e-tmf.org/2018-caduceus-retreat. Register and pay online or download a PDF registration form and mail it in with payment.

Hotel rooms are available at a special TMF rate of \$119 per person, per night, plus tax; *the deadline is May 25*. Reservations can be made via a link from the TMF Retreat web page at the link above or by calling the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel-Brentwood directly at 866-961-8096; to receive the special rate please mention you are with the TMF Retreat when you book your room.



Ms. Bates

OUR SPEAKER

This year's speaker is Christie Bates, LPC. Having recently completed 11 years in the world of residential treatment, Ms. Bates is the sole proprietor of Passati Counseling & Direction, a psychotherapy and spiritual direction practice in Nashville. She is a

member of the Tennessee Licensed Professional Counselors Association, the American Counseling Association, Nashville Psychotherapy Institute, Nashville Mindfulness Facilitators Peer Group, and is on the faculty of the Buddhist Recovery Network. She is a Brainspotting professional and the author of a new book, "Accepting Your Resurrection."

Learn more about Ms. Bates and Passati Counseling at passaticounseling.com.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

**IN HARMONY WITH REALITY
DEVELOPING SERENITY THROUGH MINDFULNESS -
THE DIS-EASE OF MISPERCEPTION**

We often hear in recovery meeting rooms that we suffer from a disease of perceptions. Classical mindfulness training includes specific teaching on this topic called "The 4 Hallucinations of Perception." Understanding these can have a powerful effect on our serenity and spiritual growth.

THESE ARE:

1. Mis-taking what is impermanent to be permanent
2. Mis-taking what is pleasurable to (always) be beneficial
3. Mis-taking what is attractive to (always) be good
4. Mis-taking what is not personal (not-self) to be personal (self)

Working a path or program of recovery helps to bring our perception in line with reality (mindfulness), so that we live more at peace with how things really are (serenity). Through exploring a combination of individual and relational activities, participants will learn how *all* aspects of recovery (not just meditation) are involved in improving mindfulness and serenity. †

QUESTIONS? Contact Jeanne Breard at jeanneb@e-tmf.org or Mike Todd at miket@e-tmf.org or call 615-467-6411.

THANK YOU TO OUR PHP PARTNERS!



TMF Medical Director Dr. Michael Baron met with Linda Cox-Collier, Director of Physician & Community Services at East Tennessee Children's Hospital, during a visit to Knoxville in November.



HCA Foundation Executive Director JoAnne Pulles speaks to the Foundation's grantees during a Healthcare Update meeting in January.

TMF GROWING PAINS REQUIRE GROWING SUPPORT

(Continued from page 1)

said TMF Medical Director Michael Baron, MD. "It's best for struggling doctors and providers to call us earlier, before their families, colleagues, employers, or licensing boards are forced to intervene."

In our years of providing hope and healing to Tennessee's struggling physicians, we have seen that the initial signs of burnout or distress usually lead to more serious consequences down the road – not just for those physicians but for their families, colleagues, employers, and patients.

According to a 2017 Medscape study, the burnout rate among doctors averages 55 percent, with some specialties as high as 60 percent. Male physicians are almost 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide than men in the general population; female physicians have more than twice the suicide risk of other women. We must do everything we can to reverse these alarming trends.

Currently, the TMF is working to develop and ultimately offer new tools and resources to address the increasing rates of burnout, depression, and suicide among physicians and other medical professionals. We are also working to teach more health professionals in Tennessee the warning signs of impairment and the importance of asking for help sooner, rather than later. In the meantime, we remain on call for Tennessee's hospitals, medical groups, small practices, medical schools, and individual providers. All of this work takes funding and the need for ongoing support never goes away.

HELPING PHYSICIANS & PATIENTS

The protection of patients and the rehabilitation of physicians in need are things every physician cares about. Regardless of whether they've benefited personally from this program, their patients and communities do.

In 2017, PHP support came from a variety of sources: approximately 25 percent from State Volunteer Mutual Insurance Program (SVMIC); 25 percent from the State Board of Medical Examiners (BME); 16 percent from physician donations; six percent from hospitals; 11 percent from the Tennessee Medical Association (TMA); and the balance from other sources, including grants, and donations from component medical and specialty societies.

It is the funding from individual physicians, medical practices, and hospitals that we are working to increase.

It is imperative we increase financial support from healthcare stakeholders; they're the beneficiaries of our service; they see the value in it and, like insurance, it's here when they need it. If the Physician's Health Program suddenly ceased to exist, where would they turn for help?

Answer that question and you'll see why this program and its continued strong support by the healthcare community are critical. 🙏

The Tennessee Medical Foundation is a non-profit charitable organization funded solely by contributions. The TMF is recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by applicable law. For information on becoming a private supporter of the TMF and its PHP, log on to www.e-tmf.org or contact Michael Todd, TMF Administrator at 615-467-6411.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

For many years the Tennessee Medical Foundation has enjoyed the staunch financial support of three loyal and generous benefactors: **State Volunteer Mutual Insurance Company (SVMIC)**, the **State of Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners (BME)**, and the **Tennessee Medical Association (TMA)**. Together they provide approximately 63 percent of the annual budget for the Physician's Health Program. Without their support, our crucial work of *Saving Lives, Saving Careers* would not be possible. We are immensely grateful to them.

Below are contributors who provide the rest of our program funding. We thank each and every one of you for the support you give to the mission of *Saving Lives, Saving Careers*.

CONTRIBUTIONS: OCTOBER 1, 2017-MARCH 31, 2018

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HOSPITAL & HEALTH SYSTEMS

Baptist Memorial Hospital	\$10,000
Erlanger Health System.....	\$10,000
Saint Francis Hospital.....	\$5,000
Saint Thomas Health.....	\$10,000
Summit Medical Center.....	\$5,000
Sweetwater Hospital Association.....	\$1,000

FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS

Memorial Foundation	\$25,000
James H. Tharp Award	\$11,250

GROUP MEDICAL PRACTICES

Cumberland Family Practice	\$100
Galen Medical Group	\$1,000
Urology Associates, PC	\$1,000

ORGANIZATIONS

Benton-Humphreys County Medical Society	\$250
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**Honorarium
+Pledge 🙏

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH PROGRAM!

We strive to ensure that all donor information is correct. If an error has been made, we apologize and ask that you call us at (615) 467-6411.

WELCOME TMF'S NEWEST STAFF MEMBER



TMF Staff enjoyed its annual Christmas Breakfast in December: (L-R) Dot Walker, Michael Baron, Jeanne Breard, Mike Todd, Julie Eberle, Brenda Williams-Denbo, Jennifer Rainwater

Since June 12, 2017, visitors to the TMF office have been greeted by the Foundation's newest staff member, Dot Walker, who said she is "glad to be here among the crew at TMF."

Ms. Walker serves as receptionist and administrative assistant; her work encompasses accounting and database administration. She has a background in health care services.

In her free time, she enjoys sports, music and reading, and is active in her church.

Dot, we are glad to have you on board! 🙌

EVENTS CALENDAR

2018 CADUCEUS RETREAT

June 22-24, 2018

Four Points by Sheraton Hotel
Brentwood, TN

SAVE
THE
DATE

FSPHP Annual Meeting & Conference

Apr 25-28 - Charlotte, NC

IDAA Annual Meeting

Aug 1-5 - Reno, NV

SVMIC Risk Management Seminars

Apr 25-26 - Hilton Garden Inn-Vanderbilt, Nashville

May 24/Aug 7-8 - Holiday Inn, University of Memphis

Jul 19/Aug 15-16 - Knoxville Marriott

Jul 25/Oct 10-11 - Chattanooga Convention Center

Jul 26 - Museum Center @ Five Points, Cleveland

Aug 23 - DoubleTree Hotel, Jackson

Sep 6 - Leslie Town Centre, Cookeville

Sep 19 - Embassy Suites Conference Center, Murfreesboro

Oct 3 - Millennium Centre, Johnson City

Oct 4 - Meadowview Conference Center, Kingsport

Oct 29 - Park Vista DoubleTree Hotel, Gatlinburg

Nov 1 - Franklin Marriott Cool Springs

TRIMed Healthcare Education Summit

Sep 14-15 - Music City Center, Nashville

TMF Board Fall Retreat

Oct 5-7 - Sewanee Inn

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 1)

Tennessee Caduceus group meetings organized by the TMF. That was where I began to see miracles happen.

My disease and recovery are not unique. I have seen hundreds of Tennessee physicians with the same fatal disease recover from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Their lives and careers have been restored through surrender to a higher power and willingness to change everything in their life.

The TMF has been an integral part of recovery for hundreds, if not thousands of physicians in the state of Tennessee. The TMF and its Physician's Health Program (PHP) mission is "to protect patients through identification, intervention, rehabilitation and the provision of advocacy for physicians impaired by addictive disease, mental or emotional illness." The TMF has become a model for physician health

programs and other healthcare programs throughout the United States. Under the leadership of Mike Todd, Dr. Mike Baron, and the current staff, the TMF is highly qualified and willing to continue this tradition.

ALL physicians in Tennessee - especially those who have benefited from the Physician's Health Program - need to support the TMF with their contributions. Without the support of hospitals and individual physicians, the TMF could not survive. The TMF saves lives and careers. 🙌



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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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Thank you for helping us keep in touch!



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PHYSICIAN’S HEALTH

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