



SunCoast Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration

August 13, 2025 | 1:00 p.m. – 2:01 p.m.

Virtual

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Total 71

Hosts/Facilitators:

Department of Children and Families (DCF) – Cristina Perez, Regional Collaboration Coordinator; Erinn Izykowski, Regional Operations Supervisor, SunCoast Region; Melissa Leslie, Regional Operations Manager, SunCoast Region

Presenter: Leann Sacino, Executive Director of Florida Coalition to End Homelessness

Full Attendee List is Provided in Appendix A

I. CALL TO ORDER

Cristina Perez, Southern Regional Collaboration Coordinator (RCC), Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) Program Office, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) called to order the SunCoast Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 1:00 p.m. on August 13, 2025.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Melissa Leslie, Suncoast Regional Operations Manager, SAMH Program Office, Florida DCF.

- Housekeeping
- Introductions to SAMH and FCEH personnel:
 - Erinn Izykowski, Suncoast Regional Operations Supervisor, Department of Children and Families, SAMH.
 - Cristina Perez, Regional Collaboration Coordinator (RCC).
 - Leanne Sacino, Executive Director, Florida Coalition to End Homelessness (FCEH), and Chair of the Statewide Council on Homelessness.

III. PRESENTATION- FLORIDA COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS (FCEH)

Leeanne Sacino, MBA, Executive Director Florida Coalition to End Homelessness



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- FCEH represents 27 Continuums of Care (CoCs) statewide; not a direct-service provider.
- Focus areas: collaboration, problem-solving, training, advocacy, and statewide data aggregation.
- Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness scheduled for October.
- Leeanne Sacino also serves as Chair of the Statewide Council on Homelessness.
- 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count: 28,498 individuals experiencing homelessness (9% decrease from 2023). ~50% were unsheltered.
- Populations: 28% older adults, 18% with severe mental illness, 14% with substance use disorder, 6.7% veterans, 6.3% fleeing domestic violence.
- CoC Responsibilities: Coordination, funding, PIT counts, coordinated entry, open membership.
- Coordinated Entry: 90,000 people served last year statewide.
- Crisis Response System: Prevention/diversion, shelter, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing.
- Advocacy: Join CoC networks, contribute data, provide feedback, and educate clients.

FCEH Presentation Questions:

1. **Clara Reynolds, CEO, Crisis Center of Tampa Bay:** How is FCEH approaching the issue of criminalization of homelessness?
 - **Leeanne Sacino, MBA, Executive Director, FCEH:** We oppose cycles of arrest, hospitalization, and release. Providing housing with supportive services is more effective and far less costly.
2. **Sherry Wenzel, Coordinator of Mental Health Services, Lee County School District:** How can school district homeless liaisons strengthen their connections to community supports?
 - **Leeanne Sacino, MBA, Executive Director, FCEH:** We work closely with the Department of Education. Liaisons should connect directly with their local Continuum of Care (CoC) for collaboration and support.
3. **Kay Frazier, Executive Director, Cali Project:** As a housing provider, it can be difficult to connect youth aging out of foster care or those with developmental disabilities to referral sources. How can providers like us best engage with CoCs?



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- **Leeanne Sacino, MBA, Executive Director, FCEH:** Providers are encouraged to reach out directly to their CoCs. This ensures alignment with coordinated entry and improves collaboration.
4. **Christine Didion, Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas:** What are the benefits of becoming a CoC member?
- **Leeanne Sacino, MBA, Executive Director, FCEH:** Membership offers legislative and federal updates, networking opportunities, and discounts to the annual homelessness conference. It also creates opportunities for local collaboration and data sharing.
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IV. SURVEY RESULTS

- Cristina Perez reviewed statewide and regional participation survey data.
 - In May, there were 47 participants from the Suncoast region and 372 participants' total.
 - The 8 statewide top priorities were discussed, which are comprised of awareness of services, prevention, expansion, peer support, housing, co-response models, staffing, and collaboration.
 - The majority of those who responded to the survey identified training (cross-agency, topic specific, and simulations) as resources and supports needed.
 - A majority of those who responded to the survey prefer a centralized location.
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V. SUCCESS STORIES

Two success stories were highlighted:

- **Foster Youth MST Success (Crisis Center of Tampa Bay):** Family committed to adoption following MST intervention.
- **Adult Crisis Stabilization (SalusCare):** Holistic supports (safety planning, SSI application, utilities restoration) prevented suicide risk and stabilized recovery.

Melissa Leslie, Regional Operations Manager, SAMH DCF: We encourage agencies to continue sharing success stories with Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN) so that these impactful experiences can be highlighted.



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VI. FUTURE PLANS FOR COLLABORATIVES

Continued regional priorities: awareness, prevention, housing expansion, peer support, co-responder models.

a. Lunch and Learns:

- **Bikers Against Child Abuse, July 22, 2025:** Bikers Against Child Abuse (B.A.C.A.) is dedicated to creating a safer environment for abused children by empowering them to no longer live in fear. Working with local and state officials, B.A.C.A. offers physical and emotional support through affiliation and presence, signaling to all involved that the child is protected and part of their biker family
- Announcement of October Lunch & Learn, October 2, 2025, featuring **Dr. Jay Reeve, CEO, Apalachee Center**, Chair of the Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder.

b. Breakout Sessions: Focus Topics and Open Discussion

Cristina Perez, Southern Regional Collaboration Coordinator, presented the three below questions to enhance the focus topic discussion.

Question 1: Where are we seeing the strongest examples of cross-agency collaboration right now – and what made that work?

- **Charlene Grecsek, University of South Florida:** Highlighted SedNet's statewide work on school-community gap analysis and multi-agency coordination as a strong model.
- **Tara Martinson, Lee County:** Emphasized on creating meaningful relationships for stronger cross-collaboration.
- **Micheal Overway, SWFL Regional Coalition to End Homelessness:** SWFL has amazing cross-collaborations – Agencies are willing to tackle the tough processes that have been barriers in the past for our consumers by setting aside 'norms' and working collectively on new and innovative ideas that typically wouldn't have been considered. i.e., branding our affordable housing opportunities as Housing Pressures which is language that political leaders can buy into and developing a Continuum of Care Common Language policy.



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Question 2: What would help agencies better understand each other's roles, services, and referral processes?

- **Kay Frazier, Executive Director, Cali Project:** Highlighted the importance of real time communication to include point of contact information so referrals are not lost in the shuffle.

Question 3: If you could enhance one aspect of cross-agency collaboration today, what would it be?

- **Ashley Neal, Live Tampa Bay:** There are Recovery Community Organizations (RCOs) and treatment providers employing peers throughout the Suncoast region, with meetings such as Recovery Roundtables in Hillsborough and Pasco Counties. A DCF-hosted calendar that shares all collaboration meetings, along with hosting a dedicated meeting for peers across various settings (hospitals, EAPs, insurance providers, DCF, and MEs), would strengthen regional connections.
- **Melissa Leslie, Regional Operations Manager, SAMH DCF:** Our cross-agency collaboration continues to build on strong partnerships. I am eager to see how this evolves.

Questions from participants:

1. **Ashley Neal, Live Tampa Bay:** How are survey priorities being used?
 - **Cristina Perez, RCC:** Priorities inform statewide planning and guide training, toolkit development, and breakout sessions at the regional level.
2. **Lt. Shane Chodakowsky, Punta Gorda Police Department:** How can law enforcement be better integrated into regional collaboratives?
 - **Erinn Izykowski, SAMH DCF:** Through cross-training, ride-alongs with co-responder teams for mental health/behavioral health and warm handoffs to support services.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comment

VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

Cristina Perez, Southern Regional Collaboration Coordinator (covering Suncoast RCC).



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Contact information for the Suncoast Regional Collaborative Coordinator, Regional Operations Manager, and SAMH mailbox was provided. Thank you for attending the SunCoast Region's August Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration meeting! We appreciate your time, engagement, and contributions to making it a great meeting

The next scheduled quarterly meeting for the Suncoast Region will take place **on November 4, 2025 at 10am. A calendar invite and FAR notice** to be shared with further details.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:01pm EST by Cristina Perez, Southern RCC, SAMH.



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APPENDIX A

Alice	Weger	Collier County Sheriff Office
Amanda	Bryan	Safe Children Coalition
Amanda	Evans	Florida Department of Health Lee County
Ann	Silva	Adult Protective Services, Pasco (DCF)
Annette	Christy	University of South Florida (Baker Act Reporting Center)
April	Busby	Department of Children and Families
Ashley	Mitchell	Department of Children and Families
Ashley	Neal	Live Tampa Bay
Ashley	Paquin	Live Tampa Bay
Brena	Slater	Safe Children Coalition
Bryan	Clark	Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Casey	Robbins	Children's Network of SW Florida
Celeste	Fernandez	Department of Children and Families
Charisse	Martinez	Department of Children and Families
Charlene	Grecsek	Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities, DOE
Chrstine	Didion	Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.
Christopher	Spall	Optum Behavioral Health
Clara	Reynolds	Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, Inc.
Dan	Chapman	Eleos
David	Kuck	Gracepoint Wellness
Dawn	Clayton	Sarasota School System
Doug	Leonardo	Tampa General Hospital



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Gail	Ryder	BayCare Health System
Heather	Cross	The Center for Progress and Excellence
Janet	Blair	Refugee Services, DCF
Jarrett	Ballo	Department of Juvenile Justice
Jean	Pierre	Suncoast Center
Jennifer	Watts	Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County
Jessica	Warnick	Aetna
Joe	Dmitrovic	Floridians for Recovery
Julie	Boudreaux	Lee County Human and Veteran Services
Kai	Jenkins	Live Tampa Bay
Kara	Chevlin	North Tampa Behavioral Health Hospital
Kay	Frazier	The Cali Project Inc
Kelly	Hammersley	Department of Juvenile Justice
Kent	Runyon	Central Florida Behavioral Health Network Inc.
Kristen	Griego	Department of Children and Families
Laura	Carson	Department of Health, Sarasota
Laura Beth	Hinson	Department of Children and Families
Lisa	Baird	Humana
Lisa	Williams	Centerstone
Lizette	Tabares	Central Florida Behavioral Health Network Inc.
Lori	Brooks	Lee County School District
Luke	Barnett	North Tampa Behavioral Health
Madison	Miller	Adult Protective Services (DCF)
Maria	Ellis	Collier County Public School
Mark	Whalen	Indivior



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Mary	Frick	Family Health Centers SWF
Meagan	Towner	Aetna Better Health of Florida
Melissa	Reid	Department of Juvenile Justice
Michael	Overway	SWFL Regional Coalition to End Homelessness
Molly	Beattie	Gracepoint
Nicole	Sweat	Lakeland Regional Health
Patricia	DeVost	Patty's Place Concierge Youth Mental Health Care
Roseanna	Broderick	APS Florida
Roaya	Tyson	Ibis Healthcare
Samantha	Bolduc	Children's Network of SWFL
Samuel	Picard	BayCare Health System
Shane	Chodakowsky	Punta Gorda Police Department
Sharon	Roper	Adult Protective Services (DCF)
Sherry	Wenzel	Lee County School District
Stacey	Schaeffer	Safe Children Coalition
Susan	Wright	BayCare Behavioral Health
Tara	Bryant	Optum
Tara	Martinson	Lee County Human and Veterans Services
Valoria	Thomas	Department of Children and Families