



AUBURN

RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 12: March 2026

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## Support AU RHI This Tiger Giving Day



**This Tiger Giving Day, the Rural Health Initiative is raising \$15,000 to provide students with opportunities to impact lives across rural Alabama.**

Based on a critical shortage of healthcare providers and limited resources, our rural neighbors experience some of the nation's poorest health outcomes.

Through your gift, Auburn University students will serve as health partners, working directly with rural communities across Alabama to address our health crisis.

Our health partner teams will engage in activities such as meal planning, exercising and socializing to become stronger and healthier together. This initiative not only strengthens the bridge between Auburn University and the communities we aim to uplift, but also transforms

student education by providing hands-on, real-world experience in public health, service, and leadership.

Your support empowers students to become changemakers while helping to heal our state, one community at a time.

Please give today!

### **What happens when the money raised exceeds the goal?**

Funds raised in excess of a project's goal will be used to meet the immediate and emerging needs of said project at the discretion of the sponsoring unit.

### **What is Tiger Giving Day?**

Tiger Giving Day is Auburn University's 24-hour online day of giving. Its purpose is to promote projects that change lives on campus, in our communities, and even across the world. You can support as many projects as you like, and you can make your gift in a single transaction. Since 2015, more than 16,000 donors have supported 400+ life-changing projects on Tiger Giving Day.

### **Who do I contact if I have questions or need help?**

Text: 334-603-8990

Email: [augiving@auburn.edu](mailto:augiving@auburn.edu)

Call: 334-844-1427 or 334-844-7019

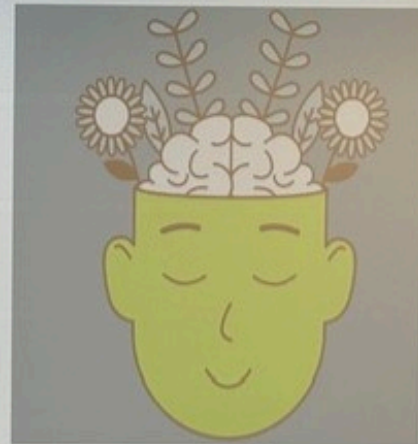
[Donate](#)

## **Rural Health Spotlight**

### **Community Conversations on Mental Health**

# What is Mental Health?

Presented by: Francesca Trella, Prather Anne Hargrove, Parker Short and Taylor Grace Joyner



Continuing this spring, the *Community Conversations on Mental Health* series will have two sessions designed to further understanding, strengthen connections, and equip participants with a supportive environment. On April 24, the session *Suicide: Understanding Risk, Warning Signs, and Response* will guide participants through the importance of talking openly about suicide. This objective is to address common fears, misconceptions, and recognize the difference between long-term risk factors and immediate warning signs. The session will cover subtle cues such as immediate mood improvement after distress and increased vulnerability during major life transitions. Another goal of having conversations on mental health is to offer supportive ways to respond regarding someone's safety. Participants can expect to learn what to avoid, such as minimizing feelings and the reinforcement to seek professional help and community resources.

**Led by graduate student Anna Beth Gandy  
9–11 a.m.**

**Central Alabama Community College  
Betty Carol Graham Technology Center  
675 Cherokee Road, Alexander City, AL 35010.**

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**Student Spotlight**



**Ryan Ho**  
**Biomedical Sciences, Pre-Pharmacy**

“Being a part of RHC has been a fulfilling experience and has contributed greatly to both my personal and professional growth. Considering that it was my first leadership position at Auburn, serving as an executive assistant has taught me the importance of teamwork and clear communication in ensuring that operations run smoothly. Also, coming from a small town myself, I have a deep appreciation for RHC's mission, as I've seen firsthand how rural communities often lack access to essential healthcare resources. Overall, I truly cherish my time with RHC, and I'm grateful to be a part of an organization that is making such an impact.”

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## **Community Health Events Strengthen Connections in Camden**

On February 27, there was a celebration for Heart Month at the Camden Courthouse. Another impactful event hosted by Jacqueline Hives and Rural Alabama Prevention Center occurred on March 12, the Health Fair at the Star Hope Center, where Dr. Hollie Cost joined onsite to support the effort. Participants were able to get registered for the OnMed Care Stations, received health packets and informational pamphlets, and were guided through the station's hours of operation and how to navigate its services. Shanicqa Davis, Admin Support Associate in Wilcox County, highlighted the importance of personal connection, noting, "I made it a priority to introduce myself to every participant." This helped participants feel more comfortable and supported while utilizing great resources. The community event concluded with a shared lunch and final announcements to reinforce the program's commitment to accessible, community-centered, proactive healthcare.



## Stepping Into Mental Health

In continuation of its *Stepping Up for Mental Health* initiative, Clay County will be hosting a community event Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will showcase local leadership, collaboration, and a shared sense of community to ensure residents feel valued. The following will participate: Ashland Fire Department, Alabama Department of Health (All Kids), Bre's Ministry, SAFE Family Services Center's Parents as Teacher Program, and East Alabama Regional Planning. This community event will create awareness, reduce stigmas, and encourage mental health conversations.

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## Mark Your Calendar

### ***Tiger Giving Day***

- March 25, 2026

### ***Mental Health Session # 3 Suicide: Understanding Risk, Warning Signs, and Response***

- April 24, 2026
- 11:45 a.m.
- 9–11 a.m.
- Location: Central Alabama Community College-Betty Carol Graham Technology Center, 675 Cherokee Road, Alexander City, AL 35010

### **Step Into Health**

- April 23, 2026 at 11:45 AM to 12:45 PM
- May 14, 2026 at 11:45 AM to 12:45 PM

**Stay updated on all events!**

[Facebook pages](#)

Visit Chambers County:  
<https://www.facebook.com/chambershealthwellness/>

Visit Greene County:

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Greene-County-Commission-100064291143692/>

Visit Hale County:

<https://www.facebook.com/HaleCountyAlabamaExtensionOffice>

Visit Sumter County:

<https://www.facebook.com/AlabamaCooperativeExtensionSystemSumterCounty/>

Visit Wilcox County: <https://www.facebook.com/WilcoxCountyAlabamaExtension/>

## Ways to Connect

### For Faculty

[Propose a Program](#)

[Request for Research](#)

[Search for Funding](#)

### For Students

[Apply for Internship](#)

[Become a Volunteer](#)

### For Community

[Ambassador Program](#)

[Become a Volunteer](#)

## Our Locations

### Chambers County

*Chambers Community Health and Wellness Center*

*404 9th Ave SW, LaFayette, AL 36862*

Mon–Fri: 8 AM–8 PM | Sat: 1 PM–6 PM

(334) 459-0173

Ms. Leah Sledge [lns0007@auburn.edu](mailto:lns0007@auburn.edu) (334) 864-9373

Ms. Debra Ward [warddeb@auburn.edu](mailto:warddeb@auburn.edu) (334) 459-0173

### Greene County

*Boligee Community Center, 17404 County Road 20, Boligee, AL 35443*

Mon–Fri: 9 AM–6 PM

Ms. Iris Sermon — (334) 844-5442 | [ics0017@auburn.edu](mailto:ics0017@auburn.edu)

### Hale County

*Akron Public Library, 207 1st Ave South, Akron, AL 35441*

Tue: 8 AM–5 PM | Wed & Thu: 8 AM–12 PM | Fri: 5 PM–8 PM

Ms. LaTarsha Tubbs — (334) 844-4017 | [lct0012@auburn.edu](mailto:lct0012@auburn.edu)

### Sumter County

*Gainesville Municipal Complex, 10900 State St, Gainesville, AL 35464*

Mon–Fri: 8 AM–6 PM

Ms. Shakeria Williams — (334) 844-5029 | [ssw0046@auburn.edu](mailto:ssw0046@auburn.edu)

### Wilcox County

*Elijah Tracey Shaw III Community Center, 17349 AL-5, Catherine, AL 36728*

Regular Hours:  
Mon/Wed/Fri: 9 AM–1 PM | Tue/Thu: 1 PM–6 PM  
Shanicqa Davis — (334) 844-3011 | [smd0122@auburn.edu](mailto:smd0122@auburn.edu)

Give Now

Check out our socials for more information!



Auburn University Outreach and Alabama Cooperative Extension System are addressing significant health disparities across rural Alabama in partnership with the Colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing, Human Sciences, Liberal Arts and with full engagement of the communities involved.



Auburn University Office of Public Service | 101 O.D. Smith Hall | Auburn, AL 36849 US

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