



Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration

April 14, 2026, 10:30am-12:30pm

Hybrid

RHODE Building, 401 NW 2 Avenue, Miami, FL 33128 Visionary Room, North 10th Floor

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: In -Person – 48

Virtual – 55

Total - 103

Full Attendee List is Provided in Appendix A

Host/Facilitators: Department of Children and Families (DCF) Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH)– Cristina Perez, Regional Collaboration Coordinator, (RCC), Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, Regional Operations Manager, Melanie Castro, Regional Operations Supervisor

Presenters:

- Healthy Me Program – Citrus Health Network, Lisa Tamburello, LMHC, CPP
- Iman’s Light Foundation - Dr. Mari Carmen Rodriguez

I. CALL TO ORDER

Cristina Perez called to order the Southern Region Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 10:30am on April 14, 2025. This meeting was held in a hybrid format.

II. WELCOME

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, Regional Operations Manager for the DCF Office of SAMH, welcomed the attendees.



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III. REGIONAL 2026 ACTION PLAN

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio opened the meeting by sharing that future quarterly collaborative meeting dates have been scheduled and “save the date” invites have been sent out. She noted that anyone who did not receive placeholders for the July and October meetings should reach out using the email provided in the presentation. Additional details and registration links will be shared as the date approaches. It was also confirmed that quarterly full collaborative meetings will be held in person at the Downtown DCF Office in the Visionary Conference Room for the remainder of the year.

The next statewide Lunch and Learn series was discussed, with the next series scheduled for June 2026. It was mentioned that the most recent Lunch and Learn covered the Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA) Medicaid Managed Care Plans.

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio reiterated that the purpose of the collaborative is to identify gaps in the regional system of care, while also encouraging participants to share positive and impactful moments that can be highlighted to the group. At the same time, identifying gaps and areas for improvement remains a priority.

Regional Workgroups, starting with Early Education Prevention Workgroup, were introduced, explaining that workgroups will follow a project management-style approach. These smaller workgroups will focus on diving deeper into identified regional gaps. Cristina, as the Regional Collaborative Coordinator, will support planning, scheduling, and documenting the workgroup’s progress. Lourdes emphasized the need for participants to volunteer to lead and actively engage in the workgroups for recommendations to be developed. These recommendations will be included in quarterly and annual reports shared with Department leadership and may ultimately be presented to the Florida Legislature.

Participants were asked to consider their agency’s perspective or personal expertise during the presentations and to be prepared to volunteer for upcoming workgroups. Additional discussions will be held, to identify additional priority gaps to focus on, at the July Collaborative meeting. Attendees were reminded about the general SAMH inbox for questions and encouraged them to share it with others who may benefit.



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Resource tables following the Regional Collaborative were introduced during this meeting.

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio closed her remarks by recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month before transitioning to the presenters.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

Citrus Health Network – Healthy Me Program

Lisa Tamburello presented the Healthy Me Program, from Citrus Health Network, emphasizing prevention as the foundation of behavioral health.

Ms. Tamburello highlighted the importance of reaching children early greatly reduces the likelihood of addiction and negative behavioral outcomes. The program serves over 5,000 youth across 14 Miami-Dade County schools, primarily focusing on elementary-aged students. Students participate in weekly sessions (30–45 minutes over 12 weeks) using interactive methods such as group discussions, journaling, games, and videos.

The program includes a continuum of care: prevention education, parent education, community capacity building, problem identification and referral, and intervention services. In addition, the program focuses on developing self-esteem, personal safety, positive relationships, mental health awareness, healthy habits, and goal setting. Positive outcomes include improved student knowledge and high satisfaction among teachers and parents.

Contact Information for the program was shared with the RCC distribution list at the conclusion of the meeting.



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Iman's Light Foundation – Dr. Mari Carmen Rodriguez

Dr. Mari Carmen Rodriguez presented on current substance abuse trends, emphasizing the dangers of fentanyl and synthetic drugs. The Foundation's mission includes prevention education, advocacy, grief support, mentorship, Narcan distribution, and community awareness initiatives such as the "One Pill Can Kill" campaign.

Ms. Rodriguez highlighted the current risks associated with vaping, including various disguised devices and fentanyl-laced products, increased cannabis potency and risks to youth, including cognitive impairment and addiction, and additional concerns included THC-infused edibles that resemble candy or cookies, and synthetic cannabinoids that are unregulated and untraceable during drug screenings.

Ms. Rodriguez emphasized the importance of critical thinking and emotional intelligence and how these critical components are not fully developed in children and adolescents. Ms. Rodriguez prevention education includes teaching youth how critical thinking helps evaluate risks and make informed decisions and how emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, communication, and commitment to positive behaviors. These skills reduce reliance on harmful coping mechanisms such as substance use.

Contact Information for the program was shared with the RCC distribution list at the conclusion of the meeting.

Both presenters reinforced the importance of early intervention, comprehensive education, and collaboration between schools, families, and community organizations.

V. FACILITATED Q&A

Question for Citrus Health Network, Healthy Me – How can a family participate in the Healthy Me services?



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Response from Citrus Health Network, Lisa Tamburello - They would need to attend one of the schools or centers we service, one on one services are not available at this time.

Question for Iman Light Foundation, Armond E Johnson – Do you provide the Narcan cabinets?

Response from Iman Light Foundation, Dr. Mari Carmen Rodriguez – Yes, we distribute the cabinets in about 20 different centers. We are a resource foundation, we do group therapy, and we have about 20 schools in Miami Dade and Broward that we work with and we look forward to obtaining more funds and are open to sponsorship and further collaborations.

Thriving Mind South Florida, Alisa Surenskaya – shared the SHAC School Health Advisory Council

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio reiterated the importance of the creation of the workgroup and their impact along with attendance in Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration. If it was asked if representatives from Miami-Dade Schools and Department of Education were in attendance in person or online.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio opened discussion and encouraged attendees to begin thinking about key gaps that should be discussed at the next quarterly meeting in July. Reference to the 2025 Thriving Mind Needs Assessment Findings was provided and several areas were highlighted for consideration, including:

- The need to increase supportive housing options
 - The importance of better defining the role of Peer Specialists and addressing stigma
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- Opportunities to expand public awareness of 988 and suicide prevention resources

Miami Dade County, Amanda Domiguez, - shared information community partner networking event on May 27th, 2026, as well as the opportunity to reach out to be included in mailing list for Behavioral Health Advisory Board meetings.

Oxford House, Erin Bigler - discussed Oxford Houses and their role in the community as potential supportive housing options.

Key Club House, Amy McClellan – expressed interest in joining work group for Supportive Housing

Fellowship House, Rosemary Smith Hoel - expressed interest in joining work group for Supportive Housing

Armond E Johnson - expressed interest in joining work group for Supportive Housing

Agape Network, Alexandra Godoy - shared information regarding housing supports and services provided by Agape and expressed interest in joining the workgroup for Supportive Housing.

Citrus Health Network, Maria Alonso (via online) – suggested Carrefour which operates supportive housing be engaged and included in the discussion

Mount Sinai Medical Center, Mary Jaramillo – expressed consideration be given, if the opportunity to expand of the 988-campaign presented itself, to tailor an opportunity for specific “operators” to have expertise in the autism population and how to properly deliver information. Expressed interest in a work group for this topic.

Jackson South Medical Center, Norma Vivanco Perez – shared the importance of including valuable information on 988 and the mobile response team while discharge planning which she currently implements herself, but also in educating the parents and families. Expressed interest in joining the Early education workgroup.

Carelon Behavioral Health, Robert Salazar – shared that peer counseling is a Medicaid covered service

Cristina Perez closed public comment at 11:48am



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VII. CLOSING REMARKS & NEXT STEPS

Cristina Perez reiterated information on the crisis response system cards. Business-sized cards and brochures were available at a resource table during the meeting.

Lourdes-Dorado Rubio shared an impactful moment provided by Lesline Anglade-Dorleans, Child Protection Director from the DCF Office of Family and Child Well Being.

A recount of the Community Crisis Continuum Resource Fair hosted in February 2026 was completed. It was considered a successful turnout with 260 attendees.

Cesar Lemoine was introduced, as the Recovery Oriented Quality Improvement Specialist (ROQIS), for the Southern region.

Cesar Lemoine shared a brief overview of the Southern Region Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Subcommittee and its ongoing work. This subcommittee focuses on improving access to, and the quality of MAT services, by bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience, providers, and community partners. The subcommittee aims to turn collaboration into actionable solutions, such as identifying service gaps and sharing resources.

It was noted that the April 1st MAT subcommittee meeting had strong engagement, with over 70 participants in attendance, which included a presentation by Freebee, a free rideshare service. This resource can help individuals access care, medications, and other essential needs by being able to ask for a ride free of charge.

Cesar Lemoine encouraged anyone interested to reach out and get involved. The group meets on the first Wednesday of each month, with the next meeting scheduled for May 6, 2026.

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio thanked all attendees for their participation.

Cristina Perez announced the next Meeting will be held on **July 14, 2026, 10:30 am-12:30 pm** in person, with a virtual option, FAR notice and registration information will be distributed.



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VIII. REGIONAL RESOURCE NETWORKING (IN PERSON)

The following community partners had resource tables at the Regional Resource Networking event. Attendees were invited to walk around the room and visit all the different tables and network with each other.

Citrus NAVIGATE program – The NAVIGATE Program is an early intervention program designed to help young adults navigate their first episode of psychosis and get back on track with their lives. By combining individualized therapy, family education, psychiatric services, and supported employment and education services, our team empowers clients to overcome challenges and achieve functional recovery.

Oxford House – Oxford Houses are self-supported recovery housing

AGAPE Network- AGAPE Network is a comprehensive behavioral health and social services organization dedicated to supporting children, adults, and families in our community. They provide outpatient and Inpatient mental health, and substance use treatment, prevention and intervention services, and supportive programs designed to promote healing, stability, and long-term recovery. AGAPE’s mission is to deliver compassionate, culturally responsive care that strengthens individuals and families across all stages of life.

Fellowship House - Fellowship House serves adults living with serious and persistent mental health conditions, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders. Their programs are available to individuals in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, offering a full range of community-based services designed to meet people where they are—promoting dignity, empowerment, and meaningful progress at every stage of recovery.

Mount Sinai Medical Center - Mount Sinai is committed to offering easy access to a network of multispecialty offices in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. The medical center operates 14 facilities, including 3 emergency centers, providing the community 24/7 emergency care access and same or next day appointments for primary care and a variety of specialties.



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Citrus Health Network Prevention - Citrus Health Network is one of the largest mental and behavioral health providers in South Florida, serving adults and children across the spectrum of behavioral health needs.

Department of Children and Families Child Welfare- The mission of the Florida Department of Children and Families is to work in partnership with local communities to protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency.

IX. ADJOURN

Cristina Perez adjourned the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 12:30 p.m.

Appendix A

Cristina Perez	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Lourdes Dorado Rubio	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Melanie Castro	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Asta Trinh	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Arienne Diaz	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Valoria Thomas	Department of Children and Families, SAMH



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Sandra McQueen	Fresh Start of Miami Dade, Inc
Rene Hasbun	Larkin Community Hospital
Williams, Candace M	Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County
Gillis, Christy	Department of Children and Families
Rabbito, Lauren F. (CSD)	Miami Dade County CSD
Lemoine, Cesar	Department of Children and Families
Harrison, Tonya1	DCF
Perez, Claudio	Agape Network
James, Harlee	DCF
Maria Alonso	Citrus Health Network
Lampon, Brenda (Office of the Mayor)	Miami Dade County
Maturell, Ana	CHI
Swann, Tarrah	Community Health of South Florida, Inc
Patrick Heidemann	Disability Rights Florida
Pontrelli, Nicole	Agency for Healthcare Administration
Denice Frieden	NAMI Miami-Dade County, Inc.
Maureen Dunleavy	Guidance/Care Center, Inc.
Joseph, Shaina	Agency for Health Care Administration
Marcella Cruz	Jewish Community Services of South Florida
Beaulieu, Tina	Simply Health
Kadiya Lewis	Citrus Family Care Network
Austin, Christopher	Florida Department of Children and Families
Marissa Rios	Citrus Health Network
Amanda Gill, MS	Thriving Mind South Florida
Tracy Grey	Centene
Kemper, Jesse	Florida Department of Children and Families
Laurie Gerhard	Retired
Soto, Maricarmen	CHI
Lina Menendez	Epilepsy Alliance Florida
Mira, Lisette	CHI
Bryant, Tara J	Optum
Gustavo Mansilla	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Nguyen, Diana	Community Health of South Florida
Susan Holtzman	NAMI Miami-Dade County
Perez Valenzuela, Carmen	Molina Healthcare



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Dagmara Dupuy	Larkin Community Hospital
Taja T. Rivers	The Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Jennifer Johnson	Florida Behavioral Health Association
Busby, April M	DCF RCC
Alexandra Schwartzman	Larkin Community Hospital
Hansen, Cassandra	Community Health of South Florida
Michelle 'Mich' Fernandez, NCPS, CRPS-A, RCP, CEI	South Florida Wellness Network
Hill, Brad	Department of Children and Families
Sequeira Solorzano, Carlos	DCF-SAMH
Macsuga, Timothy	UHS
Thompson, Taquria	Florida Department of Education
Nivia Dexter, MBA	Thriving Mind South Florida
Andujar, Laurinda	Florida Department of Children and Families/ SAMH- Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Orlando Castro	Larkin
Jan Thoman	South Florida Opioid Alliance
Silvera-Cooper, Monique K.	CHI
Anderson, Diveka	Department of Children and Families
Lucero Condor	Fellowship House
Joquetta Batista	Fresh Start DCF
Doriliz DeJesus	Fellowship House
Katina Smith	CHI
Lisa Tamburello	Citrus Health Network
Orestes Garcia	Banyan
Tamara Burch	Fresh Start of Miami-Dade, Inc.
Cristy Martinez	Fellowship House
Rosemary Smith Hoel	Fellowship House
Erin Bigler	Oxford House, Inc
Marcia V Stadler	Fresh Start of Miami Dade Inc
Ana Mandelli-Lopez	DCF
Carmen Le is	Citrus FCN
Taja Rivers	The Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Adilen Cruz	Passageway Residence of Dade County
Karina alas	AMC psychiatric services
David Cordero	AMC Psychiatric Services



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Maria Guajardo	Thriving Mind
Tracy Rodriguez-Miller	Thriving Mind South Florida
Adrianna Cera	ABCs for Success LLC
Brionnah Robinson	DCF
Josue Tercero	Chi
Norma Vivanco Perez	Jackson south
Genesis Espinosa	CHI
Brandy Blackwood	Banyan Health System
Lauren Vasconez	Citrus Health Network
Andel Nicasio	Albizu University
Robert Salazar	Carelon Behavioral Health
Rachel Aron	HCA Florida Aventura Hospital
Jennifer Buruca	Charlie Health
Risa Schwartz	Mount Sinai behavioral health
Gerardo	Alvarez
Kallay Cutler	CRT
Co-responders Team	Miami Police
Amy McClellan	Key Clubhouse, Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
Nabila Concepcion	DCF
Samuel Hernandez	Agape
Armond E Johnson	Iman's Light
Alisa Surenskaya	Thriving Mind South Florida
Mary Jaramillo Mangia	Mount Sinai Medical Center
Alejandra Godoy	Agape Network
Amanda Dominguez	Miami-Dade County
Martha Meszaros	Citrus Health Network
Mario Jardon	Citrus Health Network