



Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration

November 13, 2025, 10:30am-12:30pm

Virtual

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Total 69

Host/Facilitators:

Department of Children and Families (DCF) – Cristina Perez Regional Collaboration Coordinator, Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, Regional Operations Manager, Melanie Castro Regional Operations Supervisor

Presenters:

Laura M. Naredo, MS, CHC, CHPC Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of Thriving Mind South Florida (TMSF), Managing Entity (ME) for the Southern Region (SNR)

Angela Mooss, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of Behavioral Science Research Institute (BSRI)

Jack Vertovec, PhD, Senior Research Associate of Behavioral Science Research Institute (BSRI)

Full Attendee List is Provided in Appendix A

I. CALL TO ORDER

Cristina Perez called to order the Southern Region Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 10:30am on November 13, 2025. This meeting was held virtually.

II. WELCOME

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

Cristina Perez, DCF SAMH, Regional Collaboration Coordinator

Laura M. Naredo, MS, CHC, CHPC Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of TMSF

Angela Mooss, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of BSRI

Jack Vertovec, PhD, Senior Research Associate of BSRI



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III. PRESENTATION

Angela Mooss and Jack Vertovec, from BSRI, provided a presentation on the “Results for the Southern Region Triennial Need Assessment” and Laura M. Naredo, provided a brief overview of the services offered by TMSF, background information on the Managing Entities’ (ME) contractual obligation to perform a Triennial Needs Assessment, and how the assessment results are incorporated into the ME’s Enhancement Plan.

Laura M. Naredo provided an overview including what is a ME and, on the services, offered by TMSF, the ME for SNR. Laura explained how the state requires the ME to complete a needs assessment every three years. TMSF has partnered, for the first time, with Behavioral Science Research Institute (BSRI) staff Angela and Jack, who provided a review of the assessment research that was completed during the summer months and the findings that were produced from that assessment. These needs assessments results contribute to an annual Enhancement Plan that is submitted to the Department by the ME.

Angela Mooss shared key findings among survey and focus groups consisting of community stakeholders in the southern region. The findings, as summarized by BSRI, included: Lack of awareness of services by the community & existing stigma in accessing services, accessing services only after a crisis, a need for additional care coordination, a need for additional children’s services, increased suicide prevention, increased peer support and peer utilization in Behavioral Health settings and lack of affordable housing.

Jack Vertovec shared the Community Engagement Themes of the Town Hall Findings.

Questions and Answers:

Courtney Phillips, Health Care District of Palm Beach County: Thanked the presenters and asked how the findings of the assessment will be utilized.

Laura M. Naredo, Thriving Mind South Florida: provided a brief explanation on how the assessment results were utilized to respond in four key areas which were included in TMSF Enhancement Plan. These areas included: Additional funding for Housing, Children’s Respite Services, Children’s Crisis Unit (CSU) in South Miami-Dade and Monroe County and for additional Evidence-Based Training in Peer/recovery systems, the Daily Living Activities (DLA) -20, and The Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model

Angela Mooss, Behavioral Science Research Institute: stated they met with TMSF every other week with updates and pressing issues.

Jack Vertovec, Behavioral Science Research Institute: mentioned more details contained in the report have more specific and detailed key recommendations that came from the focus groups and town halls discussions. He shared that he has already noticed certain



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recommendations have already been implemented, in some way, such as the resource guide the ME recently updated and published. Shared that as internal evaluators he was impressed with the response.

Laura M. Naredo, Thriving Mind South Florida: mentioned how the findings don't end at the Enhancement Plan but also continue to inform the ME's Strategic Plan, a three (3) to five (5)-year plan, that includes shared goals, marketing materials, access to services or creating new services like in previous years. Laura provided the example of the "Living Room" Model, at New Horizons CMHC, which came to fruition through the ME's previous Enhancement and Strategic Plans. Expressed that TMSF will continue to take the findings from each Triennial Needs Assessment to craft and improve on services within the community.

Courtney Phillips, Health Care District of Palm Beach County: How do we bridge the gap between Silos an IT integration between social systems and health care systems including school systems?

Angela Mooss, Behavioral Science Research Institute: Mentioned that while IT Integration did not present as a specific challenge for Miami Dade, during this Triennial Needs Assessment, from the work that they have done in other areas, they acknowledged that IT integration is a challenge that exist. She reiterated that the biggest gap identified in Miami Dade was the lack of available units that could be rented at a price that someone on a disability or on a fixed income could afford that also offered services on site.

Dr. Mari C Rodriguez, Iman's Light Foundation: How do we access some funds to continue to provide services that are being requested by schools and parents?

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH: mentioned this is the purpose for these Regional Behavioral Health Interagency collaboratives, to discuss items like these. Advised that for the upcoming year, 2026, we will be discussing the creation of work groups or specialized subcommittees to be able to do a deep dive into some of these areas.

The presentation was shared with all members on the Southern Regional Collaborative email distribution list. In addition, the contact information for presenters were included in the presentation.

IV. IMPACTFUL MOMENTS

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH, shared a Southern Regional success story from two providers who wanted to highlight the work being performed at Thriving Mind South Florida,



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the Managing Entity. Providers who shared their collaborative relationship with the ME included the Guidance/Care Center from Monroe County and New Horizon's Community Mental Health Center in Miami-Dade County.

V. NEXT STEPS AND 2026 VISION

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH, shared the vision of the SNR Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaborative (RBHIC), for the year 2026, emphasizing a region-specific approach that will allow us to set goals, outcomes, and measurable actions for our counties. The RBHIC will begin forming sub-collaboratives to address regional gaps identified in 2025. Quarterly full collaborative meetings will return to in-person sessions at the downtown DCF Visionary Conference Room with an emphasis on networking. A virtual option will be included to accommodate those who cannot attend in-person.

The team is currently determining presenters for the 2026 quarterly meetings, and the agenda will be released once finalized. Members are encouraged to submit topic and presenter suggestions to snr.samh.support@myflfamilies.com by November 30th.

A future survey will be distributed to gather additional topic ideas and areas of interest.

The collaborative will continue its overarching goal of "Strengthening Community Networks and Cross-Agency Collaboration," which is aligned with the Commission's report.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

An opportunity was provided for Public Comment.

No public comment.

VII. CLOSING REMARKS

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio thanked everyone for attending.

Cristina Perez announced the next Meeting will be held on January 27, 2026, 10:30 am- 12:30 pm in person, the DCF RHODE Building at 401 NW 2 Avenue, Miami, FL. 33182, N1007, Visionary Conference Room, with a virtual option. FAR notice and registration information will be distributed.



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VIII ADJOURN

Cristina Perez adjourned the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 11:24 a.m.

Appendix A

Perez, Cristina	Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse & Mental Health
Castro, Melanie	Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse & Mental Health
Moosse, Angela	Behavioral Science Research Institute
Laura M. Naredo, MS, CHC, CHPC	Thriving Mind South Florida
Jack Vertovec, BSRI (Unverified)	Behavioral Science Research Institute
Kemper, Jesse	All Agencies
Tercero, Josue I.	CHI
Anderson, Diveka	Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse & Mental Health
Swann, Tarrah	Community Health of South Florida, Inc.
Quiroga, Pamela	Carelon Behavioral Health
Lisa Jenders	The Village South
Niurka Rolo	Citrus Health Network, Inc.
Busby, April M	DCF SAMH
Gillis, Christy	Department of Children and Families
Patrick Heidemann	Disability Rights Florida
Jones, Chelsey L	Optum/UHC
PV (Unverified)	Police
Fulford, Alison	Department of Juvenile Justice
Aley Castano	Jackson Health System
Taja T. Rivers	The Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Feuer, Aaron	11th Judicial Circuit
Amanda Gill, MS	Thriving Mind South Florida
Harrison, Tonya1	DCF
Thompson, Taquria	Florida Department of Education
Emy Sirota	Jackson Behavioral Health Hospital
Tamara, Peer Bridger, POTM	Fresh Start of Miami-Dade, Inc.



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Olowodola, Simisola J	Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County, Office of Community Health and Planning
Salazar, Robert	Carelon Behavioral Health
Linda Martinez	Citrus Family Care Network
Joanna Cardwell, MSW, CHC	Thriving Mind
Deborah Watson	Passageway Residence
Gus The MMH Fight	The MMH Fight
James, Harlee	DCF
Soto, Maricarmen	Community Health of South FL
Marissa Rios	Citrus Health Network
Coffey, Tim	11th Judicial Circuit
Melanie Brown-Woofter	Florida Behavioral Health Association
Perez, Claudio	Agape Network
Orestes Garcia	Banyan Health Systems
Hill, Brad	Department of Children and Families
Denice Frieden	NAMI Miami-Dade County, Inc
Tormo, Jesus	Agape Network
Alisa Surenskaya, MSW	Thriving Mind South Florida
Michelle Raines	HCA Florida Aventura Hospital
Miosotis Falcon	Nicklaus Children's Hospital
Dominguez, Amanda (CSD)	Miami-Dade County
Islem Pardinias	The Village South/Westcare
Leyden Diaz	Nicklaus Children's Hospital
Caceres, Bianca	Community Health of South Florida, Inc.
Maria Guajardo, MFT	Thriving Mind
Barnett, Michael	Carelon Behavioral Health
Suzy Castro	Nicklaus Children's Hospital
Monique F. Peele	Children's Medical Services
Ashton Sanchez	Citrus Family Care Network
Jennifer Johnson	Florida Behavioral Health Association
Rabbito, Lauren F. (CSD)	Miami-Dade County Community Services Department
Sanabria, Melissa	DCF
Hansen, Cassandra	Community Health of South Florida
Aristizabal, Alejandro	Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court - Jail Diversion Programs



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Courtney Phillips	Health Care District of Palm Beach County
Anglade, Lesline	Department of Children and Families
Patrice Tilson	Jackson Behavioral Health Hospital
Dr. Mari C Rodriguez	Imans's Light Foundation
Sofia Adams	HCA Aventura
Adilen Cruz	Passageway Residence
Gaines, Idris	DCF
Aley Castano	Jackson Health System
Amy Beeler	Guidance/Care Center, Inc.
Gerardo Alvarez	St. Luke's