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NEW TMF LEADERSHIP AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES ANNOUNCED

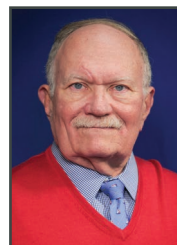
The TMF is pleased to announce the transition to new executive leadership and the addition of two distinguished medical professionals to its Board of Directors.

Dr. Eric W. Berg, III, of Clarksville is the new Board president, succeeding Dr. Clay Runnels, who transitions to the role of immediate past president. Joining the executive committee as vice president is Dr. W. Reeves Johnson, Jr., of Knoxville. Additionally, the TMF welcomes Dr. Phyllis Miller (Chattanooga) and Dr. Amanda von Horn (Nashville) as new regional representatives.

“Our Board is the cornerstone of our mission to support Tennessee’s health professionals in times of crisis,” said Jennifer Rainwater, TMF Executive Director. “The combined expertise of Drs. Berg, Johnson, Miller, and von Horn, along with the rest of our excellent board, ensures we remain a robust lifeline for those

battling substance use disorders and mental health challenges.”

NEW LEADERS, 2026-2027



PRESIDENT:
Eric W. Berg, III, MD,
FCAP, FASCP

A graduate of the TMF PHP and a retired U.S. Army Colonel, Dr. Berg formerly served as chief of Anatomic Pathology at Blanchfield Army

Community Hospital. His distinguished career includes work with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System during national crises, including the 9/11 Pentagon response and the Space Shuttle Columbia recovery.

(Continued on page 3)

CONNECTION, GROWTH, AND RENEWAL : THE 2026 CADUCEUS RETREAT

The Caduceus Retreat is the premier annual gathering for TMF Professionals Health Program (PHP) participants and graduates. It is a unique opportunity for attendees to step away from the clinical environment and reconnect with what matters most: their health, their family, and their peers. Scheduled for June 12-14 at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs in Franklin, TN, registration and details are housed online at e-tmf.org/2026-caduceus-retreat.

Expert speakers this year include Emily Brunner, MD, medical director of Eosis Recovery; Jessi Gold, MD, chief wellness officer for the University of Tennessee System; Jonathan Ripp, MD, senior associate dean and chief wellness officer with the Icahn School of Medicine-Mount Sinai, NY; and Smita Prasad, MD, assistant professor of addiction medicine at Tulane University. Attendees can earn up to 6.0 continuing medical education hours of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* during the retreat.



2026 CADUCEUS RETREAT

JUNE 12-14

**FRANKLIN MARRIOTT COOL SPRINGS
FRANKLIN, TN**

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:
Attendance required for current PHP participants and highly encouraged for graduates, veterans, and family members.

COST:
Registration is \$125 per person;
Hotel is \$189/night plus tax

ROOM & REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
May 22, 2026

e-tmf.org/2026-caduceus-retreat

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MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

“AND THE SURVEY SAYS...” STUDY RANKS OUR MOST HELPFUL SERVICES

BY MICHAEL J. BARON, MD, MPH, DFASAM

BACKGROUND

By now you have seen our impressive participant outcome data that includes an 87% monitoring completion rate with an 11% return to use rate. Our TMF outcome study results align with national Physician Health Program (PHP) outcome data and tell us that the PHP model provides the most effective substance use disorder treatment. Studies also show that PHP participant graduates are healthier and safer than the general physician population.

Given this excellent outcome data, we wanted to know what our participants perceive as the most supportive services the TMF provides to help maintain their recovery. To answer that we did a deep dive, using a survey study to rank our services in order of impact.

METHOD

The TMF sent paper surveys by USPS to our Caduceus (TMF support group) facilitators to distribute to group members, including current PHP participants and graduates. An electronic version was also sent by email to members of our telehealth Caduceus group. Both paper and electronic surveys were optional and anonymous, resulting in a strong 68% completion rate. For multiple reasons we wanted to focus the survey on those with at least two years of recovery, so the survey asked for sobriety month and year. Our final study group was 84 participants (N = 84) with two years or more of TMF recovery support.

FINDINGS

All our services were perceived as helpful by our survey participants. The services listed below are in descending order of their perceived value at maintaining recovery:

1. **Advocacy** - Perceived as the most helpful service that we provide. This is a testament to the strength and reputation of the Tennessee Medical Foundation.
2. **Caduceus Meetings** - No surprise; the Caduceus group meeting is the safest recovery-based meeting around. It is a hybrid of a process group and 12-step meeting where discussion of any subject is allowed, including patient complications, divorce, malpractice, relapse, employment, etc.
3. **Connections** - This also makes sense as physicians are typically isolated. Addiction only adds to the isolation as most physicians use substances alone. A participant may belong to a multi-specialty group or large institution, but those connections are superficial and employment based. Forming deep and meaningful connections are part of the recovery process and a measure of spiritual growth. The TMF provides an avenue to make those important connections.

4. **Accountability** - This is the shocker... at least to me. Physicians in general do not like having “big brother” or the TMF looking over their shoulder. So, for accountability to be ranked as the fourth most helpful service was a big surprise. Accountability is the force that gets one through cravings, stress, or when accidental access happens. It’s the one aspect or ingredient I point to when asked about our “secret sauce.”

The remainder of TMF services perceived as most helpful were ranked in this order:

5. **Case Management**
6. **12-Step recovery process**
7. **Intake process**
8. **Referral process**
9. **Monitoring contract**

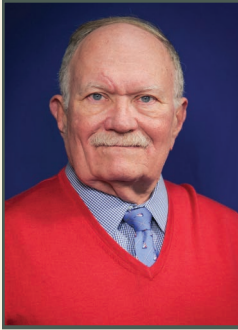
CONCLUSION

All TMF services surveyed were rated as valuable, with the top four emerging as the most impactful. The TMF provides services that support our participants’ recovery, with advocacy, Caduceus meetings, connections, and accountability found to be the most helpful by our experienced PHP participants. The survey data was instrumental in our understanding of how TMF services are seen as vital support by those in recovery. We hope to fine tune our monitoring agreements to best incorporate this survey data.

LOOKING AHEAD

To be able to publish our data, we applied for approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Because of an IRB requirement, we will need to repeat the participant survey study. The TMF continuously wants to know what we do that supports recovery so we can do it better; we also want to know what is not helpful to our participants’ recovery. Please help us achieve this goal by sharing your feedback when the repeat TMF Survey is available at your Caduceus meeting. †

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MY ABRIDGED GRATITUDE LIST

BY ERIC W. BERG, III, MD
Board President

Greetings. I am delighted to write this column, 18 years after scores of caring people rescued me from a destructive lifestyle that surely would have killed me and perhaps others. This being my first *TMF LifeLines* newsletter column, today I want to thank those who helped me turn my life around.

My wife of 40 years saw me through my recovery. Vanderbilt performed my fitness-for-duty evaluation, and the Center for Professional Excellence (CPE) was my residential treatment facility. The U.S. Army helped immensely on each step of the way; it was supportive financially and professionally. My leaders (who were also physicians, some with alcoholic family members) knew exactly what to do with me for the greatest chance of success while mitigating the damage I had already done to myself. After treatment and subsequent enrollment in the TMF aftercare program, I returned to work without loss of rank, professional status, or permanent consequences. After mandatory longevity retirement from active duty at 31 years, those same leaders rehired me as a civilian surgical and forensic pathologist.

That brings me to the Tennessee Medical Foundation. After treatment at CPE, and with a deep sense of trepidation, I met with Dr. Roland Gray, the TMF medical director in 2008. After my interview with him, I knew that things were going to be all right if I did my part. Dr. Gray turned me over to my case manager, Jeanne Breard, RN. She monitored my progress and mentored me for the next five years. I selected

“ My story is not unique.
TMF helps us all. ”

my AA recovery sponsor from among the TMF members; he knows who he is. There were many Caduceus group leaders and members who calibrated my reactions to the stressors of everyday life at our weekly meetings, people who made the following week easier to navigate.

My gratitude list includes my immediate predecessor in this office, Dr. Clay Runnels. He commissioned one of the leading accounting, tax, and healthcare consulting firms in the nation to review and provide guidance specific to the compensation of our staff. This brought us in line and competitive with prominent other nonprofits in Tennessee. I speak on behalf of the entire board of directors when I say that we are all thankful to Dr. Runnels for his leadership on this and in many other areas.

Finally, I am grateful to the God of My Understanding, the One who never forsook me when I strayed all those years.

My story is not unique. TMF helps us all. †

NEW LEADERS *(Continued from page 1)*



VICE PRESIDENT:
W. Reeves Johnson, Jr., MD, FAAFP

A former president of the Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners and member of the TN Medical Cannabis Commission, Dr. Johnson practiced family medicine in Knoxville for over 34 years before retiring from active clinical practice in 2023. He is a strong advocate for physician wellbeing at the local, state, and national level.



IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:
Clay W. Runnels, MD

Serving as chief physician executive of Ballad Health in Johnson City, TN, Dr. Runnels is an ABEM certified emergency physician. While serving in various leadership positions, he helped spearhead award-winning projects that include initiatives to reduce time to treatment for oncology patients and to streamline physician credentialing.



SOUTHEAST TN REPRESENTATIVE:
Phyllis E. Miller, MD

The first woman to lead the Tennessee Medical Association and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Medical Society, Dr. Miller was recently honored as a “Champion of Healthcare” by the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*.



MIDDLE TN REPRESENTATIVE:
Amanda U. von Horn, MD

Dr. von Horn is the division director of Addiction Psychiatry at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. She brings specialized expertise in addiction medicine and previously served on the board of the Massachusetts Physician Health Program.

Lee McLellan of Pinnacle Financial Partners in Nashville remains as Board Treasurer. Meanwhile, **Dr. John Woods** (Burns) continues as chair and **Dr. Tim Davis** (Chattanooga) remains as co-chair of the Physician Health Quality Improvement Committee (PHQIC), which provides clinical oversight for the Professionals Health Program.. †

CADUCEUS RETREAT

(Continued from page 1)

HIGHLIGHTS

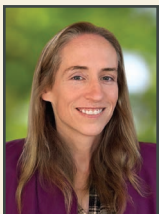
- **Friday Evening:** Traditional Newcomer's Meeting to kick off the weekend in a supportive atmosphere.
- **Saturday Program:** Interactive lectures, group work, and educational presentations focused on addiction, recovery, and well-being.
- **Sunday Session:** A final morning of reflection and spiritual renewal before heading home.
- **Dedicated 12-Step Meetings:** Scheduled throughout the weekend for appropriate attendees.

SUPPORT

This year's retreat is made possible in part by a grant from the Knoxville Academy of Medicine Alliance (KAMA), supporting our mission to heal the healers.



SPEAKER & SESSIONS



Emily Brunner, MD, DFASAM, physician and TTA consultant, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation; medical director, Eosis Recovery.

SESSIONS:

- Behavioral Addictions: It is Not All About the Substance!
- Personal Recovery Story (Sunday)



Jessi Gold, MD, chief wellness officer, University of Tennessee System; associate professor of Psychiatry, University of Tennessee Health Science Center-Memphis; author, *How Do You Feel? One Doctor's Search for Humanity in Medicine*.

SESSION:

- What About Us? Caring for Ourselves as We Care for Others in Healthcare



Smita Prasad, MD, MBA, MPH, FASAM, assistant professor of Addiction Medicine, Tulane University; medical director, Louisiana Addictive Disorder Regulatory Authority Board; president, Louisiana Society of Addiction Medicine.

SESSION:

- Hijacked: How Addiction Rewires the Brain



Jonathan Ripp, MD, MPH, professor of Medicine, Medical Education, and Geriatrics/Palliative Medicine; senior associate dean for Well-Being and Resilience; chief wellness officer, Icahn School of Medicine-Mount Sinai.

SESSIONS:

- Multilevel Efforts to Address Healthcare Worker Well-Being
- Solutions to Address Healthcare Worker Wellbeing and Mental Health and Response to Sudden Tragic Loss



QUESTIONS? For more information, visit e-tmf.org/2026-caduceus-retreat or contact Jennifer Rainwater at 615-467-6411 or jenniferr@e-tmf.org.



“I’M ALL IN”

TERESA RASMUSSEN, PA-C
2026 Graduate

These were my first words after TMF participation terms were explained to me. This I can do: respond quickly, perform efficiently, complete my goal. The goal was to be reemployed as a physician assistant. I believed my career to be the sum total of my person; without it, I was nothing.

I had long ago left behind being a parent, daughter, partner, and friend. I devoted my all each day to my work, and each night to the bottle of liquor that helped me forget my failures as a human being outside my profession.

Five-plus years down the road, I am still “all in,” but in a far greater sense. I am reemployed but in a fullness of spirit that allows me to minister to my patients much more effectively and compassionately than

before my sobriety journey began. The opportunities for making living amends to my loved ones are revealed daily. I gratefully receive them and fulfill them as best I can. Contentment is a frequent companion, rather than a fleeting idealized emotion.

Precious is far too small a word to describe my sobriety. It is priceless, as dear as my next breath. It is “the daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of my spiritual condition.”

TMF did not just give me back my career, although that is all I set out to do; TMF, and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, gave me back my life.

Yes, I am all in. I pray to be for all the rest of my days. 🙏



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TOOL: SIX YEARS & 1,000+ USERS

The Tennessee Professional Screening Questionnaire (TN-PSQ) celebrated its sixth anniversary on February 3, 2026, marking over half a decade of providing confidential mental health support to Tennessee health professionals and students/trainees. To date, the mental health screening tool has been used by more than 1,000 individuals to assess their mental health and receive optional support and referrals.

OVERVIEW

Launched in February 2020, the TN-PSQ is a free, anonymous, and voluntary online self-screening tool designed to help clinicians identify mental health struggles before they escalate.

- **Platform:** Uses the Interactive Screening Program (ISP) developed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).
- **Target Audience:** Licensed health professionals (MDs, DOs, PAs, pharmacists, veterinarians, etc.), and students/trainees in these fields.
- **Privacy:** Users are completely anonymous; counselors only know a user’s identity if the user chooses to share it.

SIX-YEAR IMPACT

- **Total Users:** As of early 2026, 1,019 health professionals and learners have utilized the tool.
- **Early Intervention:** Approximately 82% of users were not previously receiving mental health treatment, indicating the tool successfully reaches those not yet in the care system.
- **Distress Levels:** Historical data shows over half of users score in “high distress” categories, highlighting a significant need for the service.
- **Expansion:** Originally for medical professionals, TMF and the Tennessee Pharmacy Recovery Network (TPRN) expanded the program to include Tennessee pharmacy professionals.

HOW IT WORKS

1. **Screening:** Users complete a 35-question encrypted questionnaire (based on the PHQ-9) in about 10 minutes.
2. **Personal Feedback:** A program counselor provides a personalized, non-automated response.
3. **Anonymous Dialogue:** Users can exchange secure messages with the counselor to ask questions or request local referrals. 🙏

Tennessee clinicians and trainees can access the screening at tn.providerwellness.org. Learn more at e-tmf.org/tnpsq.

DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OUR MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

The TMF annually enjoys strong financial support from **State Volunteer Mutual Insurance Company (SVMIC)**, the State of Tennessee **Board of Medical Examiners (BME)**, **Board of Osteopathic Examiners (BOE)**, **Board of Physician Assistants (BOPA)**, **Board of Respiratory Care (BRC)**, and the **Tennessee Medical Association (TMA)**. Together they provide approximately 70% of the Foundation's annual budget. Without their support, our crucial work would not be possible. 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**.

Donor acknowledgements run annually in the Spring issue of **TMF LifeLines**, reflecting all gifts received in the prior year.

Organizational Contributions 2025

HOSPITAL & HEALTH SYSTEMS

Ascension Saint Thomas Health.....	\$10,000
Ballad Health.....	\$5,000
Bristol Regional Medical Center-Ballad Health.....	\$2,000
CommonSpirit Memorial-Chatanooga (Formerly CHI Memorial).....	\$1,000
Dolly Parton Children's Hospital (Formerly East TN Children's Hospital).....	\$1,000
Erlanger Health System.....	\$10,000
Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center.....	\$6,000
Hardin Medical Center.....	\$500
Highpoint Health-Sumner-w/Ascension St Thomas.....	\$250
Holston Valley Medical Center-Ballad Health.....	\$2,500
Johnson City Medical Center-Ballad Health.....	\$10,000
Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge.....	\$750
Parkwest Medical Center.....	\$500
Saint Francis Healthcare-Tenet.....	\$2,500
Starr Regional Medical Center.....	\$500
Sweetwater Hospital Association.....	\$500
Tenova Health.....	\$5,000
TriStar Skyline Medical Center.....	\$2,500
TriStar Summit Medical Center.....	\$5,000
University of Tennessee Medical Center.....	\$5,000
Vanderbilt University Medical Center.....	\$7,500
West Tennessee Healthcare.....	\$10,000

FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS

Fred & Gertrude Perlberg Foundation**.....	\$1,000
HCA Healthcare Foundation.....	\$25,000
Intuitive Surgical, Inc. Foundation.....	\$1,000
Medical Foundation of Chattanooga.....	\$4,000
Memorial Foundation, Inc.....	\$2,500
Petroni Family Fund.....	\$500
Tennessee Medical Education Fund, Inc.....	\$15,000
Tennessee Opioid Abatement Grant.....	\$333,333.33
James H. Tharp Award.....	\$5,000

GROUP MEDICAL PRACTICES

Abercrombie Radiology.....	\$1,000
Galen Medical Group.....	\$2,000
Heritage Medical Associates, PC.....	\$1,000
Premier Medical Group.....	\$1,000
Summit Medical Group, PLLC.....	\$3,000
The Jackson Clinic, PA.....	\$2,000

CORPORATIONS

Pinnacle Financial Partners.....	\$2,500
Ross E. Rainwater and R2MA: HealthMarkets+.....	\$1,200

SOCIETIES/SPECIALTIES

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Medical Society Alliance.....	\$10,436.81
Montgomery County Medical Society.....	\$1,000
Nashville Academy of Medicine.....	\$1,000
Northwest Tennessee Medical Society.....	\$2,000
Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians.....	\$1,000
Tennessee Academy of Physician Assistants.....	\$2,100
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association.....	\$1,000
Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine.....	\$1,500
Tennessee Society of Anesthesiologists.....	\$2,000
Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association.....	\$2,500
Williamson County Medical Society.....	\$1,000

SCHOOLS & TRAINING PROGRAMS

East TN State University Quillen College of Medicine.....	\$10,000
University of TN Health Science Center Office of GME.....	\$1,475

ORGANIZATIONS

Rural Health Association of Tennessee.....	\$350
West Tennessee Medical Group Management Association.....	\$2,500

Individual Contributions 2025

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\$5,000+

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THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR PROFESSIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

NEW DESIGNATION, NEW WAYS TO GIVE!

BY JENNIFER RAINWATER
Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that TMF is now a 509(a)(2) Public Charity, an upgraded status within our existing 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation. Because the TMF draws support from a broad range of sources, we qualified for this new designation by passing a five-year public support test with the IRS. Some of the benefits include:

- **Greater donor appeal** – demonstrates that our organization relies on broad public support and effectively fulfills our mission.
- **Tax Benefits** – we are generally exempt from federal income tax, allowing us to dedicate more resources to our program.
- **Public Trust** – this new designation conveys a level of public trust and credibility, indicating that we have met the IRS's standards for public support and financial management.

This new designation allows us to receive:

- **Contributions through Donor Advised Funds (DAFs)** – donors can contribute assets to a Donor Advised Fund and recommend grants to 509(a)(2) organizations like ours. (Some of our donors have already taken advantage of this giving method!)
- **Individual and Corporate Donations** – direct monetary contributions.
- **Grants** – contributions from other public charities or government entities.
- **Program Fees** – the TMF charges a small monthly fee to participants to offset monitoring and advocacy

expenses, including communication with regulatory, professional, and credentialing entities (healthcare licensing boards, specialty organizations, hospitals, insurance companies, etc.). Some participants are exempt from fees for need-based and other reasons.

- **Event Revenue** – the TMF charges a small fee for our Annual Caduceus Retreat.

We also have a Chariot account which connects us to several giving platforms, including Benevity, which allows employees to request matching gifts from their employers. Be sure to check with your employer about this great benefit – they may be able to match your gifts to the TMF and double your impact!

I want to say a special “Thank You!” to those who faithfully support us year after year. Your partnership in our program makes our mission possible. We are grateful for our donors, volunteers, board and committee members, and TMF staff who go above and beyond to help health professionals in our program. We are all proud to be a part of an organization that is making an impact on the lives of our participants, their families, their patients, and their communities. 🙏

With gratitude,

Share your thoughts with Ms. Rainwater at jenniferr@e-tmf.org

FREE OPIOID RX COURSE NOW AVAILABLE

A free online CME course, developed with the help of a panel of experts including TMF Medical Director Dr. Michael Baron, is now available to Tennessee prescribers to fulfill the two-hour requirement for proper prescribing education.

Launched by the Tennessee Foundation for Quality Patient Healthcare (TFQPH), a nonprofit entity of the Tennessee Medical Association, the course is part of a three-year initiative funded by the Tennessee Opioid Abatement Council. KnowMore/NoMore combines opioid and chronic pain prescribing education with community outreach to expand public awareness.

The course is available at no charge through June 2027. Learn more and take the free course at knowmoretn.org.





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 www.e-tmf.org

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please let us know your new address when you move.
 Thank you for helping us keep in touch!



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TMF MEDALLION SOCIETY

RECOGNIZING SPECIAL COMMITMENT

Every donation to the TMF is deeply appreciated, yet special acknowledgement is given to those of you whose contributions exemplify your commitment to TMF mission of *Saving Lives, Saving Careers*. Your leadership is recognized by membership in the **TMF Medallion Society**, honoring individuals who have given \$10,000 or more within a 10-year period. We honor you for your generosity and commitment.

THE MEDALLION SOCIETY: January 2016 – April 2026

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*New member

Learn more: 615-467-6411 or brendaw@e-tmf.org