South Carolina has a long history of caring for those suffering from mental illness. In 1694, the Lords Proprietors of South Carolina established that the destitute mentally ill should be cared for by local governments. The concept of “Outdoor Relief,” based upon Elizabethan Poor Laws, affirmed that the poor, sick and/or disabled should be taken in or boarded at public expense. In 1762, the Fellowship Society of Charleston established an infirmary for the mentally ill. But it was not until the 1800’s that the mental health movement received legislative attention at the state level.

Championing the mentally ill, South Carolina Legislators Colonel Samuel Farrow and Major William Crafts worked zealously to sensitize their fellow lawmakers to the needs of the mentally ill, and on December 20, 1821, the South Carolina State Legislature passed a statute approving $30,000 to build the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum and a school for the “deaf and dumb”. This legislation made South Carolina the second state in the nation (after Virginia) to provide funds for the care and treatment of people with mental illnesses.

The Mills Building, designed by renowned architect Robert Mills, was completed and operational in 1828 as the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. The facilities grew through the decades to meet demand, until inpatient occupancy peaked in the 1960’s at well over 6,000 patients on any given day. From 1828 through 2011, South Carolina state-run hospitals and nursing homes treated over 947,000 patients and provided over 148,500,000 bed days.

In the 1920’s, treatment of the mentally ill began to include outpatient care as well as institutional care. The first outpatient center in South Carolina was established in Columbia in 1923.

The 1950’s saw the discovery of phenothiazines, "miracle drugs" that controlled many severe symptoms of mental illness, making it possible to "unlock" wards. These drugs enabled many patients to function in society and work towards recovery, reducing the need for prolonged hospitalization. Government support and spending increased in the 1960’s. The South Carolina Community Mental Health Services Act (1961) and the Federal Community Health Centers Act (1963) provided more funds for local mental health care.

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH) was founded in 1964. In 1967, the first mental healthcare complex in the South, the Columbia Area Mental Health Center, was built. The centers and clinics have served over 2,800,000 patients, providing over 38,000,000 clinical contacts.

Today, DMH operates a network of 17 community mental health centers, 42 clinics, three veterans’ nursing homes, and one community nursing home. DMH is one of the largest hospital and community-based systems of care in South Carolina. In FY11, DMH outpatient clinics provided 1,175,482 clinical contacts and DMH hospitals and nursing homes provided nearly 300,000 bed days. Last year, DMH treated nearly 100,000 citizens, including approximately 30,000 children and adolescents.
The Stone Veterans’ Pavilion, part of the C. M. Tucker, Jr. Nursing Care Center, is one of three DMH nursing care facilities dedicated to providing long-term care to South Carolina veterans. Stone Pavilion is licensed by the state of South Carolina and is certified by the Centers for Medicare/Medicaid and the Veterans Administration. It is accredited by The Joint Commission. Stone currently serves 76 veterans in its two units.

In 1908 the South Carolina General Assembly appropriated state funds to establish the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Home, as there was no federal assistance for these veterans available at the time. This home was located at the corner of Confederate Avenue and Bull Street in Columbia, on land belonging to the Regents of the State Hospital. In 1930 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs was established and state programs were expanded. Additionally, federal funding increased per diem payments and allowed for construction of dedicated facilities to serve veterans. In 1957 the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Home closed due to reduced numbers in need. In 1964 the Veterans Administration began a grant program for construction of State veterans’ homes. In 1969 the SC General Assembly passed laws to authorize the DMH Commission to establish a South Carolina War Veterans Home to provide treatment for SC War Veterans who were mentally ill. Admission requirements were the same as other DMH facilities, except this home was for SC residents who were honorably discharged war veterans.

On April 1, 1971 the E. Roy Stone War Veterans Pavilion, as Stone was originally known, was opened. It was named in honor of Greenville resident E. Roy Stone, Jr. (1912-2001), a WWII Navy veteran nicknamed “Mr. Veteran” and “Mr. Legionnaire.” Stone was a distinguished member of the American Legion and served on numerous national Legion committees. He was national Commander of The American Legion by vote of the National Convention in 1987, one of only 10 elected since 1919.

After returning to SC following WWII, Stone found many GIs waiting for beds and worked tirelessly to establish nursing homes for veterans. In addition to his service with the American Legion, Stone founded the Goodfellows Club, which provided food to needy families at Christmas-time, and was active in both the Lions Club and the Boy Scouts of America. He also served as the State Chairman of the SC Agency for Vocational Rehabilitation.

There are almost 409,000 veterans residing in South Carolina, representing approximately 9% of the state’s population. DMH is the second largest provider of nursing home beds in South Carolina, and currently has 516 beds dedicated to veterans, representing a third of its total inpatient beds. It is noteworthy that, though Stone is part of DMH, admission is based on a person’s status as a veteran and is not associated with having any mental health problems.

Stone offers veterans a complete living environment by providing on-site medical care, nursing care, rehabilitative therapy, pharmacy services, recreational and therapeutic activities, social services, pastoral care, dietary services, transportation services, beauty and barber services, and laundry services. Stone maintains a 98% occupancy rate. Most admissions are referred from the Richland, Lexington, Sumter, Rock Hill, and Aiken areas.

Stone has many varied and rich relationships in the community. It partners with Fort Jackson, the VA, Benedict College, and the American Legion Post in volunteer, internship, and recreational activities.

As part of 2011’s Veterans’ Day activities, Fort Jackson’s Commanding General James M. Milano visited Stone residents, and the Fort Jackson NCO club provided a cookout for them. Residents were also guests at a recent recruit graduation at Fort Jackson, and many attended the Veterans’ Day parade in downtown Columbia.

In addition to a heavy rotation of activities, residents of Stone enjoy a unique aesthetic. The walls of Stone Pavilion are graced with over 150 pieces of art. This recent donation was coordinated by the Sun City Veterans’ Association, located in Hilton Head, S.C. The group contacted various groups in the art community to donate works of art depicting patriotic images, abstracts, relaxing landscapes, and other images to make the veterans feel more at home. In addition to enhancing the aesthetic of Stone Pavilion, the group also donated 300 paperbacks, 25 puzzles, 150 movies, and a VCR.
FRANCES CORLEY, R.N.,
NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR - STONE PAVILION

Even though she’s less than 5 feet tall, Frances Corley, R.N., likes a big challenge. While enjoying a successful career with DMH as a nurse, Corley decided she wanted to run a nursing home. As a result, she went back to school, earned a degree in Health Administration, and obtained her Nursing Home Administrator license.

Being the administrator for a nursing home isn’t for the faint of heart. “We are the most regulated industry there is,” said Corley. “We have to be prepared at all times.”

And what does Stone’s administrator for the last eight years have to be prepared for? Visits, inspections, and surveys from any one of the numerous regulators involved in the industry, such as DHEC, The Joint Commission, and the Veterans Administration, to name a few. Family members and residents also provide measures of review and feedback.

Corley notes that during the last few years Tucker has undergone a significant amount of scrutiny. “We always come out on top,” she says.

Corley’s 44 year Career began at Columbia’s Baptist Hospital (now Palmetto Health Baptist), then with a private physician’s practice (who, coincidentally, was the brother of celebrated Dr. William S. Hall, the Agency’s first state superintendent). She joined DMH in 1981.

Originally from Chester County, Corley remembers wanting to be a nurse even as a child, and enrolled in nursing school one month after graduating from high school. While training, she lived in the historic Mills Building on DMH’s Bull Street campus.

One challenge Corley relishes is the upcoming planned renovation of the 40-year-old Stone building. “It’s one of the most exciting things I’ve dealt with in my career.”

More big challenges are in Stone’s future, with an increasing demand for long-term care for younger veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Corley is already looking at what their needs will be, including cell phones and internet access.

All of these challenges are part of the job for Corley, though. “Veterans so deserve it,” she says, “You can’t find a greater population. Caring for veterans is an honor.”

SARAH KIRCHMAN, R.N., PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Sarah Kirchman, a 25-year DMH employee, serves as the program administrator for DMH’s three veterans’ nursing homes: Stone Pavilion, Richard M. Campbell Veterans Nursing Home in Anderson and Veterans Victory House in Walterboro. Throughout her tenure with the Agency, she’s been based at Tucker, where she previously worked in the areas of Quality Assurance, Risk Management, and Admissions.

As a young girl in North Carolina, Kirchman wanted to be a nurse. “I knew it was exactly what I wanted to do,” she says, because she enjoyed helping and working with others.

She earned her nursing degree at East Carolina University, but her military service brought her to South Carolina, when, in 1973, she was stationed at Fort Jackson. After serving in the Army, Kirchman worked for several years at DHEC before getting a job with Tucker Center.

Kirchman’s duties as administrator include helping veterans receive medical care and referrals to needed resources. She works closely with the state Veterans Affairs offices, and coordinates with the VA to provide acute care for Stone’s residents at VA hospitals. She also works closely with VA social workers regarding continuity of care and referrals: “The VA is a huge support system for us.”

Kirchman is “ecstatic” about the planned major renovation of the 40-year-old Stone building. “It’s one of the most...”
exciting things I’ve dealt with,” she says. Her goal for the renovation is to serve more veterans in the area. “I’m really hoping that we can increase our bed capability. The demand in Columbia is huge. We are the only state veterans’ nursing home in this part of the state. The need is there.”

Kirchman would also like to see more homes for veterans in other parts of South Carolina. Recent wars will likely result in an increased need for working with veterans is being able to speak with them about their service. Kirchman considers them walking history books and notes that although some have cognitive declines, most remember their military years well and are happy to talk about their service to others.

Veterans have a special place in her heart. “We should all consider it an honor being in DMH and serving that population. They’re just great.”

Kimberly Butterfly Rudd, M.D., didn’t start medical school at USC with the intent of becoming a psychiatrist. After her third-year rotation at DMH’s Bryan Psychiatric Hospital, though, she unexpectedly found her calling. She saw that patient recovery was very real and was fascinated with how clients’ individual stories impacted their mental illness.

Her typical day starts with meeting with the nurses to receive the morning report. “I believe that the only way we can provide the excellent resident care that we need to provide is to have a close relationship with our nurses,” said Dr. Rudd.

Next, she does daily rounds. “I try to change it up,” she says, by having a flexible schedule between both of Tucker’s nursing homes. That way, staff can ask questions as needed, and Dr. Rudd has the added benefit of meeting more residents. Psychiatric consults follow. Since there are only two psychiatrists serving Tucker at this time, these are a busy part of her schedule. Finally, she attends administrative meetings to ensure that Tucker stays current with all of its accrediting bodies’ standards.

Originally from California, Dr. Rudd grew up in Charleston and completed her undergraduate work at the College of Charleston. She is married with two young sons; the family fills its time with school, soccer, movies, and just spending fun time together. She enjoys living in Columbia.

Dr. Rudd’s philosophy of treatment entails providing excellent care to residents in all respects: housekeeping, activities, social work, physicians, nursing, and leadership. “It comes from everyone; everyone is involved with every resident” she says.

Her goal is for Tucker to be a center of excellence. “I want my parents, if they ever have a need, to come here.”
Yvette Frazier, B.S., Activity Therapist

Nothing is impossible to Activity Therapist Yvette Frazier. That determination helps Frazier dream big when it comes to bringing smiles to residents’ faces. “I have a passion for what I do,” she said.

Trips Frazier has planned include outings to Myrtle Beach, Fort Sumter, the Camden Cup, Fort Jackson graduations, and more. Regular activities at the facility include bingo, movies, visiting groups, happy hour (complete with family, virgin daiquiris, sparkling juices, and hors d’oeuvres), and the well-attended meet-and-greets with new Fort Jackson recruits.

Her current vision is for a grand ball at Tucker. “It will be an event you will never forget!” she said.

Frazier does not let financial barriers interfere; instead, she initiates creative ways to take part in activities for free or raise funds through outside sources. Her philosophy is simple: “Nothing is impossible. If you have a vision, it’s possible.”

She notes that all employees (housekeeping, nurses, administrative staff, management, etc.) at Stone function as de facto activity staff. “We function as a family here. We all come together because we are all trying to meet the same goal. And that is to keep the clients happy.”

Originally from Greenwood, Frazier was a cheerleader and high school athlete who went on to graduate from Benedict College. She’s been with DMH for 24 years.

B Barbara Ladson, Lead Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Unit 120

Barbara Ladson’s attachment to the residents of Stone is apparent. She recounts a song from her youth with the lyric, “be kind to old people because one day you gonna get old too!”

Ladson has worked at the Tucker Center for 21 years. Before coming to DMH, she worked as a CNA at MUSC, and prior to that worked in a sewing factory. She was born in Charleston and graduated from the Charleston Business Institute for Nursing.

Ladson’s father was a WWII veteran, and while she was growing up she took care of him and really enjoyed doing it. Her Dad used to joke that one of his daughters should become a nurse, and she told him, “that would be me!”

Ladson says she loves coming to work; the residents make her day and she wants to return the favor. Her approach to the residents is one of respect, affection and acceptance. She says, “This is what I love doing, and anything you love doing you do your best at.”

Ladson’s philosophy is simple: “Caring for people is the main thing. You’ve got to love everybody. A few clients don’t see their family members on a regular basis and you have to take them up under your wing and let them know that they’re loved and that somebody cares.”
**PAM BANKS, CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION, HOSPICE CARE OF TRI-COUNTY**

Pam Banks has seen a lot of changes at Tucker during her 10 years of service on its Citizens Advisory Board (CAB). One constant that continues to impress her, though, is the facility’s dedicated staff.

“The care here is excellent,” she says, “and staff members have long work histories. They really go out of their way to do as much as they can with what they have. They love this place!”

Banks brings extensive nursing home and hospice expertise to her role as one of the Board’s 11 voluntary members. And she’s quite familiar with what it takes to be excellent in the industry.

After graduating from USC, Banks worked for 14 years in a nursing home and then joined Hospice of Tri-County in Columbia, where she’s served as director of Community Education for the last 12 years.

Along with local attorneys, clergy, school teachers, financial advisors, civic leaders, retirees, and past and current family members of residents, Banks assists both the facility and residents with internal and local matters, sharing her experience and knowledge.

The CAB also works to recognize and reward staff for their tireless service. Banks is particularly passionate. “It takes an extremely special person to work here, and staff should be treated as such. They do it because of their heart.”

Hospice care is a growing service throughout the country, and through her work, Banks stresses education for residents and family about hospice before the actual need arises. The sooner a referral is made, the more support a hospice provider can give as a resident experiences end-of-life needs. “Hospice is a gift because it provides families with peace of mind, knowing that their loved ones died with dignity and without pain or suffering,” said Banks.

Banks’ dedication to her work is a tremendous asset to Tucker, the Board, and the community. “I love this place! I believe in my heart that God put me in both of my jobs.”

**STEPHANIE KEMP, R.N., ACTING NURSE ADMINISTRATOR**

One of Stephanie Kemp’s top priorities is that Stone’s residents be viewed as individuals first and foremost.

Kemp has worked for DMH 31 years, the last 26 at Tucker Center. Early in her career, she was part of a previous DMH program that provided funds for education and paid participants a full-time salary for going to school to become an RN and working part-time. “DMH has been great to me,” she said.

Since becoming an R.N., Kemp has worked as a staff nurse, unit manager, and wound care specialist at Tucker Center. Prior to coming to Stone Pavilion, she was the assistant nurse administrator at Roddey Pavilion. Since June of 2011, Kemp has held the position of acting nurse administrator at Stone.

Kemp oversees a 72 member nursing staff by being an approachable supervisor and maintaining an open door policy. In addition to managing the staff schedule and conducting morning meetings, she spends time on the units, checks in with staff, and provides hands-on supervision. “It’s a good way to take the pulse of the unit and be proactive about addressing any issues that arise,” said Kemp.

“The CNAs take great pride in their work and are collegially competitive as to the level of resident care they provide, with positive results,” she said. “They are very compassionate.”

There is a high level of family involvement in care of the residents. Kemp stresses the importance of viewing each resident as somebody’s parent, brother, or sister rather than just a number or a “patient.”

Kemp’s philosophy is, “resident care is number one.”
A RESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE—ERNEST H.

Ernest has made significant strides since moving to Stone Pavilion from a private nursing home more than a year ago. When he arrived he was unable to walk; he could transfer himself to a wheelchair but had problems propelling it. He had frequent hospitalizations due to problems with aspiration.

Ernest now walks daily with the assistance of two rehabilitation aides. His distance has increased and he eventually hopes to walk independently. In the meantime Ernest uses a motorized wheelchair, which allows him to move freely about the building.

Ernest served in the Navy from 1941 to 1945, and was brought back for active duty due to critical needed skills as an aircraft mechanic, serving from 1951 to 1955.

Ernest’s family says that Stone was highly recommended by the staff at the Veterans’ Administration. That, along with the fact that as a veteran Ernest was eligible to live there and it would be less of a financial challenge, prompted the family to look to Stone.

Ernest’s family says that he receives much more attention at Stone than his previous residence. They feel that the staff understand his condition better and make real efforts to improve his quality of life. Ernest’s family finds the staff to be more congenial and friendly and feels they interact with him (and them) more frequently.

Ernest is provided respiratory therapy twice a day using a special vest. This has resulted in no recent hospitalizations, and his family express great satisfaction with his care at Stone Pavilion.