AGENDA

Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council

Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026

Item	Presenter
Call to Order	Jessica Felts
Status of Florida Suicide	Javy Passalaqua
Statewide Survey Summary for Florida's Suicide Prevention Plan	Jessica Felts
Guest Presentation: Florida State Health Improvement Plan	Jennifer Johnson, Florida Behavioral Health Association
Guest Presentation: Suicide Risk in Correctional Facilities	Dr. Adam Wasserman, Florida Department of Corrections
Public Comment	Open
Adjourn	Jessica Felts

Call to Order and Introduction of the SPCC Chair

The quarterly meeting of the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council (SPCC) was called to order at 1:03 p.m. EST on January 29th, 2026, by Jessica Felts, SAMH Suicide Prevention Coordinator with the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Roll Call, Introductions and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Felts provided the following reminder: The SPCC is dedicated to using non-stigmatizing language as a method for suicide prevention, especially as one way to promote help-seeking for those struggling with suicide-related experiences. To commemorate this dedication, meetings regularly commence with encouragement to replace the words “commit” and “complete” suicide with died by suicide, similarly to how language refers to someone who “died by heart disease” or “died from cancer”.

Chairperson Felts introduced Amanda VanLaningham as Assistant Secretary for the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health at the Department of Children and Families. Assistant Secretary VanLaningham brings extensive experience litigating cases involving substance use, mental health needs, and complex family dynamics, along with expertise in cross-system collaboration, policy development, strategic initiatives and provider management and development. Assistant Secretary VanLaningham spoke to council and marked a major priority for the 2026 calendar year, developing a new statewide suicide prevention strategic plan and strengthening suicide prevention efforts across Florida

Heather Allman, The Department’s Manager of Policy and Programs, introduced Daniela Santos, The Department’s Suicide Prevention Specialist. Ms. Santos holds a Bachelor of Public Health and a Master of Public Health from Florida State University, with a focus on health policy. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Public Health at New York Medical College with a concentration in policy and management. Her professional background includes work with the Florida State University College of Medicine as a Community Health Worker supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as experience at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital providing oversight and support for patients under Baker Act and Suicide Watch. Ms. Santos was asked to share her email address with council members.

Chairperson Felts introduced new members of council and their affiliations. Roll call was conducted for required members and delegates. Guests were invited to include their names and professional affiliation in the chat for record-keeping. There was a motion to approve September’s meeting minutes by Al Carter. The motion was seconded by Council Member Rachelle Burns. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Florida Department of Children and Families Data Overview

Javy Passalacqua, The Department's 988 Coordinator, reviewed Florida suicide data. Information included historical data, suicide death counts, leading causes of death in Florida, 988 call log information, and referrals made through 988 phone calls. Suicide prevention data is provided by Florida Department of Health, visit www.flhealthcharts.gov

Guest Speaker: Jessica Felts, Florida Department of Children and Families Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Chairperson Felts provided a year in review of activities for the Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council. Chairperson Felts spoke about the Statewide Survey and Focus Group Summary bringing attention to survey data, improvement goals as well as barriers highlighted within the survey. It was noted how the information from all sources were compiled to create a comprehensive suicide prevention strategic plan.

Guest Speaker: Jennifer Johnson, Florida Behavioral Health Association

Ms. Johnson is the Senior Director of Public Policy for Florida Behavioral Health Association. Previously Ms. Johnson worked with Department of Health and the Florida Legislature's Office on Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. Ms. Johnson and Chairperson Felts are co-chairs for the suicide prevention goal of the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). SHIP is a roadmap that guides collaborative implementation of activities to drive health improvement. Ms. Johnson was able to highlight priority areas as well as their goal of Reducing Suicide Deaths and Behaviors and some of their successes for the year 2022 to 2026.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Adam Wasserman, Florida Department of Corrections

Dr. Wasserman is the Suicide & Self-Injury Prevention Supervisor for Florida Department of Corrections. The Department of Corrections is responsible for providing comprehensive medical and mental health services to its population. Dr. Wasserman and his team track and analyze data for suicidal and self-injurious behaviors. Information is used to guide department policy and training, along with referrals and resources for incarcerated individuals. Dr. Wasserman presented historical data describing the overall Florida Department of Corrections incarcerated population,

suicide and self-injury within corrections, and discussed aftercare needs for individuals at the end of sentence.

Public Comment

Council Member Rachelle Burns, Chair of the Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition, provided a professional development opportunity for the Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference, scheduled for February 23, 2026 – February 25, 2026.

Attendee Kristin Barlow, Executive Director of Dance for Life announced that Florida's Dance for Life Suicide Awareness Gala will be held on January 2027 in Miami.

Council members and attendees discussed other topics for consideration including suicide risk by occupation, suicide risk for terminally ill individuals, and the relationship between nutrition and mental health disorders and/or suicidal behaviors.

Motion to Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Al Carter, and this motion was seconded by Dr. Ralph Cash. The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m. EST.

Minutes submitted by Daniela Santos.

Florida Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council (SPCC)

Representing	Appointed Official	Delegate
Statewide Office for Suicide Prevention	Jessica Felts	
Florida Association of School Psychologists	Dr. Gene Cash	
Florida Sheriffs Association	Matt Dunagan	Allie McNair
Florida Initiative of Suicide Prevention	Paul Jaquith	
Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition	Rachelle Burns	Steve Roggenbaum
American Foundation of Suicide Prevention	Wendy Thompson	Courtney Hadl / Angelic Conn
Florida School Board Association	Karen Brill	
National Council for Suicide Prevention	Dr. Dan Reidenberg	Jennifer Owens
AARP Florida	*Vacant*	
Florida Behavioral Health Association	Melanie Brown Woofter	Jennifer Johnson / Ute Gazioch
Florida Counseling Association	Dr. Carly Paro	
NAMI Florida	Carali McLean	Suzanne Mailloux
Florida Medical Association	Dr. Ryan Hall	
Florida Osteopathic Medical Association	Michelle Winn Larson	
Florida Psychiatric Society	Dr. Joseph Edward Thornton	
Florida Psychological Association	Dr. Diane McKay	Danna Fowble / Dr. David Kirk
Veterans Florida	Joe Marino	Jeremy Sinnemaki
Florida Association of Managing Entities	Natalie Kelly	Paul Bebee
Secretary of Elder Affairs	Michelle Branham	Gretta Jones
State Surgeon General (DOH)	Dr. Joseph Ladapo	Laura Corbin / Rhonda Jackson

Commissioner of Education	Anastasios Kamoutsas	Beverley Wilks Taquria Thompson
Secretary of Health Care Administration	Shevaun Harris	Dr. Timothy Buehner
Secretary of Juvenile Justice	Matt Walsh	Dr. Tracy Shelby /Joy Bennink
Secretary of Corrections	Ricky D. Dixon	Dr. Adam Wasserman
Commissioner of Florida Department of Law Enforcement	Mark Glass	Rebekah Corley
Executive Director of Department of Veterans Affairs	James Hartsell	Al Carter / Roy Clark
Secretary of Department of Children and Families	Taylor Hatch	Amanda VanLaningham/ Bill Hardin
Executive Director of Department of Commerce	J. Alex Kelly	Wendy Castle
Governor's Appointee	*Vacant*	
Florida Department of Transportation	Jared W. Perdue	Brenda Young
DCF SMH Regions and Managing Entities (non-voting)		

Thank you to all of our council members and guests in attendance at January's meeting!