

September 19, 2019 Meeting Summary

9:00am

Welcome

Secretary Chad Poppell from the Department of Children and Families was the guest chair for the meeting, and he welcomed everyone. He emphasized the importance of everyone working together to decrease deaths by suicide. Secretary Poppell shared that everyone who joined via phone were on silent mode. He acknowledged the following individuals on the call: Dr. Gene Cash with the Florida Association of School Psychologists, Missy Lee with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Northwest Region, Karen Annunziato and Lourdes Mata from the Southern Region. Natalie Kelly from the Florida Association of Managing Entities was present in the room. He introduced First Lady Casey DeSantis.

First Lady Casey DeSantis

First Lady Casey DeSantis stated that there were 3,552 deaths by suicide in 2018. She stated that there can be a focus on data-driven interventions and prevention efforts. She spoke on the importance of breaking down silos and working together on mental health and suicide.

Agency Updates

- Secretary Mary Mayhew, Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA): Systems of care/ Medicaid challenges: need updating care, support, and evaluation of the system. How well is Florida implementing the continuum of services to children? Access to and continuation of care/ gaps in care. Using telehealth and other technology to address suicide in rural communities or communities impacted by disaster.
- Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees, Department of Health (DOH): Expand the Office for Suicide Prevention. DOH will be sending out strike teams. Focus on evidence-based programs such as Zero Suicide. Encourage schools to become Suicide Prevention Certified. Florida now has the National Violent Death Reporting System (known as the FLVDRS). Focus on maternal mortality and suicide.
- Secretary Simone Marsteller, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ): DJJ mental health staff assess for suicide risk. They monitor juveniles with close supervision. Probation officers are now taking a gatekeeper training that rolled out last week. The idea is to train individuals in the community using the gatekeeper concept.
- Executive Director Danny Burgess, Department of Veterans Affairs: The Department does a great job on training individuals to put on the uniform but does not teach them how to take it off. Nationally 22 veterans die by suicide daily and the number might be higher. A new Florida Veterans Hotline has been established. The number is 1-800-MyFLVet and this will connect veterans to peers. Emphasized the importance of using peers with veterans.
- Commissioner Rick Swearingen, Department of Law Enforcement: 146 officers died by suicide in 2018. Stress Management and Mental Health (1 hour) training is available online (<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/FCJEI/Online-Training/Stress-Management-and-Mental-Health>) as well as the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program.

- Secretary Richard Prudom, Department of Elder Affairs: Focus on socialization of older adults. Implementing the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).
- Executive Director Ken Lawson, Department of Economic Opportunity: Shared a personal story about someone who died by suicide.
- Executive Director Barbara Palmer, Agency for Persons with Disabilities: Shared a personal story about someone who died by suicide. Is very interested on focusing on suicide prevention.
- Secretary Mark Inch, Department of Corrections (DOC): The view of incarceration as a disgrace, denial of membership in society, loss of privacy and control over their lives, loss of family and friends, concern over a transfer or court appeal, and the closed social system of the prison environment are all potential risk factors for inmates. Risk assessments done to all inmates. Suicide prevention policy requires health care staff to respond within one hour of any inmate who declares a mental health emergency. Inmates identified as potentially at-risk for suicide are continuously observed until assessed by health care professionals. Newly released inmates have a markedly higher risk of suicide than the general population, DOC has a policy and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Children and Families to ensure a safe transition and continuity of care.

Florida Suicide Prevention Plan

Secretary Chad Poppell (DCF): Introduced Dr. Sofia Castro and asked her to talk about the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention.

Sofia Castro shared that the Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention was created in 2007 along with this Council. The Office works with this Council on the annual report that is due the first of January of every year. It coordinates suicide prevention awareness in Florida and creates the Florida Suicide Prevention Plan. The current Plan covers 2016-2020 (a copy of this Plan was included in the folder that was provided). This Council put together a committee to create the Plan. The committee used the 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention to guide the goals and objectives. They sent a questionnaire to Managing Entities, providers and stakeholders to determine the goals. The Plan consists of 4 Strategic Directions, 7 goals, and 11 objectives. They are on page 8 of the Plan. Following the goals in the Plan on page 9 is a list of resources to support each goal. Yearly, the annual report captures the activities that providers and stakeholders implement towards each goal. Copies of the Annual report are available on DCF website. The Plan was evaluated in its 2-year implementation phase and the results were included in the 2018 Annual Report.

Similar to the previous Plan, SPCC put together a committee that focuses on creating the Florida Suicide Prevention Plan for Fiscal Year 2021-2023. The difference for the 2021-2023 Plan is that the committee is following the *Strategic Planning Approach to Suicide Prevention* which was created by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (a copy was included in everyone's folder and emailed to everyone who was on the phone). Based on the 6 steps, the committee will describe the problem of deaths by suicide in Florida by looking at data. They had their first meeting on August 29 to look at data. They will then select goals, after that they will identify risk and protective factors. Sofia asked for help from agency heads to identify goals by the end of November with interventions that can be implemented. Subsequent steps include work of the evaluation committee, then plan implementation of new plan. (The current plan

ends June 2020 and National Suicide Prevention Day is in September 2020; this will be a time to make the new plan public.) Sofia asked Rhonda to speak about the State Plan Committee.

Rhonda Jackson recognized the members of the State Plan Committee, a subgroup of the SPCC. The plan committee, which includes diverse stakeholders and subject matter experts pertaining to at risk populations, meets monthly on Thursday mornings, based on member availability. The Suicide Prevention Plan will serve as a way to connect different strategies being employed by state agencies and organizations to address suicide, such as the examples given by agency leaders: Gatekeeper training at Department of Juvenile Justice, ASIST at Department of Elder Affairs, peer support for Veterans by Department of Elder Affairs, strike teams by DOH post disaster such as the anniversary of Hurricane Michael on October 7 and data and surveillance. She stated that it is important to not just establish linkages between the work being conducted, but also to the work to be done. Addressing isolation and gaps in care. Looking at risk factors common to multiple types of violence to achieve greater impact. Finally, change happens when people find their personal responsibility in making change happen. Everyone can contribute in some way. Rhonda stated that individuals need to be challenged to do what they can as individuals, in their relationships, community and society to reduce suicide.

Sofia informed the group of another resource in the packets that focus on suicide prevention structure. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center provides guidance to states and their new tool asks for Florida to review the state infrastructure for suicide prevention (a copy was included in everyone's folder and emailed to everyone who was on the phone). They provide 6 recommendations for Florida to consider. SPCC will look at the recommendations more in-depth in a future meeting. The idea of using the tool is to check off all the green boxes. The yellow boxes are to enhance the green boxes. Sofia checked off the items that Florida currently has in place for Florida's Infrastructure. Florida does not check off all recommendations and the green boxes on page 2 of the tool are not checked off at all. The recommendations are also ones the State Plan Committee will consider when writing the Florida Suicide prevention Plan FY 2021-2023.

Closing Remarks

Secretary Poppell's closing remarks indicated there is no lack in clarity to move the needle, there must be a reduction in deaths by suicide among veterans and law enforcement officers. He indicated DCF, AHCA, and DOH and all other agencies are committed to working across the lines.

He announced that Mike Watkins from Big Bend Community Based Care, Managing Entity would speak about efforts in Northwest Region. Mike talked about success of telehealth in schools and immediate response using technologies, training teachers on mental health/suicide, and the timeliness or normal cycle time of getting help when circumstances are a crisis, anniversary of Hurricane Michael and events taking place in Gulf, Bay, and Jackson counties as community mental health is a complex issue for families such as substance use, violence, and housing, with less support services available. When asked about other needs in the areas, Mike indicated affordable housing and other resources are much needed.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:05am.

Addendum

- Dr. Sofia Castro followed up with Commissioner Rick Swearingen regarding CISM and the possibility of adding the website links to the DCF website.
- Dr. Castro will follow-up in November with state agency leaders regarding the suicide prevention goals and measurable objectives that each agency will focus on for FY 2021-2023.
- The Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council quarterly meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2019 from 1:00-3:00 at DCF Headquarters Building 6 Conference Room A (regular meeting room).