



**RESTORING  
PROVIDERS.  
PROTECTING  
PATIENTS.**



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# *Our Mission*

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The mission of the Physician's Health Program (PHP) is to **protect patients** through identification, intervention, rehabilitation, and the provision of **advocacy/support** for physicians and other health professionals impaired by addictive disease, mental or emotional illness.

# A Message from The President



**A**s incoming President of the Tennessee Medical Foundation (TMF) Board of Directors, I am excited to present this annual report. Post pandemic, the pressure on physicians and health professionals has continued to mount as the healthcare environment deals with labor shortages, inflation, resource limitations, and new regulatory challenges. There are no timeouts in life, and this has been very evident to health professionals over the last year. As a healthcare leader and practicing emergency physician, I have seen many of the stressors first-hand with my colleagues. Many of them continue to suffer from burnout, anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. This is why I am so honored to support the Tennessee Medical Foundation in addressing these critical issues.

The TMF has an extremely dedicated group of board and committee members, staff, administrative leaders, and volunteers committed to our mission, and continues to be a national leader in physician health. As an example, the TMF was invited to present remarkable results for the TN-PSQ mental health screening tool at the American Conference on Physician Health in October of 2023. Additionally, Dr.

Baron, TMF Medical Director, has been a national advocate for physician suicide awareness and mental health, and was recognized along with fellow leaders of the Federation of State Physician Health Programs (FSPHP) on the National Physician Suicide Awareness Day website for the good work PHPs are doing in this area. Another milestone occurred when the TMF joined with other Tennessee peer assistance programs to host the inaugural Interprofessional Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and Recovery Summit in September. Of course, none of this outstanding work would have been possible without the generous support of our financial partners. As you read the annual report, I hope you will consider partnering with the Tennessee Medical Foundation in this important work to **restore providers** and **protect patients**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in gold ink that reads "Clay W. Runnels MD". The signature is written in a cursive, professional style.

Clay W. Runnels, MD, MBA  
Board President

*“The Tennessee Medical Foundation is worthy of the highest praise in being the key for physicians to continue to practice medicine, to continue to have a family, and even in some cases, to continue to live. Their program of assisting physicians to obtain and maintain sobriety and help with outside issues that occur in day-to-day behavior has played a huge role in benefiting (our) medical staff.”*

— **Jan Adam, CPMSM**, Medical Staff Coordinator  
Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center

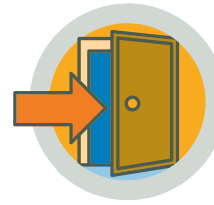
# HOW DO WE RESTORE PROVIDERS AND PROTECT PATIENTS?

It begins with our process. This is the typical progression of events when someone is referred to the TMF. These steps help our clinical team find out exactly what a health professional is dealing with.



## Identification

The Tennessee Medical Foundation Physician's Health Program (TMF-PHP) maintains a phone and web referral process for family members, patients, and co-workers to confidentially report concerns about a physician or other health professional, both licensed and in school or training; calls made after hours will be returned within 24 business hours. We encourage physicians and other health professionals to contact us directly with questions or concerns before a problem becomes career or life threatening.



## Re-Entry

Re-Entry into practice usually occurs in the week following treatment. During this period, the PHP is often the health professional's strongest – and sometimes only – ally. The PHP medical director and case managers work in concert with the treatment center's recommendations to establish contractual ground rules for re-entry into practice. These ground rules hold patient safety as a priority.



## Verification

The TMF-PHP medical director and/or case managers attempt to verify the reported behavior. If the behavior is not verified, the process is halted or the information is held for further inquiry.



## Aftercare

Aftercare is usually a five-year process. It is guided by an individualized monitoring agreement, comprised of recommendations from the treatment facility. The TMF offers guidance and accountability in the recommended aspects of each participant's recovery.



## Interview

The referred professional is asked to make an appointment for an interview with the TMF-PHP medical director. In exchange for support, the professional is invited to follow the recommendations of the PHP in seeking specified evaluation/treatment at his or her own expense.



## Evaluation/Treatment

Evaluation/treatment is carried out in external facilities vetted through a standard criterion for treating healthcare professionals. Professionals affected by other emotional or behavioral conditions are treated with an initial evaluation and subsequently prescribed inpatient and/or intensive outpatient therapy.

## PHP IMPACT

**75%-80%**

**PHP participants remaining substance-free throughout monitoring**

— *BMJ, Nov 2008*

**88%**

**PHP graduates still in strong recovery programs 5+ years after completion**

— *Am J Addict, Mar 2022*

**>20%**

**Malpractice risk of PHP graduates compared with non-PHP colleagues**

— *Occup Med, Jun 2013*

# A Message from The Medical Director



**T**his beautiful 2023 Annual Report is a beacon to the work that we do – saving the lives of physicians and other health professionals and, as a result, saving their careers. Although our emphasis is on provider health, what we are really doing is protecting patients. Our mission endpoint is exactly the same as that of our state’s Health Related Boards: “protecting the health and welfare of the citizens of Tennessee.” Our process is confidential, reparative, and non-punitive, and we have hard data proving it is effective. Studies show our Physician Health Program (PHP) recovery model is 85 percent successful at five years; no other treatment or recovery model comes close to that outcome. Other data show a PHP graduate has 20 percent less malpractice risk than a peer who was never monitored, and that relapse rates for those who have completed five years of monitoring are lower than initial substance use disorder diagnosis rates for the general physician population. Overall, studies clearly show physicians and other health professionals who have successfully completed PHP monitoring are safer than those who were not involved with a Physician Health Program.

When I meet a participant for the first time, they are generally very upset, many are crying, depressed, even suicidal. I always tell them, “This may feel like the worst day of your life but in a few years, you’ll realize it’s one of the best days of your life.” Without exception, they look at me like I am not understanding the gravity of their situation. Then I get to watch the miracle of recovery and the reparative process firsthand. Two to three years later,

the participant tells me, “You were right, that was one of the best days of my life. I am now a much better physician, spouse, parent, friend, and person. I didn’t believe you then, but I do now.”

We start with a provider who is ill and may even have impairment. Following an intake interview we often refer them for an evaluation. If indicated, we refer them for high quality treatment and then provide monitoring for three to five years based on discharge recommendations. The physician and their family, colleagues, and friends begin to see the changes. During that process, a participant experiences a cycle of emotions, beginning with fear and hopelessness on what they believe is their “worst” day, to reluctant compliance with outside recommendations and mandated accountability, to eventual gratitude for the rescue of their career, their relationships, and even their life. Through our confidential and non-punitive approach, the TMF-PHP operates as a reparative program, **restoring our participants** to health and healthy practice, which in turn enables and equips them to provide **better and safer care to their patients**. This is the work and mission you have made possible through your generous support.

A handwritten signature in gold ink that reads "Michael Baron MD".

Michael Baron, MD, MPH, DFASAM  
Medical Director

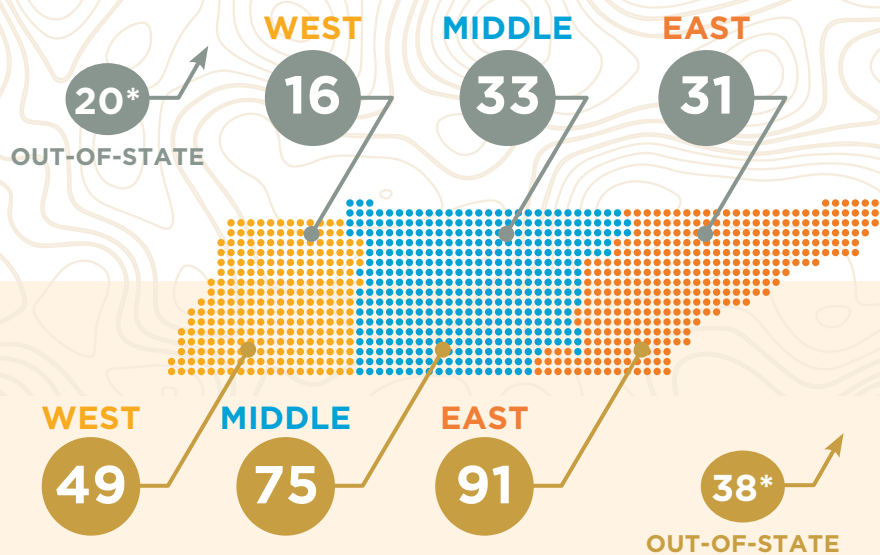
*“It was the worst thing that happened in my life when I got into alcohol, and I have been rescued or relieved of that on a daily basis. I just am so grateful to the program, to the good Lord, and everybody else associated (with my recovery).”*

— Anesthesiologist



## REGION

### NEW IDs: 100



### PHP PARTICIPANTS: 253

\*AL, AR, CA, GA, KY, MI, MO, MS, NC, ND, NJ, OH, OK, OR, SC, TX, VA, WI

## SPECIALTY



### NEW IDs

- Acupuncture Detox 1
- Addiction Medicine 2
- Anesthesiology 3
- Cardiology/Surgery 5
- Chiropractic 1
- Clinical Perfusion 1
- Dermatology 2
- Emergency Medicine 8
- Otolaryngology 1
- Family Medicine 11
- Gastroenterology 1
- Infectious Disease 1
- Internal Medicine 8
- Nephrology 2
- Neurology/Surgery 3

- Obstetrics/Gynecology 5
- Occupational Medicine 1
- Oncology/Surgery 2
- Orthopedics/Surgery 4
- Pathology 2
- Pediatrics 6
- Physician Assistant 4
- Polysomnography 1
- Preventive Medicine 1
- Psychiatry 1
- Radiology 5
- Student/Trainee 9
- Surgery 8
- Thoracic Surgery 1

### PHP

- Acupuncture Detox 1
- Addiction Medicine 5
- Anesthesiology 15
- Cardiology 5
- Chiropractic 9
- Dermatology 2
- Emergency Medicine 20
- Otolaryngology/Surgery 3
- Family Medicine 35
- Gastroenterology 1
- Internal Medicine 24
- Nephrology 1
- Neurology/Surgery 6
- Obstetrics/Gynecology 13
- Occupational Health 1
- Oncology/Surgery 5
- Ophthalmology 1
- Optometry 1

- Orthopedics/Surgery 9
- Pathology 3
- Pediatrics/Surgery 14
- Physician Assistant 9
- Physical Med & Rehab 2
- Plastic Surgery 1
- Polysomnography 1
- Psychiatry 3
- Preventive Medicine 1
- Pulmonology/Critical Care 5
- Radiation Oncology 1
- Radiology 8
- Rheumatology 1
- Student/Trainee 5
- Surgery 27
- Urology 6
- Vascular Surgery 2
- Veterinary 7



# PROFESSION

## NEW IDS

Acupuncture Detox **1**  
 Chiropractor **1**  
 Clinical Perfusionist **1**  
 DO **5**  
 DO Resident **1**

DO Student **2**  
 Limited Scope  
 Radiology Tech **1**  
 MD Student **6**  
 MD **68**



MD Resident **7**  
 PA **4**  
 PA Student **1**  
 Polysomnographer **1**  
 X-Ray Technician **1**

## PHP

Acupuncture Detox **1**  
 Chiropractor **9**  
 DO **8**  
 DO Resident **6**  
 DO Student **1**

MD Student **4**  
 MD **179**  
 MD Resident **23**  
 Optometrist **1**  
 Physician Assistant **12**

Podiatrist **1**  
 Polysomnographer **1**  
 Veterinarian **7**

# AVERAGE AGE



NEW  
IDS



PHP

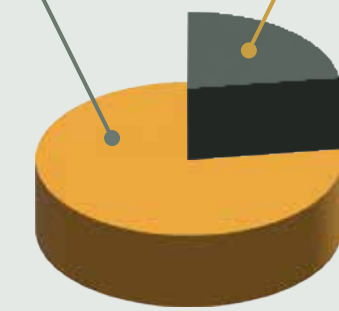


# GENDER



23 FEMALES

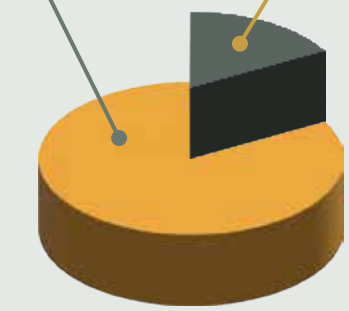
77 MALES



NEW IDS

43 FEMALES

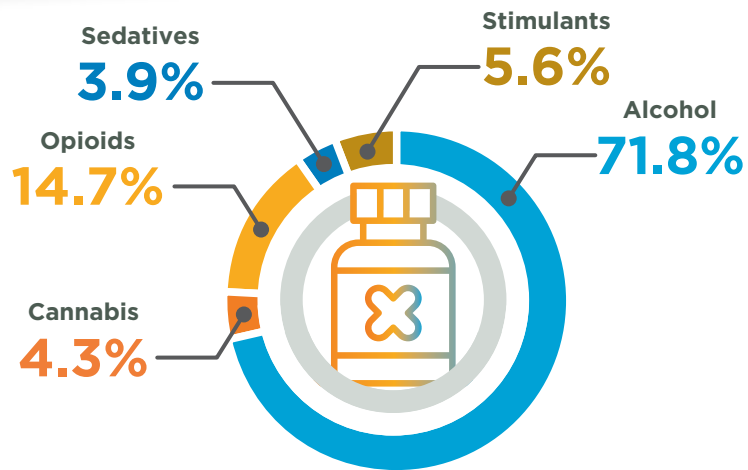
210 MALES



PHP

# DRUG OF CHOICE

## PHP

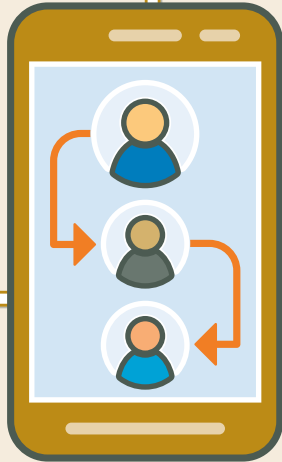


## REFERRALS

### REASON

#### NEW IDs

- Substance Use/Abuse **66**
- Behavioral **12**
- Burnout **6**
- Overprescribing **1**
- Psychiatric **13**
- Sexual Boundary **2**



#### PHP

- Substance Use/Abuse **227**
- Behavioral **6**
- Burnout **2**
- Cognitive **1**
- Psychiatric **10**
- Sexual Boundary **7**

### SOURCE

#### NEW IDs

- Attorney **1**
- Board **29**
- Colleague **8**

- Employer **28**
- Family **2**
- PHP/Advocacy Pgm **3**

- School/Training Pgm **8**
- Self **16**
- Treatment Center **5**

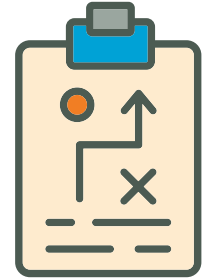
#### PHP

- Anonymous **1**
- Attorney **4**
- Board **38**
- Colleague **30**
- Employer **30**
- Family **7**

- Hospital **26**
- Malpractice Insurer **2**
- Mental Health Professional **1**
- Patient **1**
- PHP/Advocacy Pgm **18**

- School/Training Pgm **31**
- Self **43**
- Therapist **3**
- Toxicology Lab **1**
- Treatment Center **17**

## OUTCOMES



### NEW IDs

- Signed Contract **40**
- Evaluation Pending **2**
- Treatment/Contract Expected **3**
- Alternate Therapies/Solutions **25**
- Intake/Status Pending **3**
- No Verified Need for TMF Involvement **27**



**NEW CONTRACTS**  
**58**



**GRADUATES**  
**34**



**RMA PARTICIPANTS\***  
**15**

*\*Recovery Maintenance Agreement - Voluntary monitoring for PHP graduates*



## In Their Words

“ I am truly grateful for my recovery program and wanted to express my gratitude to you and your staff for helping me through such a difficult time in my life. I had a crushed spirit. Today, I am **spiritually engaged** in my life and work as a physician. I have a house and a happy family. The promises really do come true. ”

— Family Medicine Physician

“ Our experience with the TMF has been fantastic. In any situation where we have referred a physician in need, they have been **incredibly supportive**. They have always provided the physician with the guidance and resources needed to return to a meaningful life and medical practice. To call this a restoration would be putting it mildly. They do more than just restore, they rejuvenate. ”

— Dr. Matthew Kodsi, Chief Medical Officer  
CHI Memorial Hospital, Chattanooga

“ The Jackson Clinic continues to benefit from the work of the TMF Physician’s Health Program. We have personally seen **lives restored**. We are seeing families restored. As one of my doctors told me, it was the best thing that ever happened to him. We proudly support the TMF-PHP! ”

— Dr. Jere Hammond,  
Associate Medical Director  
The Jackson Clinic, Jackson

“ Thank you for all that the TMF has done for me in **saving my life!!** ”

— Anesthesiologist  
PHP Grad 2020

“ The Tennessee Medical Foundation has been a great asset to our physicians. Their focus to **help physicians in crisis** and restore their ability to practice in a safe manner has benefited several of our physicians and our patients. We are very grateful for the TMF! ”

— Dr. Eric Penniman,  
Executive Medical Director  
Summit Medical Group, Knoxville

“ My experience with the TMF over the past 30 years has been exceptionally good. I have personally seen the difference they have made in physicians’ lives that I have been associated with. They have been able to help some of my personal friends who, in all honesty, I did not think had a chance at rehabilitation. Recommendation by the TMF carries a great weight with me in deciding if a doctor should continue practicing. They have also gone a long way in **reducing the stigma** that if a doctor needs help that (they are) no longer fit for practice. We all need help at some time, just some more than others. ”

— Dr. Randall E. Pearson  
Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners

“ I was about to lose my license and be put on the permanent scrap-pile of unemployable impaired physicians for my erratic behavior during a manic episode. But TMF swept in and sent me to treatment and then energetically **advocated** for me before the Board and preserved my license and medical career. ”

— Family Medicine Physician

# 2023 EDUCATION



An important part of our mission to **restore providers** and **protect patients** is to alert health professionals regarding health and impairment, including the signs and symptoms of addiction, mental, emotional, or behavioral health disorders, and how to ask for help. The goal is to mitigate and even prevent conditions that could impair a provider and endanger a patient. Here is how we tackled provider education in 2023.

## PRESENTATIONS

The TMF traveled the state providing a total of 54 lectures and CME presentations on provider health and impairment and related topics. Invitations come from hospitals, medical practices, medical schools and training programs, specialty organizations, allied health organizations, and other partners sharing in the mission of provider health.

## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The TMF exhibited at 12 regional and state conferences and participated in or led other events to raise awareness about its services and resources in 2023.

One highlight in 2023 was a collaboration with Tennessee's other peer assistance programs, the Tennessee Pharmacy Recovery Network, Tennessee Professional Assistance Program, and Tennessee Dental Wellness Foundation. The Interprofessional Mental Health, Recovery, and Suicide Prevention Summit was held during Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and Recovery Month in September for all health professions served by these programs. The event offered four hours of CE/CME and had a good showing; our hopes are to make this September Summit an annual event.



*Medical Director Dr. Michael Baron was a keynote speaker for the 2023 Southeast Family Medicine Forum hosted by the Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians.*



*Summit Speaker Stephanie Thornton presents a session on Shared Trauma and Moral Injury.*



*Executive Director Jennifer Rainwater manned the TMF booth at the 2023 Rural Health Association of Tennessee Annual Conference.*

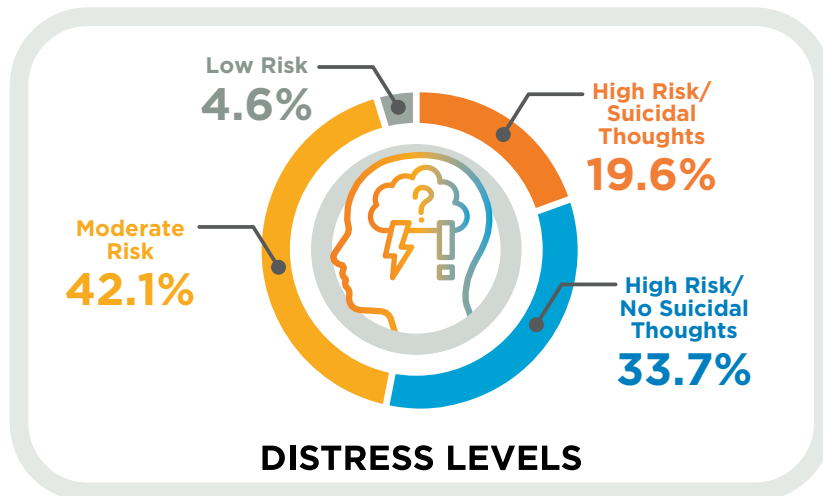
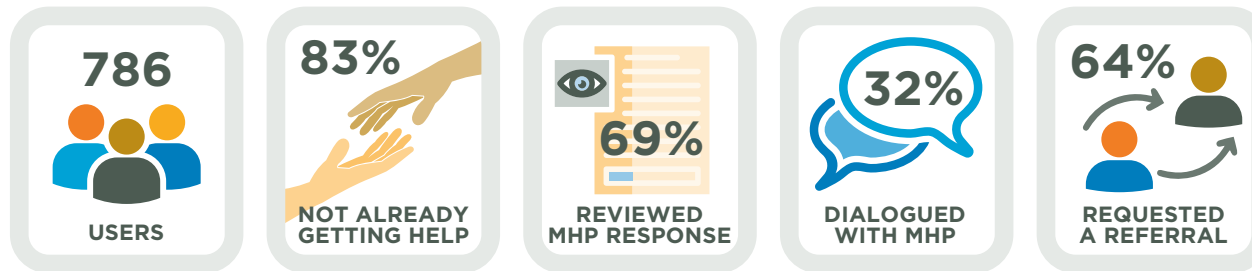
# 2023 RESOURCES



The TMF offers a robust library of resources, including articles, policy, and guidance on impairment; TMF downloadable documents and resources; links to organizations, meetings, and other agencies and entities connected to **impairment** and **recovery**; and more.

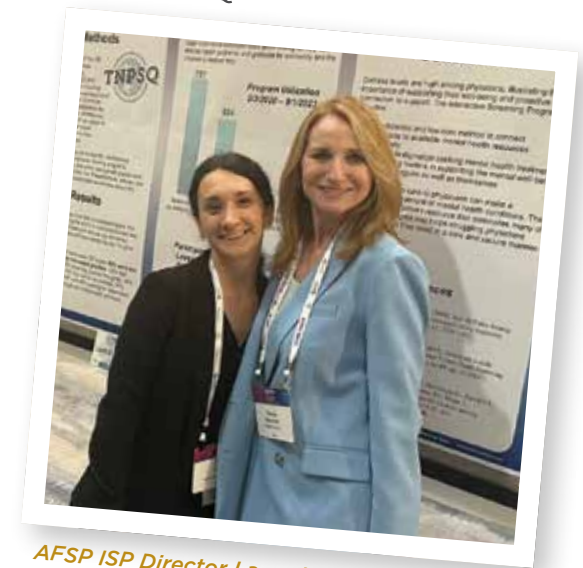
## MENTAL HEALTH TOOL

One of the central resources is the Tennessee Professional Screening Questionnaire (TN-PSQ). Launched just before the pandemic in February 2020, this online mental health screening tool recently celebrated its fourth year of helping Tennessee health professionals receive a mental health screening anonymously, with the option to dialogue with a mental health professional (MHP) for further assistance. **Results have been remarkable:**



### SHARING THE SUCCESS

As the first Physician Health Program in the country to adopt and customize this screening platform, the TMF has presented on TN-PSQ results in several national forums. Four other state PHPs have since adopted this resource for their providers. We continue to spread the word about the benefits and effectiveness of the Screening Program platform (ISP), developed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).



*AFSP ISP Director Laura Hoffman and TMF Development Coordinator Brenda Williams-Denbo presented a poster on the TN-PSQ at the 2023 American Conference on Physician Health, sponsored jointly by the AMA, Stanford Medicine, and the Mayo Clinic.*

# A Message from The Executive Director



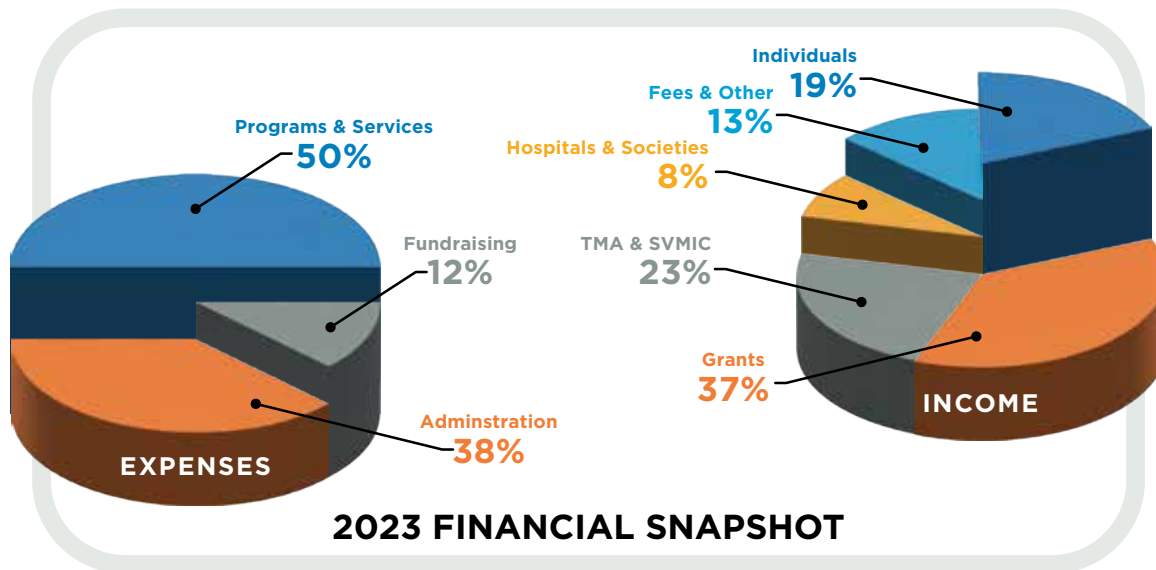
**2023** has been another wonderful year for the TMF. We have seen amazing love and support from our many donors, and I have been humbled by your generosity. Many Tennessee hospitals, medical staffs, and organizations make us a priority in their financial support. Our dedicated staff and remarkable TMF Board of Directors and Quality Improvement Committee continually raise the bar in the care of our participants.

Every day I feel extraordinarily blessed to be a part of this organization because I'm not just accomplishing tasks, I'm able to be a part of something that reaches far into our community and beyond. **Restoring providers** and **protecting patients** is the heart of what we do. We will never meet most of the people who benefit from the work we do: the patients of our providers. But our work enables them to have a healthy healthcare provider who is able to safely meet their needs.

Another tool the TMF uses to restore providers is our Tennessee Professional Screening Questionnaire (TN-PSQ). The TN-PSQ has been proactively reaching medical professionals struggling with mental health issues and has become a model for other PHPs in the country. In just four years the TN-PSQ has been utilized by more than 780 medical professionals, many of whom had never asked for help before.

As the TMF embarks on another year, I look forward to seeing the fruit of our labor - providers restored to health and their practices, *and* patients' lives positively impacted by those providers. As always, thank you for your continued support as we seek to uphold our mission of **Saving Lives, Saving Careers.**

Jennifer Rainwater  
Executive Director



*“ We are pleased to have been able to support the TMF again this year. Thank you for the good work supporting our clinicians and patients. ”*

— **Dr. Brian Wilcox,**  
Chief Clinical Officer  
Ascension Saint Thomas, Nashville

# 2023 LEADERSHIP

Volunteer leaders are the backbone supporting fulfillment of the TMF mission to **restore providers and protect patients**. We are beyond grateful to these caring, dedicated people.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The TMF Board of Directors oversees the business and affairs of the Foundation and its Physician's Health Program; directors are representatives from each region of the state, including several citizen members.

## PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE (PHQIC)

The PHQIC is focused on quality improvement work and is tasked with clinical oversight of the TMF Physician's Health Program.

## CADUCEUS GROUP LEADERS

Confidentiality prevents listing 27 dedicated volunteers who lead support groups for current and past PHP participants. They meet weekly in 10 cities across Tennessee and one statewide virtual session for those in remote locations.



*Incoming President Dr. Clay Runnels (foreground) and other board members take a break from a business session at the Fall Board Retreat in October.*



*PHQIC members meet quarterly to review and vote on actions related to health professionals who are monitored participants of the PHP. Thank you to the Tennessee Medical Association for graciously allowing us to use their conference room all year long.*

## TMF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Clay W. Runnels, MD**  
President  
Johnson City

**Eric Berg, III, MD**  
Vice President  
Clarksville

**Lee McLellan**  
Treasurer  
Nashville

**J.D. Rosdeutscher, MD**  
Chair, PHQIC  
Nashville

**Michael Miller, DO**  
Past President  
Nashville

**Subhi D. Ali, MD**  
Waverly

**Keith D. Gray, MD**  
Knoxville

**Pat Lee, CPMSM**  
Chattanooga

**Randy Ratliff, Esq.**  
Brentwood

**Perry C. Rothrock, III, MD**  
Cordova

**Natascha S. Thompson, MD**  
Memphis

**John B. Woods, MD**  
Co-Chair, PHQIC  
Jackson

**Mary I. Yarbrough, MD**  
Nashville

## PHYSICIAN'S HEALTH QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE (PHQIC)

**J.D. Rosdeutscher, MD**  
Chair  
Nashville

**John B. Woods, MD**  
Co-Chair  
Jackson

**Eric Berg, III, MD**  
Vice President, TMF Board  
Clarksville

**Tim Davis, MD**  
Chattanooga

**John Harris, MD**  
Memphis

**Lorraine Johnson, RN**  
Knoxville

**Clay Runnels, MD**  
President, TMF Board  
Johnson City

**Brigham Scallion, MD**  
Bells

**Steve Tate, MD**  
Franklin



## FEBRUARY

Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, and Transitional Year Residents attend a Physician Wellness Grand Rounds presentation by Dr. Baron at TriStar Centennial Medical Center.



## APRIL

TMF Medical Director Dr. Michael Baron presented his annual report on the Physician's Health Program to the Tennessee Medical Association House of Delegates. The TMF-PHP began as a TMA Board Committee on Impaired Physicians in 1978; TMF's partnership with our parent organization is still strong.

# -2023- Snapshots



## SEPTEMBER

Speakers pose after the Inaugural Interprofessional Mental Health, Recovery, and Suicide Prevention Summit: (L-R) Dr. Ariel Clark, Tennessee Pharmacists Association; Stephanie Thornton, West Virginia Judicial and Lawyer Assistance Program; Phil Herndon, River Tree Center; Dr. Ed Capparelli, Tennessee Medical Association; and Brenda Williams-Denbo and Dr. Michael Baron (not pictured), Tennessee Medical Foundation.



## SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER

TMF Executive Director Jennifer Rainwater presents outgoing TMF Board officers President Dr. Michael Miller (L) and Treasurer Martin Akin (R) with certificates of appreciation and a lovely parting gift during the Fall Board Retreat.





## MAY

Presidents of the Federation of State Physician Health Programs (FSPHP) pose for a photo during its 2023 Education Conference. L-R: Current President Dr. Scott Hambleton, Mississippi PHP; Incoming President Dr. Baron, TMF; and Past President Dr. Chris Bundy, West Virginia PHP.

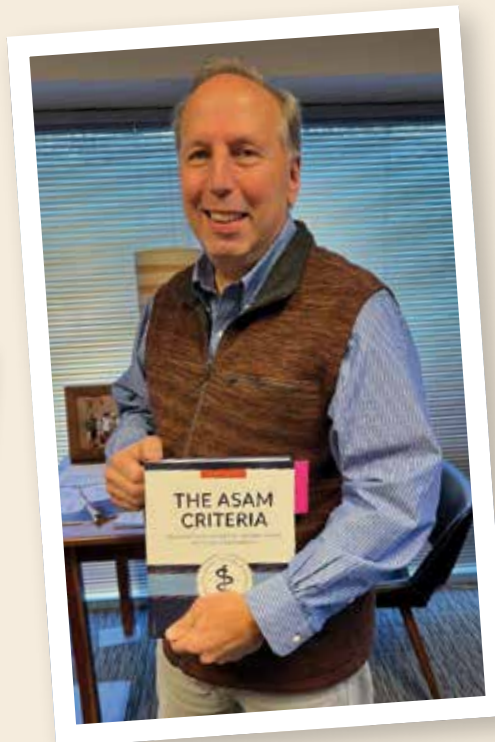


## JUNE

The 2023 Caduceus Retreat featured speakers (L-R): Colton Shannon, Chip Dodd, and Phil Herndon presenting on “Thriving in Recovery.” Dr. Dodd is the son of former TMF Medical Director, the late Dr. David Dodd. The Retreat is held annually for TMF participants and alumni.



TMF Board members and their families enjoyed the 2023 retreat at Fall Creek Falls. (L): Dr. John and Mary Kaye Woods; (R): Heidi Baron with Past-President Dr. Tim Davis and wife Barbara.



## DECEMBER

Dr. Baron displays the *ASAM Criteria Fourth Edition*, to which he and two addiction medicine colleagues contributed a new chapter titled, “Supporting Patients Working in Safety-Sensitive Occupations.”



**TMF**  
TENNESSEE MEDICAL  
FOUNDATION

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Brentwood, TN 37027  
Phone: 615-467-6411  
Fax: 615-467-6419  
[www.e-tmf.org](http://www.e-tmf.org)

“*Alcoholism had driven me to the brink of losing my career, my family, and my very life. I called TMF and they guided me to treatment and continue to guide and support me in recovery. With their endorsement and support I was able to retain my employment, renew my relationships, and rediscover a happy, peaceful life. I am forever grateful to TMF.*”

— *Internal Medicine Physician*

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