Annual Quality Assurance Report FY 2019-2020

Introduction:

Eckerd Connects Community Alternatives (ECCA) is the lead agency for foster care and adoption-related services in Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough Counties. The ECCA system of care provides a full array of services to all children referred through investigations including diversion programs, dependency, out-of-home care, adoptions, post-adoptions support, and independent living. Judicial Circuit 6 is comprised of Pinellas and Pasco Counties, and Circuit 13 is comprised of Hillsborough County. ECCA encompasses two of the four lead agencies in the Suncoast region (Circuit 12 and 20 also encompass the Suncoast region). ECCA has held the lead agency contract since 2008 in Circuit 6 and 2012 in Circuit 13. Each circuit is subcontracted by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF), with each having their own contract. The protective investigation function is conducted by the Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough County Sheriff's Offices respectively. Children's Legal Services (CLS) represents the State in Dependency proceedings in Circuit 6, and The Office of Attorney General represents Circuit 13.

The ECCA model operates at a county level for each circuit and provides an administrative functionality to each service location. ECCA has four locations, one in each service county, supported by a centralized administrative support center located in Clearwater Fl. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, ECCA adopted a remote working schedule for many staff in March of 2020, which remains intact at this time. In all service counties, case management services are mainly subcontracted to community providers with the exception of Eckerd's in-house case management unit, as follows: Pinellas: Eckerd CMO (Formerly Directions for Living) and Lutheran Services Florida; Pasco: Youth and Family Alternatives; Hillsborough: Devereux, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services, and LifeStream Behavioral Center (Formerly Directions for Living). ECCA contracts to provide diversion programs in each county that work jointly with each county's child protection units. In Circuit 13, diversion services are provided by GCJFCS-Safe at Home and Gracepoint-Family Net. In Circuit 6, diversion services are provided through Lutheran Services Florida-Connecting Family Paths (Formerly Directions for Living-Family Works) in Pinellas, and GCJFCS-Safe at Home in Pasco.

Functionality and Capacity Breakdown:

Circuit 13 is structured with a Vice President of Community Based Care (who acts as an Executive Director), two Associate Executive Directors, and five Senior Directors. Circuit 6 is structured with an Executive Director, an Associate Executive Director, and five Senior Directors. Both circuits are overseen by a Chief of Community Based Care. Each Senior Director (per circuit) is assigned to one of the following spokes; Growth and Transformation, Quality, Staff, External Relations, and Finance, with each spoke being responsible for specific federal and contract-specific metrics. Each Senior Director supervises a team of staff (made up generally of Supervisors and Specialists) to support work aligned with each

measure. Each circuit has a Quality Management/ERSF team that report to the Senior Director of Quality and Innovation via the Clearwater Support Center. These teams work hand-in-hand with the ECA Senior Directors of Quality and their respective teams. The Quality Management/ERSF teams consist of four QM Specialists and a QM Supervisor. These teams conduct reviews following the State's Windows into Practice plan, such as Florida CFSR reviews, DCF Rapid Safety Feedback reviews, and Eckerd Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews. The results of the reviews are analyzed to identify trends, anomalies, areas in need of improvement, and areas of high performance. The below chart outlines the workload capacity for these teams.

ECCA	Total Children Served (In-Home Services)	Total Children Served (Out-of-home)	Total	Florida CQI Reviews		DCF RSF	Eckerd RSF
				File Review	PIP Monitored		
Pinellas/Pasco (C6)	2,113	3,637	5,750	50	10	40	622
Hillsborough (C13)	1,906	3,399	5,305	44	12	40	591
Totals	4,019	7,036	11,055	94	22	80	1,213
	Total Reviews Completed						1,409

Workload Capacity FY 19-20
*7/1/19-6/30/20

Performance Improvement:

This section includes information regarding the Agency's systematic process to review practice trends and performance, along with performance improvement strategies. Additionally, this section will include outcomes and measures routinely reviewed and at what frequency. Eckerd Connects wrapped up the 2019-2020 fiscal year serving the two largest populations of youth in the state. As of the 06/30/2020, ECCA-Hillsborough was providing services to slightly more than 3,200 children and young adults, while ECCA-Pinellas/Pasco was serving more than 3,300 children and young adults.

Quality Management Activities:

- **DCF Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews:** DCF RSF reviews are completed in accordance with the Windows into Practice Model on a quarterly basis. Each circuit is responsible for 10 reviews per quarter which are selected at random from the stratified sampling method using the required parameters to ensure that all CMO's are represented. Completed reviews are submitted into the

Qualtrics system portal. If, during the course of the review, a reviewer notes a safety concern, a staffing is requested with frontline staff, generally held within one business day. An action plan is developed jointly with case management staff and Quality staff and is tracked to completion by the QM Specialist.

- **Eckerd Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews (ERSF):** Cases are reviewed with the ERSF tool, which is based on nine qualitative domains of critical case practice, such as safety planning, supervision, quality and quantity of visits, response to emerging dangers, etc. Case reviews that identify gaps and/or where questions are identified are staffed with case management staff (generally within one business day) to develop a plan to address any perceived case practice gaps. In the staffing, concrete action items are jointly developed by the QM team and the case management staff. All action items are monitored to completion by the QM Specialist. The sample size in each circuit varies based on the population of children served in-home, but this process remains a focal point for the quality team throughout each quarter. Survey questions are designed to promote child safety, as well as aid in the identification of systemic issues. Monthly roll-ups are completed for each CMO containing qualitative and quantitative data on the reviews from the previous month. Reports identify positive and negative trends on a month over month basis. Data is also analyzed as part of a quarterly trend analysis report for leadership.

- **Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR):** Over the course of the past fiscal year, Quality staff completed a total of 94 CFSR reviews and a total of 22 PIP-monitored CFSR reviews in accordance with Windows into Practice. Prior to the roll-out of the Quality Roundtable initiative, the QM Supervisors and Reviewers met with case management staff informally on PIP-monitored cases to discuss the review process and CFSR tool and to explain areas rated as needing improvement. Each circuit utilizes roll-up data provided by DCF to aid in discussion of countermeasures. CQI and PIP data are also analyzed as part of a quarterly trend analysis report for leadership, along with findings from RSF and ERSF reviews.

- **Eckerd Permanency Feedback Reviews (EPF):** Over the past fiscal year, Eckerd Connects continued this process on a limited basis, in an effort to enhance timely permanency performance (Permanency within 12 months) with a pilot CMO agency in Circuit 6. This process utilizes the existing ERSF framework and best practice research specific to permanency outcomes. As of June 2020, Eckerd Connects rolled out the EPF process in C13, but with a focus on permanency between 12-24 months rather than under 12 months like the C6 process. As part of the process, Eckerd Connects works in conjunction with Mindshare to identify children who are most likely to achieve permanency late. The process includes a comprehensive file review utilizing a permanency-focused tool, often followed by a collaborative meeting with case management staff to discuss barriers to permanency and develop an action plan to guide the case to permanency (when applicable).

- **Discretionary/Special Reviews:** Discretionary, or special reviews, are conducted by Eckerd Connects' Quality Department upon request. Requests for discretionary reviews can be made by Executive Management, DCF Administration, or stakeholders. Results are shared with ECCA

leadership and the requesting party. These reviews are child specific and/or topic specific. For example, Eckerd Connects' QM staff have previously completed reviews for missing children, adoption permanency, and abuse reports on open cases.

- **Incident Reporting:** Completion of an incident report is required by all Eckerd Connects staff and contracted providers when a reportable incident or accident occurs. This provides Eckerd Connects with notice of situations or circumstance which may jeopardize the health, safety, or well-being of a child or person receiving services/under the supervision of a contracted provider. Entries are made into the State database for those incidents that meet mandatory reporting criteria per CFOP. Each circuit has a dedicated position within the lead agency to monitor the Incident Reporting process. Their role includes reviewing a subset of identified incident categories for deep-dive trend analysis. The Specialist utilizes the child's file and historical information from previous reports to provide an overall trend summary to ECCA, CMO leadership, and assigned staff. These positions also complete data roll-ups on a monthly basis for leadership and DCF for review and trend identification.

- **Trend Identification and Analysis:** Trends are identified through various data elements, case reviews-including CFSR and ERSF reviews, Operations reviews, special reviews, Safe Return Reviews, Eckerd Permanency Reviews, and the Eckerd Connects weekly data packet, etc. Communication of trends is paramount to ongoing quality success. Each circuit holds leadership and stakeholder meetings on an ongoing basis that function as an avenue to discuss emerging systemic trends and to develop and evaluate countermeasures for identified trends. In Circuit 13, the Senior Director of Quality Management holds a monthly Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) meeting with CMO Directors, Assistant Directors, and Supervisors. In Circuit 6, PQI discussions are held in a monthly performance meeting with each CMO. Evaluation of the effectiveness of countermeasures is done through various file reviews, as indicated above in the identification of the trends, as well as through constant review of performance data.

- **Child Exit Interviews:** The ECA Lead Agency QM Department is responsible for the oversight of child exit interview process. Results are aggregated on a macro level to identify trends. If an issue is identified in the survey, the QM Specialist provides the information to the ECA licensing department, the licensing provider, or the ECA Contracts Department for follow-up with the residential providers. The results of the interviews are shared with leadership, case management organizations, Licensing staff, and stakeholders.

Outcome Measures & Performance Metrics:

Data Tracking and Communication:

Eckerd Connects utilizes multiple processes across both circuits to monitor and improve performance. These processes included developing and disseminating data packets, conducting data calls with community partners, holding internal performance improvement calls, creating and monitoring Performance Improvement Plans for low-performing agencies, completing root cause analyses when warranted, and conducting special review projects. ECA publishes a weekly data packet on our website

that provides a streamlined overview of key performance indicators for both circuits. These key performance indicators align with the Federal and Statewide scorecard measures. In addition to statewide comparison, the data packet breaks down each measure with comprehensive listings of agency-specific data sets for deeper comparison. Both Circuits continue to hold collaborative calls with stakeholders to address these publications. In Circuit 6, a bi-monthly data call is held on the second and fourth Monday of every month. In Circuit 13, the call is also held two times per month. In addition, Eckerd Connects has maintained a focus on enhanced communication and accountability throughout both circuits. The data packets are available at:

https://eckerd.org/family-children-services/foster-and-adoption/eckerd-connects-community-alternatives-hillsborough/success-metrics/weekly-data-reports/

https://eckerd.org/family-children-services/foster-and-adoption/eckerd-community-alternatives-pasco-pinellas/success-metrics/weekly-data-reports/

Data from reviews such as ERSF, CQI, and DCF RSF are utilized for systemic trending, providing a window into the current case practice. For example, Eckerd Rapid Safety Feedback represents the largest Quality Assurance sample completed in the state of Florida by any Community Based Care Organization or Region. In fiscal year 2019-2020, Circuit 13 completed over 590 ERSF reviews, and Circuit 6 completed just over 620. In combination, both circuits accounted for over 1,200 individual ERSF reviews alone. Staffings with frontline case management staff were completed in conjunction with many of these reviews in accordance with the Eckerd Rapid Safety Feedback practice model, which employs research-based coaching methodologies. This provides for a substantial data subset that is incorporated into case practice enhancements. It also allows for the quality team to play an active role in ongoing coaching of frontline case management staff during the staffing process. Unfortunately, excessive field staff turnover can have an impact on the coaching process and ultimately slows positive changes in case practice.

In the past fiscal year, Eckerd Connects has implemented the Quality Roundtable Process developed by Casey Family Programs for all PIP-identified cases. This process is focused on solutions, learning, accountability, and enhanced documentation on PIP cases. CQI reviews are tracked and trended to prioritize areas of improvement. CQI data, along with information learned from the PIP cases, have helped both circuits to see case level issues that have the greatest effect on overall performance, such as caseworker turnover. Each review is debriefed with case management staff in order to provide an opportunity for them to understand case practice strengths and opportunities for improvement. In the past fiscal year, a new quarterly trend report was developed and deployed, which highlights trends identified across all quality review types. Suggested countermeasures are also included in the report, which is shared with leadership within Eckerd Connects and each CMO. Countermeasures are being tracked for efficacy and will be re-evaluated on at least a quarterly basis. Examples of countermeasures include topic-focused, in-depth trainings (safety planning, concerted efforts, quality of contacts, etc.) and enhanced reports for leadership staff to monitor performance.

Findings:

The tables below outline contract performance trends for each circuit for the fiscal year ending in 2015 to present time. The first column illustrates the target for each measure with an arrow immediately to the right that depicts the directionality of the desired performance outcome. For example, column one has a target of 8.50. To meet or exceed this target, performance measurement would have to be 8.50 or below. Arrows in the final column demonstrate the trend from the previous fiscal year.

Circuit 13:

Measure	Target	Red Zone	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	Trend Direction from FY 18/19-19/20
Rate of abuse or neglect per day while in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	8.50 ↓	8.844	10.49	10.05	10.80	10.03	9.12	6.31 (As of 3/20)	⬇
Number of children with finalized adoptions between 7/1 and 6/30 (YTD)	N/A	N/A	288	297	275	304	294	384	⬆
Children exiting foster care to a permanent home within twelve (12) months of entering care (YTD) (Federal Measure)	40.5% ↑	36.4%	52.37%	44.66%	48.37%	41.72%	37.0%	32.03%	⬇
Children who do not re-enter foster care within twelve (12) months of moving to a permanent home (YTD) (Federal Measure)	91.7% ↑	90.9%	85.33%	86.16%	90.98%	88.38%	89.87%	90.38%	⬆
Children's placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	4.12 ↓	4.532	4.74	4.74	5.30	6.83	6.25	5.26%	⬇
Percent of children in out of home care who have received medical services within the last twelve (12) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	99.12%	98.30%	99.32%	92.85%	96.21%	97.44%	⬆
Percent of children in out of home care who have received dental services within the last seven (7) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	96.48%	96.68%	96.58%	79.13%	90.51%	81.45%	⬇
Percent of young adults in foster care at age 18 that have completed or are enrolled in secondary education. Rolling 12 month period.	80.0% ↑	69.9%	95.83%	87.36%	95.83%	92.94%	90.38%	85.23%	⬇

Circuit 6:

Measure	Target	Red Zone	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	Trend Direction from FY 18/19-19/20
Rate of abuse or neglect per day while in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	8.50 ↓	8.844	9.46	10.36	7.50	6.88	8.73	10.18 (As of 3/20)	⬆
Number of children with finalized adoptions between 7/1 and 6/30 (YTD)	N/A	N/A	348	297	319	319	403	332	⬇
Children exiting foster care to a permanent home within twelve (12) months of entering care (YTD) (Federal Measure)	40.5% ↑	36.4%	53.69%	51.29%	47.17%	38.46%	33.99%	28.96%	⬇
Children who do not re-enter foster care within twelve (12) months of moving to a permanent home (YTD) (Federal Measure)	91.7% ↑	90.9%	90.21%	87.24%	88.00%	90.76%	90.15%	89.89%	⬇
Children's placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	4.12 ↓	4.532	3.57	3.66	4.46	4.64	6.57	4.59	⬇
Percent of children in out of home care who have received medical services within the last twelve (12) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	98.35%	99.00%	98.76%	99.16%	97.90%	86.80%	⬇
Percent of children in out of home care who have received dental services within the last seven (7) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	97.66%	96.50%	96.56%	96.93%	87.89%	53.64%	⬇
Percent of young adults in foster care at age 18 that have completed or are enrolled in secondary education. Rolling 12 month period.	80.0% ↑	69.9%	93.65%	94.20%	88.31%	86.25%	90.0%	83.12%	⬇

Safety

Safety continues to be a critical focus for both circuits, which is why ERSF continues to play such an integral role in Eckerd's quality processes. As indicated above, the ERSF tool is safety-focused and contains questions related to nine areas of critical case practice, such as case planning, safety planning, response to emerging dangers, supervision, etc. When reviewers identify perceived gaps in practice and/or have questions related to safety aspects of a case, a staffing is held with frontline staff. The ERSF process utilizes coaching methodologies that are based on researched ideologies.

Previous deep dives into re-abuse measures have shown that, on average, 30% of the cases that directly affect these numbers closed with verified findings relating to violation of visitation restrictions rather than abuse by an out-of-home caregiver. Information gained has been shared with front line staff in efforts to open communication with caregivers and parents surrounding safety planning and contact with unapproved individuals. Significant safety planning training has been done throughout the past fiscal year, including supervisory-specific training. Additionally, a small percentage of these cases were found to contain errors (inaccurate finding dates) and submitted to the Office of Child Welfare for

corrections. The most common of these errors was linked to child disclosures of historical abuse and neglect. Each circuit works with their respective Sherriff's Offices to ensure that these instances are addressed appropriately and that accurate date reporting is reflected.

Each circuit continues to struggle with safety planning, as do other areas of the state. In the ERSF population, generally initial safety plans are sufficient; however, regular monitoring with safety monitors is lacking. The Covid-19 pandemic has provided some challenges in this arena, as much of case management work shifted to remote vs. in-person and some service providers temporarily shut down. Staff have had to utilize out-of-the-box thinking and creativity when developing sufficient safety plans. In addition to safety plan monitoring, updating the safety plan at critical junctures is also a struggle. ERSF continues to be a mechanism to review and provide feedback to frontline staff regarding safety planning. Mindshare Technologies, whom Eckerd Connects contracts with, has developed a safety plan monitoring tool which supervisors can utilize to evaluate the safety plans of cases they supervise. The C6 Quality Management Specialist pulls the Safety Plan performance report from FSFN 3 days per week, breaks down performance to the agency level, and forwards it to each CMO and Diversion provider so they can bring any non-compliant plans into compliance. When an agency's performance drops below the 95% performance target, they are requested to provide status updates on bringing plans into compliance prior to the next report.

Permanency

In both circuits, finding forever families for our permanently committed children continues to be a strength. During the last fiscal year, Eckerd Connects achieved over 700 successful adoption closures. C13 saw an increase of 90 adoptions from the previous fiscal year, which was a transition year in which ECCA transitioned adoption-related case management services back to the CMO providers. Not surprisingly, each circuit is performing well above the identified target for the measure of achieving permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more.

Overall performance in children achieving permanency within 12 months saw a decline during the fiscal year in both circuits. In Circuit 6, returns to care also declined. Direct effectors on these measures were found to be related to overall family engagement, case management turnover rates, judicial delays, and general documentation delays (supervision/caseload). In the upcoming fiscal year, timely permanency will be a significant focus for each circuit, as is the stabilization of the workforce. In the past fiscal year, the Legislature appropriated funding for a Case Management Pilot Program in each circuit. While the specifics are still under review, the pilot program is intended to include several permanency-related initiatives. Also, for the upcoming fiscal year, DCF has dedicated 6 OPS positions to assist Circuit 6 and Circuit 13 in achieving permanency for children and thus reducing the case load.

Parent Engagement: Both circuits declined in parent engagement stats overall. From the CQI, PIP, and ERSF reviews completed during the year; it was determined that In-home judicial cases in which a child is placed with a non-maltreating parent, most often lacked parent engagement of the maltreating parent. This was leading to increased length of judicial oversight due to lack of sufficient efforts by the case management organization to link the maltreating parent with the services necessary to achieve their case plan outcomes. Staff and case turnover have also been seen to have a negative impact on parent engagement. While turnover seems to be on the decline, it is important to note that several

agencies are comprised of staff with little tenure/experience. Staff with little case management experience generally are less nuanced in respect to parent engagement. These staff also have greater supervision needs and are unable to carry full caseloads for a period of time while they continue to learn and enhance their skills.

Supervision/Caseload: Another area of high need was identified at the case management supervisory level. The quality and quantity of overall supervision was found to be needing additional support. Due to the high turnover rates and the transitions in each agency, field experience and general education was lacking at the supervisory level. Many supervisors needed additional training on data tracking and trending on a unit level. Permanency and safety planning follow-up were also needs identified for improvement. Lastly, caseload size and high turnover, often times had the supervisor working in the field to maintain ongoing supervision of families. During the last fiscal year, C13 began to utilize the CFSR checklist as part of supervision and/or staffing discussions. C6 is in the process of incorporating this tool into their staffings as well, with an anticipated roll-out date of 9/1/20. As caseloads increase, staff have less time to spend with an individual family. The ERSF process models supervision for staff, but like other processes, the most effective learning is achieved through repetition, which requires time and sufficient dosage. Staffing ratios and retention is an area intended to be addressed with the Case Management Pilot Program.

Well-being

The Covid-19 pandemic has provided challenges related to medical and dental visits for children across the state. With that said, Circuit 13 was able to remain above the standard for medical services for the past fiscal year, while C6 struggled to meet this measure. At present time, countermeasures have been implemented in both circuits to improve overall dental numbers.

One particular area of highlighted performance is placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care. Each circuit saw significant progress in this area over the past fiscal year, with C13 dropping to 5.26% from 6.25% in the previous fiscal year and C6 dropping to 4.59% from 6.57% the previous year. Placement stability was a significant focus over the past year and will continue to be a focus over the upcoming fiscal year.

Performance Improvement Strategies

Each circuit continues to focus on various improvement strategies and plans, including Eckerd Connects' internal CQI plans, PIP-identified activities, DCF performance improvement plans (such as Path Forward in C6), etc. Each circuit routinely synthesizes data related to performance in a number of measures and routinely identifies and evaluates countermeasures meant to improve performance. As mentioned above, one of the main overarching goals is workforce capacity and stability. Eckerd Connects has worked diligently with each CMO to address staff turnover, including but not limited to: employee satisfaction surveys, employee recognition programs, intensive staff training in partnership with the USF Training Consortium, and staff retention bonuses. While turnover seems to be slowing for the most part, some agencies have a large number of newer staff with little experience. With an unstable and inexperienced workforce, practice change is difficult. Added to that is the Covid-19 pandemic, which has

caused shifts and changes to practice. Eckerd Connects has risen to that challenge and has adapted practice to ensure the safety of staff and families served by our programs.

Eckerd Connects continues to partner with Mindshare Technologies to provide useful data reports to Eckerd Connects and CMO leadership to aid in their management of performance. Eckerd Connects' Data team also provides staff with a number of child/case-level reports. To enhance this linkage, data trainings have been offered in both circuits to ensure staff are aware of what each measure consists of, how to affect change on measures, and how to interpret data. Additional training was provided to ECCA and provider staff due to a recognized gap in data understanding at the supervisory levels, with the intention of enhancing supervisory discussion across all agencies and promoting creative planning. Below are some specific performance improvement strategies identified by circuit.

Case Management Pilot Program: As part of Senate Bill 1326, CMO pilot programs were established in C6 and C13 with a goal of increasing performance in several areas using innovative programs and methodologies. While the specific goals and metrics are still being finalized, some of the expected areas of focus will include: Permanency within 12 months, returns to care within 12 months, placement stability, parent visits, identification and provision of service needs to children, caregivers, and parents, etc. Eckerd Connects has completed a proposal for how to utilize funding, should additional funding be associated with these pilot programs as well. Eckerd Connects has also developed reporting functionalities to monitor and evaluate progress as to the proposed metrics.

Joint Response Licensing Team: Circuits 6 and 13 have worked diligently with the Sherriff's Offices in each county to develop a joint program that is targeted to respond to cases of abuse and neglect reports in licensed foster homes. This program was designed to support foster families and Investigative staff during open case investigations for children in licensed care. Licensing specialists complete a joint response with the investigator for initial engagement of the foster family. This program has had positive reviews from all parties involved thus far.

Effective 07/1/20, ECA Licensing in C6, in partnership with Pasco and Pinellas CPIS, respond jointly to abuse reports in licensed foster homes. There is a 14-day staffing that includes all parties related to the case to address any concerns and to facilitate better communication between all parties.

In C13, joint engagement with families was already active and successful prior to the pilot, but this pilot has had a positive impact on foster parents' awareness as to the status of investigations. Eckerd and licensing are included on all initial and closing calls.

Family Reunification Team (FRT): In Circuit 13, Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services maintains the contract for the Family Reunification Team program, which serves as a major service provider to our in-home population. FRT's reunification support services are designed to complement case management services by providing intensive in-home, family engagement, through case management and therapeutic services. Referrals for the program can be submitted as soon as reunification is projected. Family Reunification Team (FRT) serves families that have a reunification date within 12 months from their last date of entry into the Child Welfare System. Services can initiate with

the family up to 30 days prior to reunification, but no later than 10 days after reunification. For FRT to initiate services, the CMO must have the option for reunification and have begun working a transition plan with a reunification date expected within 30 days. All families are seen by an FRT staff member within 2 business days of receiving referral. FRT is in the home initially 2-3 times a week, with the frequency decreasing as families are making progress to prepare them for service closure. The initial FRT staffing is held within 10 days of receiving referral to develop goals, identify family strengths, and plan for a safe and successful reunification. Bi-weekly staffings are held to ensure collaboration is occurring and that all of the family's needs are being met, as well as discuss any barriers or obstacles the family may unexpectedly face.

FRT tracks their performance in relation to the statewide contract measures pertaining to maltreatments during in-home services, re-removals, and practice trends by utilizing the data collected through independent verification specific to their service cohort.

Based on the successes of the FRT program in C13, this strategy is being expanded to Circuit 6 for the upcoming fiscal year. Camelot Community Cares was awarded the contract and will begin services in C6 on 9/1/20. Implementation meetings have already begun, and it is expected this program will positively impact outcomes for FY20-21.

Kinship Support Program: This program is designed to complement case management services by providing direct support to non-licensed caregivers (relatives and non-relatives) of children in the child welfare system. Services are provided in the caregivers' homes and local communities. The program utilizes direct family involvement to develop an individualized support plan to address necessary service needs such as counseling, crisis intervention, advocacy, case management assistance, caregiver benefit assistance, and peer support.

CHN Kinship-C13: The Kinship Care Program with CHN, as part of the County Collaborative, reaches out to each relative/nonrelative caregiver after the removal and placement by CPI. This is an automatic process off of the shelter docket, which allows CHN Kinship to complete an over-the-phone assessment with the caregiver to determine if they need to be assigned to a Kinship Navigator to provide in-home supports to the family. They can also provide referral information if the caregiver does not feel they need a Kinship Navigator. As the Collaborative partners with CPIs to increase the number of youth placed with a relative or nonrelative, this program helps support those placements. If, during the screening process, CHN Kinship identifies that the caregiver would be more appropriate for Gulf Coast Kinship services, they contact Gulf Coast and complete the referral for services. Length of services is determined on a case by case basis, typically ranging from 60-90 days. Kinship is designed to serve 150 families per year.

The Gulf Coast Kinship Program in C13 has had a positive impact on measure 1-Rate of abuse per day while in foster care by ensuring an early and ongoing connection for relative/non-relative caregivers.

Consequently, there has been a reduction in placement disruptions, reduction of inadequate supervision findings, and an increase in caregiver compliance with court orders (related to parent visitation).

A contract has been executed for CHN kinship support in C6 beginning on 7/1/20, which will provide the following: Kinship Navigation services, fiscal management, program supervision of the KS program, and consultation. CHN has extensive experience in the field of Kinship Care along with more than 128 years of nonprofit management of children and family services. The Level 1 licensing team is partnering with CHN Kinship through this new contract as well.

Diversion Enhancement-C13: Eckerd is partnering with Hillsborough County to provide additional diversion support for families in the community. The project includes increased capacity for the family finding team, kinship supports, an assessment team, healthy start, and CARES Model. This project will include access for a CPI to an assessment team. Assessment team staff will initiate domestic violence and mental health assessments within 1 business day. Healthy Start will also offer prioritized service for substance exposed newborns.

Family Services Initiative (FSI)-C6: Eckerd Connects has been working with the Juvenile Welfare Board to develop Prevention and Diversion options in Pinellas County. Juvenile Welfare Board has committed $100,000 in funding as part of the Family Services Initiative (FSI). FSI is a strategic partnership focused on quality service delivery, easy access for families, innovative technology, utilization management, and fiscal accountability processes. FSI will provide quality, family-driven services that are accessible and cost efficient for families in need.

Family Finding Program-ECAs: ECCA continued to see a high demand for services in both circuits as described above. To address this demand ECCA focused efforts on achieving permanency timely be reviewing children in licensed out of home care placements to determine possible safe reunifications or step down into relative/non-relative care. Both circuits are now fully staffed and running. These units were modeled after the evidenced-based practice of "Family Finders". The Family Finding model offers methods and strategies to locate and engage relatives/non-relatives of children living in out of home care. These units were instituted with the goal to reduce the number of children in Out of Home Care by locating and engaging relatives/non-relatives and successfully transitioning children to the care of their family. In C13, the Family Finding Team increased staffing as a result of the partnership with Hillsborough County on diversion.

In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year, the C13 Family Finding Team accomplished the following:

- Moved **223** children from licensed foster care into relatives/non-relative placement
- Reduced out of home placement costs by approximately **$11,965.04** daily, which would be a yearly savings of **$2,703,156.66**
- Moved children from licensed foster care into relatives/non-relative placement in timespan of **79.2 days** on average

In C6, the Family Finding team completed relative/non-relative locator efforts and home studies for children in targeted residential group care settings to reduce the RGC population, participated in case transfer staffings for all children not already in relative/non-relative care at the time in order to identify potential caregivers for assessment, and completed home studies for potential relative/non-relative caregivers identified by the CMOs. In Fiscal Year 2019-2020 the C6 Family Finding Team completed locator efforts for 232 children, moved 92 children from licensed care to relatives/non-relatives, and had an additional 25 children pending moves to relative/non-relative care at the end of the fiscal year.

CHN Family Finding-C13: The Family Finding team with CHN is working on the front end with potential lockout youth, as well as supporting CPIs at the time of removal to identify possible family supports to either prevent the removal or to increase the number of youth placed with a relative or non-relative when removal is necessary. The family finding team is working with identified group homes and are assigned to youth at those group homes to help identify possible family supports and/or placement options. When a relative or non-relative is identified and the youth steps down to the family member, the CHN Kinship program can assign a Kinship Navigator to help support that placement.

Turnover/Internship Program: Both circuits continue to be impacted by front line staff turnover rates, though turnover has slowed over the past few months. While turnover is slowing and agencies are building capacity, it is important to note many new staff have little to no prior case management experience. This has been a critical focus across all of Eckerd Connects Community Alternatives, attempting to improve retention of staff across both circuits. ECCA has continued its partnership with the University of South Florida to provide pre-service training and amended the training schedule to acclimate new staff into the field. Eckerd secured grant funding for retention bonuses for all case management staff who remain with the agency at prescribed intervals.

Eckerd Connects has also continued its partnership with local universities, such as St. Leo University and USF, to provide internship opportunities for staff enrolled in the BSW programs. As part of the pilot program, students are prepared, using pre-service curriculum, to take the exam immediately upon graduation. This program enables BSW graduates to be hired directly into case management positions upon graduation without requiring additional preservice training. While in this program, students are "placed" with a CMO as an intern where they complete several field hours per week. This provides them the advantage of implementing practices they learn from their core curriculum in real-time.

Over the past several months, the judicial system in each circuit has streamlined and improved court docketing, which is reported as having a positive impact on turnover. It is anticipated improvements in turnover rates, staff tenure, and staff experience will impact all contract measures. CMO retention is a focus of the CMO pilot program over the upcoming fiscal year as well.

Quarterly Case Manager Retention Rate: FY 2019-20				
Circuit	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6	76.9%	74.8%	75.2%	88.0%
13	83.1%	84.2%	80.5%	85.3%

Reflective Practice Leadership Series Training: C6 and C13 are partnering with the Department of Children and Families to initiate Reflective Practice Leadership Series training for supervisors. The overall purpose of the training is to reduce staff turnover, improve staff well-being ,and through a parallel process, improve children and families' overall well-being and reduce re-entry into the system of care. This is considered a value-added training to utilize in deepening workforce connectedness within everyday moments using a reflective practice. The trainings will be initiated in C6 first, and upon completion, will be initiated in C13.

Safety Plan Trainings: Both quality teams have worked with USF to provide ongoing onsite safety plan trainings to front line staff at both the Case Manager and Supervisor/APD levels. These trainings were directly related to findings from the review processes and incorporated language and education surrounding the development, implementation, and monitoring of safety plans. To expand upon the trainings, both circuits' QM Specialists and USF trainers provide ongoing coaching in unit meetings, as well as on an individual basis. Over the past year, this training has been mandatory in Circuit 6. Increased focus and trainings on safety planning appears to be having a positive impact on abuse measures as well, as we are seeing less violation of court orders/safety plans resulting in subsequent verified findings.

Supervisor Level Key Competencies: Both circuits saw above average turnover rates for frontline and supervisory staff. The Supervisor position continues to be a focal point for enhancement and education. Across both circuits we utilized the initial proficiency training program "Supervising for Excellence" (SFE) for case management and lead agency leaders. This program is taught through the USF training consortium. In addition, USF offers Learning Circles in each circuit that addresses common practice gaps and allows for a free flowing conversation. These learning Circles are held each month, and are opened to all of the CMO and Lead agency supervisors. Supervision numbers are pulled and discussed as part of the Watchlist/PQI meetings held with each CMO's leadership. Finally, a multidisciplinary workgroup is currently working to improve supervision processes especially as they relate to permanency in C13. This group includes representation from the Guardian Ad Litem, case management, OAG, DCF, and Eckerd.

QPI Supervisory Roundtables-C13: Carole Shauffer, with the Youth Law Center, facilitated a series of supervisory roundtables for the Case Management Supervisors in Circuit 13. These roundtables were a result of a recommendation from the Quality Parenting Initiative steering committee which meets monthly. Frontline supervisors are critical when implementing the tenets of QPI, and the series was

intended to promote open dialogue about how to best move forward with QPI practices in light of current challenges. The roundtable discussions kicked off with an overview of QPI and subsequent topics included: how to build relationships with caregivers, child transitions, and co-parenting.

Targeted Recruitment: Both circuits continue targeted recruitment process to expand licensure of sibling placements by ensuring recruitment specialists targeted homes that would be licensed for multiple bed capacity (2 or more). A second focus is to recruit homes licensed specifically to place teens. This has been an ongoing process for both circuits to combat the growing number of teens in out of home care. Placement stability has improved in both circuits, at least partially attributable to increased foster home capacity.

In C6, the overall goal for FY19-20 was to recruit 144 New Homes. They finished the FY at 136 new home, hitting 94% of the goal. They also began targeted recruitment during the past fiscal year, involving recruitment in 17 specific zip codes throughout Pinellas and Pasco counties where removal rates were high and the number of available homes was low. The goal for new homes in these targeted areas was 36, which was accomplished at 100%. 18 of these homes were designated for sibling groups, which exceeded the target of 9 within these specific zip codes. The overall goal for sibling home recruitment was 40 homes, and C6 was able to license 49 homes (123% of the goal). A secondary goal was to license 80 new beds for siblings, and this goal was accomplished at 140% of the goal, or 112 new beds. Regarding teen home recruitment, a goal was set for 12 new teen homes, and the team finished the FY at 11 new homes, or 92% of the goal. A secondary goal of 18 new beds for teens was also developed, and the team finished at 28 new beds (156% of the goal). 45% of the new teen homes came from the targeted zip code areas. The overall new home goal for FY 20-21 is 150 new homes. C6 also continues to develop their Ambassador Program which involves highly motivated foster parents in the recruitment of additional foster parents.

In C13, CHN has been actively bringing teens to foster parent training classes to speak on their experiences. CHN is tracking families who started with one profile, but have changed their preferences to accept older youth or sibling groups. In the near future, these sessions will be taped to support the other CPA trainings. Discussions about sibling groups and teens start at orientation and carry through to the home study and assessment phase.

Parent Advisory Council: As part of our Community Café initiative, Casey Family Programs is continuing to provide support to Eckerd Connects, the Guardian Ad Litem program, and community-at-large, to maintain the Hillsborough's Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC includes parents who have successfully navigated the dependency system and achieved reunification with their children. These parents have made a commitment to work with current dependency parents who have had their children removed to assist with ensuring the timely and successful return of their children back to their care /custody. These meetings are held monthly, facilitated by Corey Best (as an independent

contractor), and continue to receive positive feedback from group members. Meetings are currently be held virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

ResWrap: Eckerd Connects has partnered with the National Center for Innovation and Excellence to implement the ResWrap wrap-around model. The ResWrap model approach is designed to serve children and youth placed in, or at risk of placement in, residential group care. The model reduces the length of stay in RGC while stabilizing youth with complex behavioral health needs associated with trauma by diverting entry into residential care, achieving a planful and sustainable step-down process for youth, and expediting the return of youth to their homes and communities. C13 initiated this process initially, with C6 to follow. C6 has completed the training for this program and has identified one facilitator and supervisor to implement the model, serving 4 youth after rollout on June 15, 2020 and to serve up to 12-15 youth upon full rollout.

CHN Placement Stability-C13:

- CHN developed a Placement Staffing Coordinator position, which has resulted in increased placement stability. This role focuses on staffing children in traditional foster homes, as well as traditional residential programs, that are facing challenges that could result in disruption. They help link to resources, provide creative solutions to challenges, and provide suggestions for additional areas of training. They also provide oversight and coordination to the follow-up recommendations to promote stability.
- In addition, CHN has implemented consistent messaging among providers regarding the need for permanent placements for children. A strong focus has been put into finding the most permanent option for the child, even if it is not the quickest resolution. Placement and the licensing team are engaged a minimum of once a week, and at times daily if necessary, when encountering barriers in placing traditional children permanently.
- CHN Placement Team and Family Finding Team are working closely on the front end to ensure all options are exhausted prior to licensing care being explored.
- An approval process has been implemented within CHN leadership for short-term placements to ensure that all options are exhausted prior to seeking a short-term option.
- CHN Placement Team has engaged with foster parents on the agency-run Foster Hillsborough Facebook page to help identify placement options, as well as highlight children needing to be stepped down from residential placements.

Dental Countermeasures-C6: The case management organizations have each identified a point of contact to manage dental performance within their agencies weekly. The CMOs utilize weekly performance reports to identify youth needing appointments. The CMOs send a weekly report to the Lead Agency to identify current status and barriers for children needing appointments. As a support to the CMOs, the ECA licensing team utilizes the weekly performance report to contact foster parents for children needing dental appointments to collect the information and report to CMOs.