



# North Alabama Mental Health Coalition

Meeting minutes for May 13, 2025

## **Attendees (in person):**

Daniel Adamek (Little Orange Fish)  
Randy Barbour (City of Huntsville)  
Amanda Burns  
Madison Elam (R.O.S.S.)  
Faith Jackson (Thrive AL)  
Laurin Mitchell (Wellstone)  
Leticia Ogutu (Wellstone)  
Deidre G. Roberts (ADMH Autism Services)  
Kendra Tatum (Madison County Schools)  
Brandi Woodard (Alliance BH)

Kelli Arthur (VA)  
Kim Bigelow (Warrior Wellness Program)  
Melissa Caldwell (Wellstone)  
Melissa Foster (UAH Nursing)  
Kimberly Lamar (Genesis Detox)  
Tristan Morris (InVis (AI Chatbot))  
Leticia Oja (NACH)  
Jenny Stang (Alabama Lifespan Respite)  
Geraldine Thompson (Alliance Huntsville)  
Mack Yates (SVDP/VOP)

Sarah Bailey (UAH RAN)  
Amy Bryan (Alliance Huntsville)  
Rudolfo Chavez (SVDP)  
Jennifer Gentry (Long Leaf Centers)  
Tyletha Lord (ADMH)  
Krista Moulton (Therapist)  
Alyssa Perry (Wellstone)  
Paula Steele (Wellstone/WES)  
Don Webster (HEMSI)

## **1. Welcome and Introductions – Daniel Adamek**

Introductions are important because you need to be able find out who can help you.

## **2. Coalition Updates – Daniel Adamek**

Daniel mentioned again that all the minutes are on the website under the [“Stay Informed”](#) link. He has been working on getting the website more and more useable. Please let him know if you have any feedback. There is going to be a new page on the website where the minutes will be summarized and action items are detailed.

## **3. Review of Action Items– Daniel Adamek**

Don provided details about a situation that occurred last month and there have been attempts from the coalition to help; however, nothing has been resolved yet.

Audrey mentioned [www.alhelp.org](http://www.alhelp.org) to find support groups. She is working with Paula Steele and others to create a network in the community to help support those people leaving the crisis center. They are receiving (through the website), requests for help from members of the community dealing with mental health issues. Since the last meeting, she has made several referrals to other agencies in the coalition.

Daniel mentioned again that if your organization is not on the “Resources” page of the website and would like to be, please contact him with information about your organization.

[Daniel@LittleOrangeFish.org](mailto:Daniel@LittleOrangeFish.org).

Other action items included: follow-up with UAH student nursing engagement with veteran care coordination, raise awareness of the Houston/Hunter bill as described in last month’s minutes, support PTSD screening efforts through iXpressGenes (Wellstone has a blood test kit available).

There will be a meeting on Friday in Birmingham sponsored by the VA and Daniel will be presenting. They are going to look at how to address the problems that veterans face. Daniel has reworked the “roadmap” that the coalition has talked about for many years and he is getting closer to Don’s “recipe” that he has asked for.

Don provided an update on HEMSI’s numbers. For April, visits to homeless and unsheltered - 85 calls (2.8 per day), Salvation Army (which is closed but still helping where they can) – 15 calls, SLAB – 12 calls, First Stop – 10 calls.

ODs for April was 2.3 per day (down from April 2024 where it was 3.1 per day). They are seeing a downward trend in overdoses, but they are not sure why.

Someone asked about the Salvation Army. The city is working with them to get them going again. They are having some staffing issues. They need volunteers. Supposedly there is a new commander coming in and hopefully things will improve.

Huntsville Hospital Mobile Health unit is still coming out to Downtown Rescue Mission.

Daniel mentioned that bringing up the things going on in the community is what we are here for. Krista brought up last month the idea that we have a vision of what needs to be done. The real work happens outside of the meeting guided by our mission. Daniel went over the mission of NAMHC. We work together to address the problems we encounter with mental health issues in our community.

#### **4. Featured Presentation – Agency-Student collaboration: Strengthening the Community – Dr. Melissa Foster, UAH Nursing School**

Melissa teaches community health in the UAH Nursing School. She uses her students to help the community. The Nursing School collaborates with local agencies. It will benefit the students (who need to get out in the community) and it benefits the agencies (who have insufficient staffing and money to work on their mission). Nursing students can do assessments for the community and help determine what the needs are. The Nursing School can share resources with other organizations.

Communication is the key. They try to match what they are able to provide to help fulfill the needs of agencies. Students doing home visits is tricky because they are still students and not licensed.

They do a good job with education. They can develop projects and then share them with other communities.

Some possible education programs include: parenting classes, Lamaze classes, smoking cessation class, understanding your health condition. They are trying to community events, screenings, and vaccination clinics.

They also do interactive classes, for example, with the intellectually disabled adults. They do healthy living classes, basic care and hygiene.

The most important part is evaluating how they are doing. Are we meeting the agency and participant's needs? The work needs to be meaningful to the students as well.

UAH is not the only nursing program in the area. Calhoun, Drake and Oakwood all have nursing programs as well.

A lot of people don't know how to access them and what they can do.

Please contact [Melissa.Foster@uah.edu](mailto:Melissa.Foster@uah.edu) Cell: (256)565-5803.

Now is the time to get them for fall programs (Labor Day through December).

Mack asked if they could offer classes about substance abuse disorders and other mental health issues. Melissa was receptive to that idea. She said they can also do short informational videos. Getting people to show up is always a struggle. Mack feels like having the UAH name behind a program would be beneficial. Melissa said she is good at developing programs.

Someone also wanted classes about basic living skills for those who are coming out of recovery. Melissa said she could help with that.

Melissa says she has between 40 and 50 students a semester. They prefer to go in groups of 8. She can tailor it to what you need.

\*\*\* [Melissa's presentation](#) is on the coalition website on the '[Resources](#)' page: <https://northalabamamentalhealthcoalition.org/resources> under "MEETING AND PRESENTATION MATERIALS"

## 5. Actions of the coalition to help the community – Mack Yates

Mack mentioned two goals that we would like to accomplish:

1 – Petition to get a long-term inpatient treatment and recovery center in North Alabama for individuals with serious mental illness and substance use disorder. All the sheriffs in North Alabama signed the petition as well as many others. Mack read the petition and it is posted on the website. He said since the legislative session will be over soon, he will be able to contact the legislators in person and encourage them to support the recovery center. Anyone that would like to help is encouraged to contact Mack (256)585-0304.

2 – Establishing a club house here in the Huntsville area. Krista explained that the club house model rehabilitation is a psycho social rehabilitation for adults with serious mental illness. Chattanooga is the closest city to us with one. There is significant evidence suggesting that the club house model reduces recidivism, reduces the need to access acute care, and helps the unsheltered. It also teaches life skills and work skills for transitional employment. Krista has personal experience with club houses in New York. We have treatment centers, but the chance of success is so much better with a community-based facility. Krista encouraged everyone to go to the website for the international club house organization and learn about it. [www.clubhouse-intl.org](http://www.clubhouse-intl.org) Krista will provide a roadmap later of how we can do this in our community. Mack emphasized the need for those suffering mental illness or substance abuse to have a social group that will support them. He said that the club house provides this social aspect as well as training for jobs.

Mack said there is a sign-up sheet for those interested in either of these two projects.

Daniel reminded us that the numbers of people we talk about having mental illness also relates to real people. He mentioned that we need to humanize these numbers and get that message out.

Krista recognized that people in the field of helping those with mental illness also need to take care of themselves. She feels like hope is a muscle that we need to exercise. She suggested that everyone think about what inspires them in this kind of work. She shared an inspirational

memory that she got from visiting the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery. She also suggested a book The Small and Mighty by Sharon McMahon.

Dr. Randy Barbour is the new director of Multi-Cultural Affairs for the city of Huntsville. His vision for the office is to create opportunities for growth and prosperity for all the citizens of Huntsville. A big priority for them is the unhoused population, as well as the youth of our city. He also wants to create opportunities for those in our community with disabilities. He encouraged coalition members to contact his office with any ideas. He said creating a vision of our community and setting goals to reach that vision is important to him, including our mental health community.

He said the cultural diversity of our city is extremely important and his office will be working to make an environment that we can be proud of.

The Caribbean 5K and Mental Health Awareness Fair is Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this event is to have fun, raise awareness of mental health issues, and to make people more aware of the resources that are available in our community to help. The race is being sponsored by the Youth Friendship Foundation (an organization dedicated to serving the youth of Madison County) and the city of Huntsville. Proceeds from the race will help their scholarship program.

Next Meeting  
Tuesday June 10, 2025  
11:00 am at Wellstone

Minutes for past meetings can be found at:

<https://northalabamamentalhealthcoalition.org/stay-informed>

Minutes can be searched and analyzed using the [NAMHC is Here for You](#) - GPT:

<https://chatgpt.com/g/g-rsEoS1Q7i-namhc-is-here-for-you>