



# MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE

***Our Mission: To promote hopeful, healthy living and freedom from substance misuse through prevention, treatment, and recovery support.***

## *In Memory of Steve McElmurray*

The Chairman of Aiken Center’s Board of Commissioners, Steve McElmurray, passed away on August 25, 2025. Steve was a pharmacist and owner of North Augusta’s Park’s Pharmacy for over 40 years. Steve served his beloved community in multiple ways across the decades, including being a faithful member of Aiken Center’s Board for over 30 years. He cared deeply for this organization’s mission, vision and daily work. Steve cared deeply for Aiken Center’s staff and the families we serve. He named Aiken Center’s Jake Miniard Recovery Fund as one of two recommended charities for memorials. See page six of this newsletter if you would like to donate.



**Paul Stephens**  
**“Steve”**  
**McElmurray**  
 July 14, 1948 – August 25, 2025



*“I am honored to step into the role of Board Chair for Aiken Center. This organization has a long-standing commitment to prevention, education, and support for individuals and families in our community, and I am excited to help continue that mission.*

*My goal as Chair is to work alongside our dedicated team and partners to strengthen programs, expand outreach, and ensure that every person who needs help knows where to find it. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the health and well-being of Aiken County.*

*I look forward to working with all of you as we move forward in service to our community.” - Allison Youmans*



**AIKEN CENTER LEADERSHIP TEAM:**

- Jennifer Gilley  
**Executive Administrator**
- Sherry Lewis  
**Clinical Services Manager**
- Jontavius Gilbert  
**Prevention Services Manager**
- Tina Lewandowski  
**Recovery Services Team Lead**

Margaret M. Key  
**Executive Director**

- Rebecca Summer  
**Opioid Abatement and Prevention Coordinator**
- Sydney Kinar  
**Operations Manager**
- Jeff McClain  
**Finance Manager**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- Diane Miniard  
**District 2**
- Dr. W. Lynn Kirkland  
**District 3**
- Linda Strojan  
**Aiken County At-Large**

- Dr. Charlie Dees  
**District 7**
- Maureen Lawrence  
**Treasurer, District 4**
- Kathy S. Holley  
**District 6**

Allison Youmans  
**Chair and Secretary, District 1**

- Darriel Whetstone  
**District 8**
- Delina (Del) R. Hickey  
**Emeritus**

# SCORF Updates:

On October 21, 2025, the SCORF Steering Committee kicked off its first meeting, with representation from Aiken Center, Aiken Barnwell Mental Health Center, Aiken County Sheriff's Office, City of North Augusta Public Safety, City of Aiken Public Safety, Courage Center, Aiken County Parole Office, Aiken County Solicitor's Office, Aiken County Coroner's Office, and faith-based communities including ACTs and CMONA. This committee serves the ongoing mission of identifying gaps within the current system of care for individuals living with opioid use disorder. During the meeting, members discussed challenges faced by individuals seeking treatment, barriers that prevent timely access to services, and opportunities to strengthen community partnerships. By examining these areas, the committee aims to help build a more coordinated and effective network of support, one that ensures individuals can access the resources, treatment, and hope they need to move toward recovery.

SCORF Funding may allow us to hire additional Counselors and Peer Support Specialists at the beginning of 2026. If you're passionate about helping people in our community and you're interested in joining our team at Aiken Center, please reach out to Jennifer Gilley, Executive Administrator/Human Resources at [jgilley@aikencenter.org](mailto:jgilley@aikencenter.org) or (803) 649-1900 ext. 3070 to find out more about how to apply.



Over the past year, Aiken Center has strengthened its partnerships with fellow Aiken County SCORF recipients, including Aiken County Public School District, Courage Center, and Aiken Barnwell Mental Health. These collaborations have allowed us to share resources, support one another's initiatives, and celebrate meaningful achievements across the community. Highlights from the year include Courage Center opening its new Aiken location, the launch of Aiken County Public School District's Saturday Prevention Classes for At-Risk Youth, and Aiken Barnwell Mental Health marking its 60th anniversary. We are grateful for these partnerships and look forward to building on this progress in the year ahead.

## Detention Center Update!



Through SCORF, and the wonderful partnerships it has fostered between several of our local agencies, fantastic things are happening to better support individuals in the criminal justice system working towards recovery. SCORF has also allowed for Aiken Center to introduce a new hire, Matthew Shaffer, as an embedded peer-support specialist within the detention center. The detention center has employed Kristi Bodie as their new Opioid Recovery Services Program Coordinator and Alyssa Brookshire as their new Recovery and Re-entry Social Worker, which are their first steps toward some very exciting future plans, including the hopeful construction of an in-house Recovery Center! In this update, we would also like to congratulate and thank Sheriff Sawyer and Major Gallam for their leadership.

## Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Conveniently Available at Aiken Center



**Penny Langford, NP**



**Kennedy Toole, PA**

During 2025, Aiken Center expanded its capacity to treat Substance Use Disorders through the addition of two medical professionals with expertise in medication-assisted treatment. Please join us in welcoming Nurse Practitioner Penny Langford and Physician Assistant Kennedy Toole to the Aiken Center team. Under the direction of Medical Director, Jack Emmell, M.D., Penny and Kennedy are available in the office each Monday and Wednesday. Following a 'medication-first' model, Aiken Center's practice prioritizes assistance with timely withdrawal management. Medication-Assisted Treatment is considered the gold standard for substance use disorders, and particularly for opioid use and alcohol, when combined with counseling. As with Aiken Center's overall practice, Patient Choice and Trauma-informed care serve as the foundation of all that we do.

Financial assistance may be available, including the cost of medication.

## How Does MAT Work?

- Helps reduce cravings and withdrawals
- Increases the chance of long-term recovery
- Lowers the risk of overdose and death
- Improves outcomes for pregnant women with substance use disorders
- Supports dignity, stability and quality of life

### To Get Started:

- Call our MAT Counselor, Chauneese Greene, at 803-649-1900 Ext. 3580 to learn more
- Walk-Ins on Mondays and Wednesdays between 8:30AM and 2PM for a Medical Evaluation by our Nurse Practitioner or our Physician's Assistant



Thanks to Aiken Barnwell Mental Health Center (ABMHC) for making naloxone (Narcan) very accessible to the families they serve. Aiken Center's new Narcan dispensing machine is conveniently located in the ABMHC lobby, and a kit is free of charge to those in need. Narcan is a life-saving medication (nasal spray) that acts to quickly reverse opioid overdoses. It is safe, easy to use, and does not negatively impact someone who has not taken opioids. Through this new outreach program, Aiken Center and ABMHC are also educating Aiken County residents about treatment for addictions and recovery support options for themselves and their loved ones.

# Prevention



## Prevention Works!

Our Prevention Department has been hard at work this year, and we're proud to share the impact their efforts have made throughout our community. Over this past year, our team has brought vital prevention messaging to more than 9,000 people through school presentations, community events, trainings, workshops, and collaborations with local partners.

From educating youth on substance misuse risks, providing resources for parents and caregivers, and promoting healthy decision-making across all age groups, our Prevention staff has remained committed to meeting people where they are and delivering information that truly makes a difference. Their dedication helps strengthen protective factors, reduce risk, and build safer, healthier environments for everyone.

We look forward to continuing this work in the year ahead and expanding our reach even further. Thank you to the organizations, schools, families, and community members who welcomed us into their spaces and supported our mission. Together, we are creating lasting, positive change.

Scan the QR code to explore a collection of prevention resources and educational tools. It's an easy way to stay informed and connected to the materials that help keep our community healthy and safe.



# SPOTLIGHT

Jontavius Gilbert



Jontavius Gilbert is Aiken Center's new Prevention Services Manager, overseeing all Prevention activities. He brings a strong passion for serving the community, offering resources and hope while supporting the agency's mission.

Jontavius finds his work fulfilling because it allows him to put others first, and he aims to build on the solid foundation already in place to ensure the Prevention Department remains a pillar of support for the community.

"If you know yourself, and you know the enemy, then you know the outcome." - Sun Tzu

Rebecca Summer



Introducing Rebecca Summer! Rebecca now fills the Opioid Abatement and Prevention Coordinator position, where she acts as our SCORF designee.

Rebecca felt drawn to our organization because of our mission and vision and how closely they lined up with her own personal drive in serving the community. She believes there is a lot of great work to be done with SCORF, and we look forward to seeing what she accomplishes here with the support of Aiken Center.

"People who wonder if the glass is half empty or half full miss the point. The glass is refillable." - Unknown.

Tina Lewandowski



We have an exciting update to share, in the form of a promotion of our very own Tina, who was a featured spotlight in our last newsletter!

Tina was interviewed and asked what at Aiken Center has driven her success. She stated there has been plenty of opportunity for growth in peer support and she feels there is a lot of respect in doing work that fulfills both peers in recovery and the community we serve. She hopes to continue to see herself helping to realize gaps in services and helping to fill them in meaningful ways.

"Meet people where they are, but never leave them where they were." -Unknown

Prevention works.

Treatment is effective.

Recovery is possible.

# TALL COP SAYS STOP!

YOU CAN'T STOP WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW! JOIN JERMAINE GALLOWAY FOR AN EYE-OPENING AND INTERACTIVE TRAINING DESIGNED TO UNCOVER THE LATEST DRUG TRENDS IN OUR AREA. THIS FREE WORKSHOP IS IDEAL FOR EDUCATORS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, PARENTS, AND FAITH BASED AND COMMUNITY LEADERS.

# FREE!

JERMAINE GALLOWAY  
AKA TALLCOP

Attendees will gain the knowledge to:

- Recognize current drug misuse trends
- Identify indicators of possible at-risk individuals
- Detect hidden products, stash compartments, clothing, and more.
- Strengthen local prevention efforts and protect our community.



March 19, 2026 9 AM- 1 PM  
NewSpring Church  
2521 Trolley Run Blvd  
Aiken, SC 29801

We are pleased to announce that Tall Cop will be coming to Aiken County on **March 19, 2026.**

Please register today using the QR code below.



## Special Thanks to St. John's Methodist Church



Aiken Center's Jake Miniard Recovery Fund was chosen by the women of St. John's Methodist Church to be one of three recipients of donations for this year's Apple Festival. Every dollar in the Jake Miniard Recovery Fund goes to help an Aiken County resident who is seeking recovery from a drug addiction. If you would like to donate to the Recovery Fund, please make a check payable to Aiken Center - Jake Miniard Recovery Fund or visit [aikencenter.org](http://aikencenter.org) and click the donate button provided. All donations are tax deductible.

Prevention works.

Treatment is effective.

Recovery is possible.