



Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration

May 15, 2025, 10:30am-12:30pm

Visionary Room, 401 NW 2 Avenue, Miami, FL 33128

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Department of Children and Families SAMH- Asta Trinh, Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, Melanie Castro, Cristina Perez, Joquetta Batista, Indira Pineda, Jessica Durant, Valoria Thomas, Idell Gayman, Dameneka Afrika, Shenekee Slaughter **Agency for Healthcare Administration-** Devona Pickle **Agency for Persons with Disabilities-**Tajat Rivers, Hillary Jackson **Adult Protective Services** – Latorria Grier. Raylin Ubeda, Melissa Sanabria Rodriguez, Yolanda Aguilar **Florida Department of Health-**Candace Williams **Department of Education- Miami-Dade County Public Schools-** Lianie Cuba **Area Agencies on Aging- Alliance for Aging-** Barbara Suarez, Susana Llitas **Community-Based Care Lead Agency- Citrus Family Care Network-** Maria and Mario Alonso **Thriving Mind South Florida ME-** Laura Naredo, Stephen Zuckerman, Alisa Surenskaya **Behavioral Health Service Providers-The Village South/West Care-** Ilena Cabrera **Banyan Health Systems BH-** Jordan Guedes, Orestes Garcia, Brandy Blackwood **AGAPE Network** – Claudio Perez, Samud Hernandez **Citrus Family Care Network** – Maria Alonso **Community Health of South Florida-** Celia Milon **New Hope C.O.R.P.S-** James Dougherty **South Florida Wellness Network** - Susan Nyamora, Michelle Fernandez **Hospitals- Jackson Behavioral Health Hospital-** Patrice Tilson **Nicklaus Children’s Hospital-** Leyden Diaz, Ana Tyrkala **Aventura Hospital Behavioral Health** – Dario Carrasco **Mount Sinai Medical Center-** Mary Jaramillo Mangia. **Mount Sinai Behavioral Health** -Risa Schwartz **Medicaid Managed Medical Assistance Plans-Molina Health Care MMA-** Kale Baker **Sunshine Health MMA** - Monique Peele **United Health-** Joe Rogers, Deyris Coello **Police-City of Miami Police Department** - John Blackerby, Roger Jackson **Aventura Police** – Sabina Shapiro **North Bay Village Police** – Jesica Polanco **Florida City Police** – Valeria Martinez **Sheriff’s Office-Miami Dade Sheriff’s Office-** Maria Barosela, Heather Winters **Florida Community Care-** Alina Orozco **Florida Internal University Embrace-** Krystal Sutherland **Miami-Dade County, Community Action and Human Services** -Brenda Lampon, Amanda Dominguez **DC Juvenile Services Department** – Elena Angulo **Help Miami-** Kathy Hurt **Iman’s Light Foundation** – Mari Carmen Rodriguez **Circle of Mental Health Rights** – Armond Johnson **Concept House** – Connolly Dsouz **Carelon Behavioral Health** – Pamela Quiroga, Robert Salazar **Passageway Residence** – Adilen Cruz **Fresh start** – Sandra McQueen Baker **Florida Advocates for Behavioral Health / The Key Clubhouse of South Florida** – Amy McClellan **New Horizon Community Mental Health Center** – Nusrat Karim **L.Weber Mental Health Associates PA** – Laurie Weber Alfonso Martin



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I. CALL TO ORDER

Cristina Perez called to order the Southern Region Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 10:33am on May 15, 2025.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, Regional Director for the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) welcomed the attendees. The following individuals provided introductions:

Asta Trinh, Department of Children and Families, SAMH, Chief of Regional Operations and Initiatives

Melanie Castro, Department of Children and Families, SAMH, Southern Regional Operations Supervisor

Cristina Perez, Department of Children and Families, SAMH, Regional Collaboration Coordinator

Devona Pickle, Agency for Health Care Administration, Bureau Chief

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and the 15th of May is Mental Health Awareness Day. Green ribbons were provided to all attendees and a photo was taken to commemorate the event.

III. PRESENTATION – OVERVIEW OF SAMH

Cristina Perez, Regional Collaboration Coordinator, provided a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the DCF SAMH program office as the State agency for Substance Abuse and Mental Health and State Opioid Authority.

Open Discussion:

Aimee McClellan - Key Clubhouse and Florida Advocacy Coalition: provided feedback on the Power Point stating that under the “array of services” that SAMH funds, it did not include Psychosocial and Vocation Rehabilitation services, which the Department funds.



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Mari Carmen Rodriguez Iman's Light Foundation requested information if the Department or other agencies are funding prevention programs or awareness campaigns, specifically targeting elementary aged children, beginning in 5th grade, as it relates to vaping

Maria Alonso, Citrus CBC: The CBC does contract for some of those campaigns/programs; however, the funding is limited, and we only have contracts with 10-11 schools, from 1st grade to 6th grade.

Laura Naredo, Thriving Mind South Florida: The Managing Entity has contracted prevention programs with Network Service Providers from elementary to high school, however acknowledging that the need is greater than the current services available.

Candance Williams, Department of Health: Advised of an awareness campaign/prevention program that is managed by DOH targeting middle school children. Also advised of a Tobacco Free workgroup, which actively discusses prevention awareness, and requested the group to join the workgroup to share resources and advise the workgroup of future initiatives that are worth considering. The next meeting will be held on May 27, 2025, and will resume again in July 2025.

Maria Alonso, Citrus CBC: inquired whether the Children's Trust was in attendance. Informed the group that a good idea would be to engage the Trust, who works collaboratively with DOH. There are conversations about expanding services to additional schools to include a nurse and a part-time mental health professional.

Susan Nyamora South Florida Wellness Network: A gap that they have identified is in the availability of re-entry programs. In addition, peers are having a difficult time gaining employment due to delays or complications in their background screening exception process. Fire Rescue and Law Enforcement are having a difficult time filling positions to offer wrap around services when they want to hire a peer specialist.

The presentation was shared with all members on the Southern Regional Collaborative email distribution list.



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IV. PRESENTATION – OVERVIEW OF AHCA

Devona Pickle: Bureau Chief, provided an overview presentation to increase the overall knowledge of AHCA and how they administer and manage Medicaid, fee for service, Managed Care, Information on how to file a complaint, Behavioral Health covered services and the Medicaid Helpline: 1-877-254-1055

Open Discussion:

Mary Jaramillo Mangia, Mount Sinai Hospital: shared a concern regarding Medicaid Enhanced coverage and what services the health plans offer, and what their eligibility is, as they struggle to find health plans that cover Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) or Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP) even though they have a staff of individuals working with insurance plans.

Devona Pickle, AHCA: shared that everyone's enrollee handbook can be accessed and contains all the information on what services are covered. There is also a way for you to verify eligibility via phone or online. In addition, if you have contracted with a particular plan, you have access to a portal where that information can be found or assisted with finding it.

Kale Baker, Molina Healthcare: stated their insurance plans cover IOP and PHP

Monique Peele, Sunshine Health: stated their insurance plans cover IOP and PHP

Robert Salazar, Carelon Behavioral Health: stated depending on the insurance plan selected, IOP and PHP can be covered

The presentation was shared with all members on the Southern Regional Collaborative email distribution list.

V. REVIEW OF SURVEY DATA

Cristina Perez, Regional Collaboration Coordinator, presented on the Statewide and Regional survey data obtained from attendees following the February Kick-Off Meeting. There was a total of 60 responses received for the Southern Region. The three (3) top points of interest reported for the Southern Region specifically, were presented and included:

1. Best practices of interagency and referrals/Improving cross agency training and education
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2. School based Behavioral Health Programs and Youth Mental Health Services
3. Peer Run Organizations

Areas for Collective Action (Statewide):

1. Funding and Financial Flexibility
2. Peer Support Services/Person Served Participation
3. Training and Education Needs
4. Strategies to Improve Staff Retention
5. Identifying Gaps in Behavioral Health Service Array

VI. GROUP DISCUSSION REVIEW OF KEY FOCUS AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lourdes Dorado Rubio provided overview on the 4 key areas identified by the Statewide Behavioral Health Commission which were introduced during our kickoff meeting in February

1. Strengthening Community networks and gross agency collaboration.
2. Enhancing Crisis Care Continuum.
3. Improving Data Collection and Management Processes.
4. Optimizing the financial management of the Behavioral Health system of care.

The following portion of the agenda was open discussion for the collaborative to discuss recommendations to address these key areas:

b. Recommendations:

Mari Carmen Rodriguez: the school system is setup in a way that to allow outside partners/experts and conversations, they are resistant to allow other professionals in.

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH: early intervention meetings, finding other resources to fund those services. School Board should have been in attendance but was not. Will f/u on that

Susan Holtzman, NAMI: schools when discussing BH issues with parents is difficult and it is something that NAMI tries to assist parents with, including understanding mental illness. Enhancing crisis care, that continuum starts before diagnosis and during and



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after the crisis. Many of these conditions are chronic so it is important to recognize that continuum and how services are needed.

Maria Alonso, Citrus Health and Family Network, CBC: it's what happens after the crisis, levels of care needed for the population and what is available, and what is not. Not enough resources for adolescent population. It has to be looked at through a whole system and not just the "crisis" in time.

Mary Jaramillo Mangia, Mount Sinai Hospital: I also wanted to share how important Trauma Informed Care training (TIC) is and having that understanding. We are seeing a lot of misdiagnoses from a very young age because everyone is overlooking trauma. This should start at the school system and everywhere throughout the system, to look at these adolescents with the frame of trauma. We have to do better with that and we have to evolve. We have a staff who conducts TIC to first responders, law enforcement, and hospital staff.

Asta Trinh, DCF SAMH: DCF also is able to provide TIC training. Also, we are moving towards the direction of DCF hosting "lunch and learn" events in the near future.

Laura Naredo, Thriving Mind South Florida: The Managing Entity is involved in various initiatives and has 46 Network Service Providers as part of the Southern Regions Behavioral Health Safety Net. All providers must be trained in TIC, even if they are not providing trauma services, but the training must be done, and the culture of the provider should be TI focused. Also shared that the ME has their three-year contractual requirement for ME Needs assessments which will occur later this year. Surveys have been distributed to various peer services, community providers. Next steps will be to schedule Focus Groups will be virtual and in-person

Alina Orozco, FI Community Care, MMA: shared that their agency conducted Baker Act and Marchman training and Mental Health First Aid. Expressed interest in working more closely with the Managing Entity.

Brenda Lampon, Office of Levin Cava: shared that a potential gap is a lack of partnering with local resources. We should be tapping into FIU, UM. Invited Albizu University Director but she was not able to come. These resources could be used at schools to step in and provide some relief on training and education. Continuum of Care components, employment is number one. Opportunity for training and education for these individuals. How are they going to become independent if they have no skills?

Asta Trinh, DCF SAMH: shared that behavioral health professionals needing clinical hours can intern with the providers or with DCF.



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Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH: also, Vocational Rehab programs, the regional administrator of the program will be invited to future meetings.

Sandra McQueen Baker, Fresh Start of Miami-Dade: Peer support background screening waiver is becoming a barrier. It takes a long time for the waiver to come through, they get everything, and they still can't work. It is very frustrating for them. This process should be reviewed.

Armond Johnson Circle of Mental Health, Dept of Commerce: people coming out of jail who is looking for this population I am looking to partner and offer those services. Are there facilities that we can use to do workshops. Building here was offered.

Amanda Dominguez, MD CAHSD: shared the Senator Rene Garcia Behavioral Health Advisory Board Services who is discussing issues across all the areas, it is open to the public, and we talk about needs of the community, what the current data suggests, how we move forward with providing better services. Shared information for July meeting. Will be forwarding the Collaboration information and invite to the next meeting to leadership.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

An opportunity was provided for Public Comment.

Amy McClellan Florida Advocates for Behavioral Health/ The Key Clubhouse Of South Florida: Asked clarification regarding which commission group was this meeting making recommendations for? Response provided "The Statewide Behavioral Health Commission"

Asta Trinh, DCF SAMH: announced the next two meetings (August and November) will be virtual. Also acknowledge the need to host these meetings in circuit specific areas

Maria Alonso, CBC: suggested forming smaller groups to discuss key areas

XI. CLOSING REMARKS

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio and Asta Trinh provided closing remarks.



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Next Meeting will be held on August 11, 2025, 10:30 am- 12:30 pm virtually, FAR notice and invite will be sent

X MOTION TO ADJOURN

A Survey code was provided to attendees for feedback. Asta Trinh and Lourdes Dorado-Rubio provided closing remarks thanking the group for attending. Cristina Perez adjourned the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 12:10pm.
