



## **Northeast Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration**

August 06, 2025, 11:00am

Virtual via Teams

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendance:** 150

**Host/Facilitator:**

**Department of Children and Families** - Idris Gaines, Northeast Regional (NER) Operations Manager

**Presenter:** LeeAnne Sacino, Executive Director of the Florida Coalition to End Homelessness

**Full Attendee List is Provided in Appendix A**

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Idris Gaines called to order the Northeast Region Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration meeting at 11:00 am on August 6, 2025.

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#### **II. WELCOME**

Idris Gaines, Northeast Regional (NER) Operations Manager for Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) at the Department of Children and Families (DCF), welcomed attendees and initiated introductions.

Harlee James, Regional Collaboration Coordinator, DCF Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) Program

LeeAnne Sacino, Executive Director of the Florida Coalition to End Homelessness, attending as a representative and presenter

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#### **III. PRESENTATION – FLORIDA COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS**

LeeAnne Sacino provided an overview of the Florida Coalition to End Homelessness's mission and key initiatives, emphasizing their commitment to "Everyone Working Together to End Homelessness."

- a) Homelessness in Florida
- b) Homeless Continuums of Care
- c) Homeless Crisis Response System



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- d) State and Federal Initiatives
- e) Advocating for your clients

Nancy Eisele, from LSF, reported that some housing providers are opting out of Continuum of Care (CoC) networks to maintain direct relationships with landlords, which facilitates faster client housing. She noted that the most significant housing barriers are for vulnerable populations, including those with criminal histories or no income. Eisele asked if the state is funding alternative models like Operation New Hope, which combines housing with employment training. She also inquired about the flexibility of current federal funding to support such initiatives

Leanne responded that the Coordinated Entry System (CES) aims to connect individuals to housing quickly and fairly, prioritizing those with the greatest need. She acknowledged the trend Nancy described is happening statewide and that CoCs are working to better engage providers. Leanne added that while the future of federal funding is uncertain, alternative models, such as Master Leasing, are being explored to increase housing access and improve system responsiveness.

### **IV. SUCCESS STORIES**

Idris Gaines shared success stories from the Northeast Region, highlighting outcomes from the Mental Health Resource Center and FreshMinistries.

- a) A success story was shared about David, a client served by the Mental Health Resource Center.
- b) A client success story from FreshMinistries was also presented.

### **V. OPEN DISCUSSION**

Idris Gaines covered the focus topic of strengthening community networks and cross-agency collaboration.

- a) If we had to prioritize one outcome, what would it be?
- b) Where are we seeing the strongest examples of cross-agency collaboration right now – and what made that work?
- c) Where do we see gaps in collaboration between agencies, and what's getting in the way?
- d) What specific strategies can agencies implement together to strengthen partnerships and create a more integrated support network?



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Sabrina Howland from the Bradford County School District shared that identifying service gaps remains difficult and that both locating resources and raising awareness continue to be challenges in her role.

Deborah Richmond from Eckerd Connects E-Nini-Hassee, noted challenges in filling staffing vacancies and expressed that a centralized, formal list of providers would be a valuable tool for improving access and coordination.

Erin McVicker from Wolfson's Children's Hospital supported the idea of a provider list, stating it would assist in making appropriate referrals for children transitioning from crisis stabilization to community-based services.

Idris Gaines highlighted the Access to Care Line provided by Lutheran Services Florida (LSF). Dr. Cauffield shared the contact number for the line: 1-877-229-9798.

Debbie O'Neil from MHRC noted that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted relationship-building efforts between providers. In response, MHRC launched a partnership series with other agencies, facilitating discussions on past collaborations and forming inter-agency task groups to establish shared goals.

David Perry, representing Community Partnership with Children, stated that Autism is a significant barrier to service access for children. He noted that because Autism is classified as a medical, not a mental health condition, it often leads to insurance denials. He asked if any efforts are underway to address this issue and improve service access for children with Autism.

Idris noted that the team will follow up with AHCA for further clarification regarding David's question.

### **VI. FUTURE COLLABORATIVES**

Idris Gaines presented information on the future of the collaborative to include:

- a) Attendance Metrics
- b) Survey outcomes- statewide priorities, regional priorities, need for additional resources and supports.
- c) Lunch and learns – previous presenter and schedule of future meetings.



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### **VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Lisa Baird from Humana shares that having a resource list would be helpful.

Shelley Katz from LSF shares that links to providers can be found at [LSFHealthSystems.org](https://LSFHealthSystems.org)

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### **VIII. CLOSING REMARKS**

Idris Gaines closed the meeting by thanking participants for their engagement and valuable feedback, noting its importance to the success of the collaborative. He encouraged attendees to reach out with any follow-up questions and requested that he and Harlee James be included in relevant future meetings to support ongoing efforts. He expressed appreciation for the group's continued commitment to meaningful, collaborative change.

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### **IX. ADJOURN**

Idris Gaines adjourned the meeting at 12:16

**Minutes Submitted by:** Harlee James



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### APPENDIX A

Adam	Hertz	St. Johns Sheriff's Office Co-Responder Unit
Addie	Levens	Behavioral Independence Inc
Alan	Paulin	Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
Alison	Fulford	Department of Juvenile Justice
Amanda	Lang	Behavioral Independence Inc
Amber	Fernbach	DCF
Amy	Cooper	Mental Health Resource Center
Andrea	Douglas	Department of Juvenile Justice
Angela	Still	Agape Family Health
Anita	Clyne	UF Health St. Johns Care Connect BRAVE
April	Busby	DCF SAMH
Ashley	Brooks	Meridian Healthcare, Inc.
Ashraf	Affan	Angel Kids Pediatrics
Asta	Trinh	DCF
Barbara	Etter	Living Hope, Inc.
Beverley	Wilks	K-12
Brandy	Williams	Flagler Schools
Brandy	Panariello	Healthy Start Coalition of Flagler & Volusia Counties
Brianna	Ramos	Children's Medical Services Medical Foster Care
Cara	Bryant-Thomas	DCF
Carol	Schneider	Epic Behavioral Healthcare
Carrie	Baird	Flagler Cares
Cassandra	Hert	Angle Kids Pediatrics and Behavioral Health
Chelsey	Jones	Optum
Cheryl	Twombly	DCF
Cheryl	Stakes	Vision Is Priceless
Christine	Weems	DCF
Christine	Taff	Department of Juvenile Justice
Christopher	Watson	Agape Family Health, Inc.
Christy	Gillis	Community Development Administrator
Christy	McBee	Meridian Healthcare
Courtney	Horton	Department of Children and Families



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Cristina	Perez	DCF
Cynthia	Henderson	Cynergy Consulting
Daniel	Engert	Flagler County Sheriff's Office
Danielle	Antoine	Community Partnership for Children
David	Perry	Community Partnership with Children
Deborah	Richmond	Eckerd Connects E-Nini-Hassee
Deborah	Babin	NFHIDTA/CDCF
Debra	O'Neal	Mental Health Resource Center
Dennis	Maneja	SAYS
Diera	Woodard	DCF SAMH
Diveka	Anderson	DCF, SAMH
Donna	Johnson	DCF
Doug	Glasco	Flagler Schools
Dr. Christine	Cauffield	LSF Health Systems
Elizabeth	McKinnon	FL Department of Juvenile Justice
Elizabeth	Franco	Kids First of Florida
Emma	Sanders	Domestic Abuse Council of Volusia
Erica	Machnic	LSF Health Systems
Erin	Whitaker-Houck	LSF Health Systems
Erin	McVicker	Wolfson Children's Hospital
Flora	Davis	Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida, Inc.
Glorian	Maziarka	Florida Legal Services
Gynda	Galan	GCJFCS
Hannah	Graham	Florida Department of Health Clay County
Harlee	James	DCF
Hope	Walton	Flagler OARS
Jacqueline	Primerano	Simply Healthcare
Jacqui	Watson	Elevance Health Inc
Jada	Hunter	Family Support Services
James	Terry	Halifax Medical Center
Jeanette	Burcham	Community Partnership for Children
Jennifer	Snyder	Acadia Healthcare
Jennifer	Pendergraph	Family Support Services



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Jennifer	Nawrocki	Flagler County Sheriff's Office
Jennifer	Nadelkov	The House Next Door
Jennifer	Arevalo	Wolfson's Children Hospital- The Players Center for Child Health
Jeremy	Demos	Meridian Healthcare
Jessica	Durant	DCF
Jessica	Gossett	Family Integrity Program
Joe	Munson	UF Health
John	Fanelli	Flagler Schools
Jon	Hooper	Nassau County Sheriff's Office
Jordynn	Cannon	Clay Behavioral Health Center
Josh	McCumber	Alachua County Board of County Commissioners
Joyce	Case	Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida
Julie	Barrow	SEDNET - Florida Department of Education
Karrie	Dolan	UF Health St Johns
Keith	Money	Family Support Services of North Florida
Kelly	Goll	UF Health St. Johns
Kimberlie	Tobin	FSS
Kimberly	Stratton	Children's Home Society of Florida
Krista	Bartosch	Operation New Hope
Kristy	Amburgey	One Voice for Volusia
Kyerstin	Meeks	Florida Department of Health
Laura	Martin	Civic Communications/Tobacco-Free Jacksonville
Laura	Klock	School Board of Levy County
Laureen	Pagel	Starting Point
Lauren	Cohn	Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
Leeanne	Sacino	Florida Coalition to End Homelessness
Lesley	Hersey	LSF Health Systems
Linda	Peterson	FDOH Children's Medical Services/Medical Foster Care
Lindsey	Nelson	Family Support Services of North Florida
Lisa	Caine	Easterseals Florida
Lisa	Baird	Humana
Lismarie	Pacheco	LifeStream Behavioral Center
Marcus	Hill	Inspire to Rise Inc.



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Marisol	Bahena	Florida Department of Health
Mark	Whalen	Indivior
Mary L	Fagaragan	ESP Case Management Professionals Inc
Matthew	Doughney	Flagler Beach Police Department
Maura	Colon	Help Me Grow
Mckena	Johnson	Dayspring Health
Megan	Jeffrey	Community Partnership for Children
Meghan	Harrigan	GCJFCS
Meghan	Riley-Reynolds	LSF Health Systems
Melinda	Boswell Sczepanski	PFSF
Melinda Sue	Nolan	BMC - Jax Riverfront Behavioral Health
Mendi	Varnado	Mental Health Resource Center
Michael	Skiathitis	Children's Home Society of Florida
Milton	Fonseca	Advocate Program, Inc.
Nancy	Eisele	LSF Health Systems
Nangela	Pulsfus	Epic Behavioral Healthcare
Nathalie	Hervy	Meridian behavioral healthcare
Nikki	Medina Rodriguez	Rebel Recovery Jax
Paula	Willacy	Department of Children and Families
Pebbles	Edelman	Partnership for Strong Families
Philecia	Wilson	Family Support Services of North Florida
Piper	Weber	The Arc Jacksonville
Racquel	Courts	DCF
Robert	Sommers	Mental Health Resource Center
Ryan	Parker	PFSF
Sabrina	Howland	Bradford County School District
Salvatore	Gintoli	SMA Healthcare
Sara	Rutan	St Augustine Youth Services
Sasha	Bass	Partnership for Child Health
Shannon	Johnson	DOH,CMS,MFC
Shawna	Novak	St. Johns County Family Integrity Program
Shayla	Green Flanders	Mental Health Resource Center





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Shelley	Katz	LSF Health Systems
Sherry	Buchman	Florida Department of Health
Shyla	Lebo	One Voice for Volusia
Soffia	Aikens	FL Department of Juvenile Justice
Stacey	Rowe	Children's Home Society of Florida
Stacey	Brown-King	Deep Creek Youth Academy
Stephanie	Groth	DCF
Steven	Cuffe	UF Health- Jacksonville
Susan	O'Brien	Starting Point Behavioral Healthcare
Tamira	Alston	Flagler Cares
Tara	Morton	Meridian Healthcare
Tara	Bryant	Optum
Theresa	Rulien	Child Guidance Center
Tina	M Swathwood	Clay Behavioral Health Center
Tina	Kapusta	CMS/MFC
Tracy	Cooper	LifeStream Behavioral Center
Valerie	Duquette	Epic Behavioral Healthcare
Wadith	Martinez	Simply Healthcare
Walle	Waters	Lend An Ear Outreach
Yolanda	Rowling	Florida Department of Health