



Question for Statewide Candidates

**If elected, what will
you do to support our
mental health system to be
as responsive as possible to
adults, children and families
in Mississippi who are
affected by mental illness?**

Response from Candidate for Attorney General Jennifer Riley Collins

Mississippi citizens deserve access to comprehensive and consistent care, including mental healthcare. The government has a duty to provide mental, emotional and substance abuse treatment to those who may be in need. We need to provide accommodations for persons with mental infirmity in the same way we do for others with physical limitations. We need to make sure every one of our citizens can thrive to their maximum individual capacity. We need to provide accommodations for persons with mental infirmity in the same way we do for others with physical limitations. We need to make sure every one of our citizens can thrive to their maximum individual capacity. As Attorney General, I will be supportive of efforts that ensure people to have good health care and quality mental health services.

As Attorney General, I will lead efforts to reverse the perpetuation of a system that overrelies on incarceration to address persons who should be treated. We must stop sending people to jail who need treatment and releasing people already caught in this vicious cycle of the criminal justice system without



treatment. As Attorney General, the state's top law enforcement officer, I will be supportive of expanded mental health courts and will work with state agencies to establish legal supports to these courts and the communities they serve.

Mississippi, like many other states is suffering from an opioid crisis. The often overlooked victims of this epidemic are the children of parents who suffer opioid and other substance abuse issues. The early trauma exposure makes children more likely to suffer later mental health disorders including substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder. As Attorney General, I will hold pharmaceutical companies liable and would make recommendation to the legislature to utilize proceeds derived from the current and any new litigation brought by the Attorney General's office regarding opioids to be used to increase capacity for mental health treatment for impacted children.

As Attorney General, I will also establish a unit to monitor and ensure compliance with court-ordered outpatient treatment for persons in the care and custody of the state, including management of the court-ordered evaluation system for sanity and competency of criminal defendants.