



SunCoast Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration

November 4, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Virtual

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: 74

Full Attendee List is Provided in Appendix A

Hosts/Facilitators: Erinn Izykowski, Regional Operations Supervisor, SunCoast Region; Melissa Leslie, Suncoast Regional Operations Manager, SunCoast Region

Presenter: Lizette Tabares, LCSW, Vice President of Behavioral Health Services, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network

I. CALL TO ORDER

Erinn Izykowski, Regional Operations Supervisor (ROS), 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 (RBHIC) at 10:01 a.m. on November 4, 2025.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Melissa Leslie, Regional Operations Manager, SCR SAMH Program Office, DCF

- Housekeeping
- Introductions to SAMH staff and Central Florida Behavioral Health Network (CFBHN) presenter.

III. PRESENTATION- Managing Entity, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network

Lizette Tabares, Vice President of Behavioral Health Services, CFBHN

- CFBHN Needs Assessment, conducted every three years for SCR and Circuit 10 (Central Region) and acts as a roadmap for growth.
- CFBHN is the largest Managing Entity (ME) by population size; and the second largest by land mass in Florida, serving 14 counties (Circuits 6, 10, 12, 13, and 20) with the smallest



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county being Glades (just over 13,000 residents). CFBHN serves the largest number of uninsured and underinsured individuals in Florida.

- CFBHN submits approximately 50% of all statewide SAMH data.
- Strategies to decrease waitlists: daily reviews, monitoring bed utilization, embedding behavioral health consultants with community organizations.
- Opioid settlement funding: 40% increase in funding over the last three years, leading to expanded outreach and engagement.
- Peer workforce expansion: adding new Recovery Community Organizations, peer certification training, and ongoing technical assistance; monthly Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) learning communities, and weekly support meetings.
- Needs assessment results: 175 respondents—94% reported services improved their quality of life, but stigma, financial constraints, and transportation remain major barriers.
- Housing initiatives: Jersey Commons project in Polk County supporting high utilizers.
- Goals identified in the Needs Assessment include reducing restrictive funding for high utilizers, expanding public awareness campaigns, and expand social media efforts to reduce stigma through help-seeking storytelling and education.

CFBHN Presentation Questions:

- 1) **Ashley Neal, Live Tampa Bay** (via Q&A chat): Do you have information on any of the upcoming peer trainings that you mentioned?
 - a) **Lizette Tabares, VP of Behavioral Health Services, CFBHN**: Will get more information to you regarding peer trainings.

IV. IMPACTFUL MOMENTS

Erinn Izykowski, Regional Operations Supervisor, SCR SAMH Program Office, DCF

- Shared two impactful stories shared about the ME, highlighting themes of supporting timely, accessible, and high-quality services.

V. NEXT STEPS AND 2026 VISION

Melissa Leslie, Regional Operations Manager, SCR SAMH Program Office, DCF

Erinn Izykowski, Regional Operations Supervisor, SCR SAMH Program Office, DCF



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- Over the past sessions we have had many organizations attend hearing multiple perspectives in identifying and addressing ongoing opportunities within the behavioral health system at the local level to Improve the accessibility, availability, and quality of behavioral health services. Statewide RBHIC have identified themes of service accessibility and capacity, funding flexibility, need for more housing, and increasing peer support services.
- Supportive and Intensive Behavioral Health services which are relating to housing: The Agency is preparing a 1915(i)-state plan amendment to add housing support services to Medicaid services. The waiver will improve the expired “Housing Pilot” by including an enrolment and reimbursement option for supportive housing service providers. This initiative will help address housing support, which Lizette highlighted in her presentation as a top need. Housing has been identified as a significant area of need not only within SCR but across the state and nation.
- The Agency has been working to develop a tiered rate structure for Statewide Inpatient Psychiatric Program (SIPP) services. The rate structure will reflect individuals’ disease acuity, and the resources needed for their care. The Agency expects to request additional appropriations for the new rates during the 2026 legislative session.
- The January RBHIC meeting will feature Courtney Whitt, Ph.D., Executive Director, of the Florida Center for Behavioral Health Workforce, through the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences at the University of South Florida. She will be discussing the work on workforce development and other exciting initiatives underway through USF.
- January RBHIC is a hybrid meeting at the Manatee County Goodwill, located at 2705 51ST Ave E, Bradenton, FL 34203, where the May 2024 RBHIC was held.
- 2026 RBHIC meetings will focus on tailored regional perspectives, how we can identify ways to strengthen community networks and cross-agency collaboration for better access to care, have availability of the needed services, and maintain quality behavioral health care. Are there areas that could be better supported by development of time-limited sub-collaboratives?
- Recommendations or ideas for sub-collaboratives:
 - *Are there any promising practices you’ve seen that could be scaled up or sustained within your area of work?*
 - *What concrete measures or indicators are you currently using, or could begin using, to track progress and success over time?*



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- Lunch and Learn sessions: In between RBHIC meetings, there are statewide Lunch and Learn sessions. Two have been held to date, Dr. Jay Reeve and Bikers Against Child Abuse, with session coming up in Dec. 2025 and 2026 (March, June, Sept., Dec.)
- We will continue to share success stories, begin to think on collaborative practices/initiatives across agencies- whether your own or other great work between agencies you have heard about.
- After this meeting, we will send a post-survey, we encourage you to take the few minutes to fill out. It helps drive the meetings and ensures that we continue to make the RBHICs meaningful and actionable. Be on the lookout for the survey link.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comment
- Participant questions:

(1) **Timothy Macsuga, Universal Health Services, Inc:** Quick question about the tiered rate structure. I remember a Milliman study in 2024—has there been any update?

(a) **Melissa Leslie:** That was information from AHCA presented at the Commission. We'll take that for action and get back to you with an update, if AHCA is not on the call.

(b) **Devona "DD" Pickle, Chief of Medicaid Policy, ACHA:** Will check on that and follow up after RBHIC.

(2) **John Cornett, Behavioral Health Consultant, DCF:** Hello, will the survey be presented to the alliance meetings since they might have some good feedback on practices that are taking place within each circuit and able to identify some potential needs they are identifying.

(a) **Erinn Izykowski:** The surveys are distributed through this mailing list, but we encourage you to share themes with your Alliance groups and invite them to join our distribution for the RBHICS, if interested. You can act as the conduit to ensure that all that need to be included or themes that need to be brought to the meetings are capture.



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VII. CLOSING REMARKS

Melissa Leslie, Regional Operations Manager, SCR SAMH Program Office, DCF

- Thank you for participating, contact information for the Suncoast Regional Operations Manager and SCR SAMH mailbox was provided.
- The next scheduled quarterly meeting for the Suncoast Region will take place **on January 28, 2025, at 1pm.** A calendar invite will be shared later, an email with today's presentation and survey link will be sent out.
- Link to updated Baker Act Training Manual, Florida Behavioral Health Workforce website, infographic for Behavioral Health Ombudsman, and link for Office of Economic Self-Sufficiency/SNAP benefits was provided in chat.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:42am EST by Erinn Izykowski.



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APPENDIX A

Alice	Weger	Collier County Sheriff Office
Alison	Fulford	Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
Alicia	Hyatte	Department of Veterans Affairs
Arlene	Tracy	Sarasota Sheriff Office
Amanda	Marker	Universal Health Services, Inc.
Amanda	Medina	Pasco County School District
Amanda	Sciarrotta-Farell	Pinellas County Sheriff Office
April	Busby	Department of Children and Families (DCF), Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) Program
Ashley	Neal	Live Tampa Bay
Ashley	Paquin	Live Tampa Bay
Asta	Trinh	DCF SAMH
Brad	Hill	Ombudsman for Behavioral Health
Brianna	Dumas	Florida Department of Health
Brianna	Wolf	DJJ
Brittany	Miyawa	HCA Florida Healthcare
Bryan	Clark	Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Christie	Sparks	Florida Health
Christine	Didion	Area Agency on Aging- Pasco-Pinellas
Christopher	Spall	Optum Behavioral Health
Clara	Reynolds	Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, Inc.
Carole	Matyas	Sunshine Health
Carolyn	Hix	DCF, Behavioral Health Consultant
Darryl	Henderson	Recovery Epicenter Foundation



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Derek	Mc Carron	Gracepoint Wellness
Desiree	Rodriguez	Children's Network of Hillsborough
Devona "D.D"	Pickle	Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA)
Diana	Cardano	DCF, Behavioral Health Consultant
Diveka	Anderson	DCF SAMH
Donna	Sicilian	Pinellas County Schools
Doug	Griffin	No identified agency
Janet	Blair	Refugee Services, DCF
Jared	Craig	ACHA
Jarrett	Ballo	DJJ
Jesse	Kemper	Office of Children's Behavioral Health Ombudsman
Jessica	Warnick	Aetna
Joe	Dmitrovic	Floridians for Recovery
John	Cornett	DCF, Behavioral Health Consultant
Joseph	Belardo	City of Marco Island Police Department
Kimberly	Kutch	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Kimberly	Williams	Children's Network of Hillsborough
Kristin	Mathre	Suncoast Center
Laura	Carson	Florida Department of Health
Linda	Macdonald	Florida Behavioral Health Association
Lindsey	Votour	NorthPoint Behavioral Health
Lisa	Baird	Humana
Lisa	Henshaw	Florida Department of Elder Affairs
Lizette	Tabares	Central Florida Behavioral Health Network Inc.



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Lucas	French	DCF SAMH
Maria	Ellis	Collier County Public School
Maricela	Morado	Area Agency on Aging
Marlaina	Satcher	Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County
Mark	Miller	DCF
Mary Ann	Guerra	David Lawrence Behavioral Health Centers
Melanie	Brown Woofert	Florida Behavioral Health Association
Michael	Licciardiello	ACHA
Michelle Lynn	Hudson	Pasco County School District
Molly	Beattie	Gracepoint
Monica	Gonzalez	Hillsborough Recovery Coalition
Patrick	Heidemann	Disability Rights Florida
Rebecca	Albert	Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County
Robin	Greene	Florida Department of Elder Affairs
Shaleeah	Marshall	DCF SAMH
Sherry	Wenzel	Lee County School District
Tara	Bryant	Optum
Timothy	Macsuga	Universal Health Services, Inc
Tina	Neff-Long	DCF SAMH
Tonya	Harrison	Office of Children's Behavioral Health Ombudsman
Toni	Fixico	DCF SAMH
Valoria	Thomas	DCF SAMH