



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Highland Rivers Health governing board welcomes two new members**

DALTON, Georgia – March 7, 2017 – Murray County Chief Magistrate Judge L. Gale Buckner and Hiram Police Chief Todd A. Vande Zande were seated as members of the Highland Rivers Health governing board at its most recent meeting in February. Buckner and Vande Zande will serve three-year terms as representatives of Murray and Paulding counties, respectively.

“Mental illness and substance use disorders continue to have a substantial impact on both law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system in our state,” said Judge Allen Wigington, chair of Highland Rivers’ governing board. “Chief Vande Zande and Judge Buckner are important partners in Highland Rivers’ ongoing efforts to address these issues in communities in northwest Georgia. We are very pleased to have them join our governing board.”

Highland Rivers Health is governed by a 14-member board that includes a representative from every county in the agency’s service area (with two representatives from both Floyd and Polk counties) who are appointed by each county’s board of commissioners. Members serve three-year terms, and terms are staggered to ensure continuity of governance.

The board includes several individuals who have family members with mental illness, addictive disease or developmental disabilities, and includes representatives from the judicial system, family services, private industry, law enforcement, local government and healthcare, among others.

“Highland Rivers Health is very fortunate to have governing board members that are true advocates – not only for our agency, but more important, for the individuals we serve,” said Highland Rivers CEO Melanie Dallas. “Judge Buckner and Chief Vande Zande are excellent additions to our board and we thank the commissioners of Murray and Paulding counties for appointing them.”

For more information about the Highland Rivers Health governing board, including a list of members, meeting schedule and meeting minutes, visit the Highland Rivers website board page at: <http://highlandrivershealth.com/governing-board/>.

**About Highland Rivers Health**

Highland Rivers Health provides comprehensive treatment and support services for adults, children and families, and veterans affected by mental health disorders, intellectual developmental disabilities and addictive disease. One of the state's largest public safety net providers, Highland Rivers operates more than two-dozen treatment facilities across a 4,400-square mile area of Northwest Georgia that includes Bartow, Cherokee, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk and Whitfield counties, and serves nearly 16,000 consumers annually. Highland Rivers is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and is a Tier 1 safety net Core Provider for the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. For more information, visit [www.highlandrivershealth.com](http://www.highlandrivershealth.com).

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