



# SHELBY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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## **Shelby County Health Department Establishes First Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team in the State**

MEMPHIS, TN – After a year of planning with community partners, the Shelby County Health Department has established the Mid-South Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (DBHRT), the first of its kind in Tennessee. A DBHRT is an elite group of volunteers that responds to the emotional and mental health needs of a community in the aftermath of a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or critical incident such as a mass shooting.

The 75-member team is comprised of volunteers who come from diverse backgrounds with experience in education, human services, medicine, mental health, nursing, psychiatry, psychology, public health, social work, spirituality, and substance abuse.

“Without timely intervention, the mental health impact of disasters is often long-lasting and deeply scarring to individuals, families, and communities,” said Dr. Alisa Haushalter, DNP, RN, director of the Shelby County Health Department. “By being able to quickly deploy the Mid-South DBHRT in the aftermath of a disaster, the healing process can begin.”

Volunteers undergo standardized training consisting of six core courses, including Psychological First Aid and PsySTART, a mental health triage system. On-going education will include topics such as: active shooter, children in disasters, cultural competency, infectious diseases, and shelter operations.

“I applaud the work of Dr. Haushalter and her team. Their efforts will serve a vital role in times of crisis,” said Shelby County Mayor Mark H. Luttrell, Jr.

The Mid-South DBHRT will supplement local resources, not replace them. The team will assist communities throughout the Mid-South, including Shelby, Tipton, and Fayette counties in Tennessee; DeSoto County, Mississippi; and Crittenden County, Arkansas. If necessary, in a large-scale incident, the team can deploy anywhere in the United States to fulfill an official request for assistance.

The Mid-South DBHRT is currently accepting applications for those interested in joining. Registration information and training opportunities can be found online at <http://www.shelbytnhealth.com/372/Disaster-Behavioral-Health-Response-Team>.

### Mission

*To promote, protect and improve the health and environment of all Shelby County residents.*

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