



## **Annual Quality Assurance Report FY 2018-2019**

### **Introduction:**

Eckerd Connects Community Alternatives (ECCA) is the lead agency for foster care and adoption related services in Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough Counties. The ECCA system of care provides a full array of services to all children referred through investigations including diversion programs, dependency, out of home care, adoptions, post adoptions supports, and independent living. Pinellas and Pasco Counties comprise of Judicial Circuit 6 and Hillsborough County comprises of Circuit 13. ECCA encompasses two of the four lead agencies in the Suncoast region (Circuit 12 and 20 also encompass the Suncoast region). ECCA has held the lead agency contract since 2008 in Circuit 6 and 2012 in Circuit 13. Each circuit is subcontracted by The Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) individually having their own contract. The protective investigation function is conducted by the Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough County Sheriff's Offices. Children's Legal Services (CLS) represents the state in Dependency proceedings in Circuit 6 and The Office of Attorney General represents Circuit 13. In Pinellas and Pasco Counties the Guardian Ad Litem Program is overseen by Mariela Ollsen the Circuit Director, Evelien Still in Pasco County and in Hillsborough County is overseen by Theresa Lambert.

The ECCA model is operated at a county level for each circuit. ECCA provides an administrative functionality to each service location. ECCA has three service locations in Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties, supported by a centralized administrative support center located in Clearwater FL. In all service counties, case management services are subcontracted to community providers: Pinellas: Directions for Living and Lutheran Services of Florida; Pasco: Youth and Family Alternatives; Hillsborough: Devereux, Gulf Coast Jewish Family Centered Services, and Directions for Living. ECCA contracts Diversion programs that work jointly with each county's child protection units. In Circuit 13 diversion services are subcontracted to Gulf Coast Jewish Family Centered Services Safe at Home and Gracepoint Family Net program. In Circuit 6 the contracts for diversion services are through Directions for Living Family Works in Pinellas, and Gulf Coast Jewish Family Centered Services Safe at Home in Pasco. In Circuit 6, ECCA will be transitioning case management services from Directions for Living to ECCA effective October 31, 2019.

### **Functionality and Capacity Breakdown:**

Each ECCA is structured with an Executive Director, Associate Executive Director, and Five Senior Directors. Each Senior Director is assigned to one of the following spokes; Growth and Transformation, Quality, Staff, External Relations, and Finance. The duties and responsibilities of each Spoke within the ECCA circuits are outline as follows:

- **Staff Spoke** – Handles/processes all background screenings for potential caregivers, eligibility determination, Medicaid eligibility and re-determination of benefits, provides document requests, and manages the switchboard.
- **Quality Spoke** – Provides ongoing support, assessment and retention of Child Placing Agencies. Handles requests and issues with missing children. Completed identified reviews both within the scope of normal duties as well as through special requests from outside constituents. Processes and trends incident reports. Ensures that provider agencies receive technical support necessary to meet child welfare outcomes for the children and families served, providing ongoing support, assessment and retention of licensed foster parents. Provides data analysis and trending of systemic issues to accompany direct accountability with the CMO agencies. Completes corresponding DCF reporting. Tracking and overseeing Psychotropic medications and 5339 compliance. Attends subcommittee meetings such as; Adoption Applicant Review Committee, Foster Home QA Committee, Separated Sibling Staffings, Match Meetings for potential adoptive families. Facilitates Child Exit survey data and trending, as well as follow up on concerns listed in submitted surveys. Ongoing support, training, and consultation with Direct CMO field staffing and leadership.
- **External Relations Spoke** – Responsible for identifying, actively recruiting, assessing, training, and licensing prospective foster parents. They are also responsible for recruiting adoptive parents, managing client relations and community engagement.
- **Finance Spoke** – Responsible for the initial and subsequent placement of children in licensed care settings, the processing of requests for supportive services to children in out-of-home care, and the coordination of placements of children in residential and foster home settings that provide mental health therapy and treatment to those children. Also, monitors out-of-home care expenses, reviews services to ensure the best use of available resources, and monitors treatment and progress of children in mental health placements. For Pre-Paid Mental Health, reviews pre-authorizations and ongoing services, and assist in appeals. Also maintains client records and the flow of information from Case Management for update into FSFN and contract management.
- **Growth and Transformation Spoke** – Responsible for managing the operational concerns including case specific problems, systemic issues and additional data analysis. Evaluates FSFN data to assess agency compliance with outcomes to target areas requiring technical assistance and oversight. Also, manages and coordinates all requests to re-open cases and provide support. Facilitates lifelong family connections by providing intensive training and coaching to case managers. Responsible for managing all activities related to post adoption support. Responsible for the oversight of Lead Agency programmatic functions, and organizes, manages and evaluates the delivery of diverse program services. Inclusive of handling requests to place a child within or outside the circuit, and issues related to courtesy supervision and adoption. Also, responsible for management of services and resources designed to enhance the independent living system and support foster youth. Engages the community in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention/diversion efforts. Also works with CPID to mitigate the risk of removal of children by providing information, support and services in order to keep families together. Provides awareness and training on child safety, family and community wellbeing, and facilitates

community dialogues to resolve issues. Develop connection with community stakeholders to engage them in keeping children safe and supporting families.

**Quality Team Specifics:**

ECCA’s Quality Management team conducts case reviews utilizing the Windows into Practice Model on a quarterly basis. The quality department is broken down into two subsets. Each Circuit has a Senior Director of Quality supported by a QM Specialist. The second subset consists of a review team that reports directly to the corporate support center. These teams are located on site and support each lead agency as needed. The review team for each circuit consists of four QM Specialists who each report to a QM Supervisor. Both QM Supervisors report directly to the Senior Director of Innovation and Quality. The results of the reviews are analyzed to identify trends, anomalies, areas in need of improvement, and areas of high performance. Analysis includes performance in achieving safety, permanency, and well-being; practice trends; areas of excellence; and opportunities for improvement.

The below chart outlines the workload capacity

Annual workload capacity during FY 18-19								
ECCA	In-Home Children	Out-of-home	Total	Florida CQI Reviews			DCF RSF	Eckerd RSF
				File Review	In-Depth Review	PIP Monitored		
Pinellas/Pasco (c6)	679	2341	3020	50	0	10	40	564
Hillsborough (c13)	750	2378	3128	44	0	12	40	696
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1429</b>	<b>4719</b>	<b>6148</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>80</b>	1260
<b>Total Reviews Completed</b>								1456

**Performance Improvement:**

This section includes information regarding the Agency’s systematic process to review practice trends and performance along with performance improvement strategies. Additionally, this section will include outcomes and measures routinely reviewed and with what frequency. During fiscal year 2018-2019, Eckerd Connects Community Alternatives (ECCA) wrapped up the fiscal year serving the first and third largest populations of youth and young adults in the state. As of the end of June 2019 ECCA

Hillsborough was providing services to more than 3300 children and young adults, while ECCA Pinellas Pasco was serving more than 3200 children and young adults.

### Quality Management Activities:

- **DCF Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews:** DCF RSF reviews are completed in accordance with the Windows into Practice Model on a quarterly basis. Each circuit is responsible for 10 reviews per quarter that are selected at random from the stratified sampling method with the required DCF RSF parameters to ensure that all CMO's are represented. These reviews are submitted into the Qualtrics system portal. If, during the course of the review, a reviewer notes a safety concern, a staffing is requested with frontline staff within one business day. An action item is developed jointly with the case management staff, and tracked to completion by the Quality Specialist.
- **Eckerd Rapid Safety Feedback Reviews (ERSF):** In both circuits, children in-home with a parent under the age of 3 are reviewed for this process at least one time per quarter. In 2018-2019, ECCA expanded the age range to 0-5 for one CMO agency to add an additional layer of oversight. Each review is prioritized according to high risk criteria. A re-review of the case will continue to be completed on the case at minimum of one time per quarter until the focus child no longer meets the above criteria. Additionally, cases are re-reviewed within 48 business hours in the event that a baby is born into the case, a new investigation is initiated, or if a critical incident report is submitted. Each question on the tool aids in the identification of systemic issues. Cases are reviewed based on nine domains of critical thinking including supervision, and staffed within one business day to address any safety concerns. In the staffing, concrete action items are jointly developed by the reviewer and the CMO and then monitored to completion by Eckerd Connects Quality staff. The sample size for this review process varies based on the population of children served but remains a focal point for the quality team throughout each quarter.
- **Eckerd Permanency Feedback:** Eckerd Connects has initiated a new process, Eckerd Permanency Feedback, in an effort to enhance timely permanency performance starting in Circuit 6. This process utilizes the existing ERSF framework and best case practice research related to permanency. As part of the process, Eckerd Connects works in conjunction with Mindshare to identify children who are most likely to achieve permanency late. Late is defined as termination of an out-of-home care episode to permanent guardianship or reunification between 12 and 18 months in out-of-home care. The Eckerd Permanency Feedback process is aimed at increasing the timeliness of safe permanency for children in out-of-home care in Circuit 6 to under 12 months from removal. The process includes a comprehensive file review followed by a collaborative meeting with case management to identify action items to guide the case to permanency.
- **Discretionary and/or Special Reviews:** Discretionary, or special reviews, are conducted by Eckerd Connects Quality Department or other approved staff when requested. Requests for discretionary reviews can be made by Executive Management, DCF Administration, or stakeholders. Prior to conducting the review, Eckerd Connects QM staff determines the purpose

of the review in conjunction with the requestor. Results are shared with ECCA leadership and the requesting party. These reviews are child specific and/or topic specific. For example, Eckerd Connects QM staff has previously completed reviews for missing children, adoption permanency, abuse reports on open cases, and inspector general reports.

- **Incident Reporting:** Completion of an incident report is required by all Eckerd Connects staff and contracted providers when an incident or accident occurs. This provides Eckerd Connects with an early notice of an unusual situation or circumstance which may jeopardize the health, safety, or well-being of a child or person receiving services under the supervision of a contracted provider. Additional entries are made into the state database for those incidents that meet the criteria of reportable incidents. ECCA dedicated a position within each Circuit's Lead Agency specific to the Incident Reporting process. Their role is to review a subset of identified Incident categories for deep dive trend analysis. The reviewer utilizes the child's file and historical information from previous reports to provide an overall trend summary to ECCA, CMO leadership, and assigned staff.
- **Trend Identification and Analysis:** Trends are identified through various case reviews on several levels, including CFSR/CQI, ERSF, Operations reviews, special reviews, Safe Return Reviews, and the Eckerd Connects weekly data packet, etc. Communication of trends is paramount to ongoing quality success. Each ECCA holds leadership and stakeholder meetings that function to develop and evaluate counter-measures for identified trends. ECCA leadership in Circuit 6 meets weekly to discuss emerging systemic trends. Circuit 6 also meets with the CMO Program Directors on a bi-monthly basis. In Circuit 13 ECCA Leadership, program directors from each CMO, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Judiciary, Guardian program, and community stakeholders meet weekly. Within each ECCA, the Senior Directors from each spoke meet internally one time per week. Emerging trends are discussed as part of both meetings. In Circuit 13 the Quality Department led by the Senior Director of Quality Management holds a monthly Performance Quality Improvement (PQI) meeting with CMO Directors, Assistant Directors, and Supervisors. Evaluation of the effectiveness of counter-measures is done through various file reviews, as indicated above in the identification of the trends, as well as through constant review of performance data.
- **Watchlist:** ECCA instituted a new practice surrounding performance and scorecard measures to enhance communication and accountability throughout both circuits. This process, dubbed "Watchlist," provides current systemic challenges, strategies, and action steps to enhance projected performance related to identified challenges. This reporting feature is disseminated to program leaders from ECCA, in addition to leadership from its CMO contracted providers. Each CMO receives two documents that outline performance. One document highlights collective performance across our Judicial Circuits. The second document captures the specific performance areas in which an identified agency's performance has fallen below the target mark. In Circuit 6 a monthly "Watchlist" meeting is held with leadership from each CMO once per month to ensure accountability for each identified challenge. In Circuit 13 the functionality

of the “Watchlist” is the equivalent, however it is discussed during the monthly PQI meeting with each case management organization.

- Child Exit Interviews:** The ECCA Lead Agency QM Department is responsible for the oversight of child exit interviews (feedback). Results are aggregated on a macro level for system improvements. If an issue is identified on the form, the ECCA QM Specialist follows up with the internal licensing department, the Licensing Provider, or ECCA Contracts Department for follow-up with the residential providers. The results of the interviews are shared with leadership, case management organizations, Licensing, and stakeholders.

## Outcome Measures & Performance Metrics through 18-19:

### Data Tracking and New Communication:

ECCA utilized multiple processes across both circuits to monitor and improve performance. These processes included developing and disseminating data packets, conducting data calls with community partners, and instituting watchlists for each case management organization (CMO). ECCA publishes a weekly data packet that provides a streamlined overview of key performance indicators for both circuits. These key performance indicators align with the CFSR and Scorecard measures statewide. In addition to statewide comparison, the data packet breaks down each measure with comprehensive listings of agency specific data sets for deeper comparison. Both Circuits continue to hold collaborative calls with internal stakeholders to address these publications. In Circuit 6 a bi-monthly data call is held on the second and fourth Monday of every month. In Circuit 13, the call is held two times per month. In addition, ECCA has maintained a focus on enhanced communication and accountability throughout both circuits. On a monthly basis watchlists are developed and provided to each CMO identifying challenges to be addressed based on performance through the end of the previous month. Each CMO then provides a response identifying strategies and action steps to improve performance and provide projected performance for the next three months. The watchlists are discussed by ECCA leadership and program directors from each case management organization. In Circuit 6 a monthly watchlist meeting is held with each CMO to ensure accountability for each identified challenge. In Circuit 13 the watchlists are discussed during monthly PQI meetings with each case management organization. The data packets are available at:

<https://eckerd.org/family-children-services/foster-and-adoption/eckerd-connects-community-alternatives-hillsborough/success-metrics/weekly-data-reports/>

<https://eckerd.org/family-children-services/foster-and-adoption/eckerd-community-alternatives-pasco-pinellas/success-metrics/weekly-data-reports/>

The tables below outline a performance trend for each circuit from June of 2014 to present time. The first column illustrates the target mark for each measure with an arrow immediately to the right that depicts the target achievement area. For example column one has a target of 8.50. To meet or exceed this target, performance measurement would have to be 8.50 or below. Arrows in the final column

demonstrate the overall increase or decrease during the last fiscal year. Note that the arrows in the Target columns demonstrate directionality of desired performance.

### Circuit 13:

Measure	Target	Red Zone	Jun-14	Jun-15	Jun-16	Jun-17	Jun-18	Jun-19	
Rate of abuse or neglect per day while in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	8.50 ↓	8.844	12.11	10.49	10.05	10.80	10.03	9.33 <small>(as of 3/19)</small>	↓
Number of children with finalized adoptions between 7/1 and 6/30 (YTD)	N/A	N/A	270	288	297	275	304	294	↓
Children exiting foster care to a permanent home within twelve (12) months of entering care (YTD) (Federal Measure)	40.5% ↑	36.4%	50.79%	52.37%	44.66%	48.37%	41.72%	37.0%	↓
Children who do not re-enter foster care within twelve (12) months of moving to a permanent home (YTD) (Federal Measure)	91.7% ↑	90.9%	88.53%	85.33%	86.16%	90.98%	88.38%	89.87%	↑
Children's placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	4.12 ↓	4.532	4.51	4.74	4.74	5.30	6.83	6.25	↓
Percent of children in out of home care who have received medical services within the last twelve (12) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	95.53%	99.12%	98.30%	99.32%	92.85%	96.21%	↑
Percent of children in out of home care who have received dental services within the last seven (7) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	92.88%	96.48%	96.68%	96.58%	79.13%	90.51%	↑
Percent of young adults in foster care at age 18 that have completed or are enrolled in secondary education. Rolling 12 month period.	80.0% ↑	69.9%	87.65%	95.83%	87.36%	95.83%	92.94%	90.38%	↓
Percent of children achieving permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12 to 23 months (Federal Measure)	43.7% ↑	39.3%	63.76%	60.14%	52.01%	50.39%	46.58%	50.1%	↑
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more (Federal Measure)	30.3% ↑	25.0%	36.34%	41.29%	50.49%	43.88%	50.82%	40.5%	↓



## Circuit 6:

Measure	Target	Red Zone	Jun-14	Jun-15	Jun-16	Jun-17	Jun-18	Jun-19	
Rate of abuse or neglect per day while in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	8.50 ↓	8.844	13.26	9.46	10.36	7.50	6.88	8.13 (as of 3/19)	↑
Number of children with finalized adoptions between 7/1 and 6/30 (YTD)	N/A	N/A	370	348	297	319	319	403	↑
Children exiting foster care to a permanent home within twelve (12) months of entering care (YTD) (Federal Measure)	40.5% ↑	36.4%	59.20%	53.69%	51.29%	47.17%	38.46%	33.99%	↓
Children who do not re-enter foster care within twelve (12) months of moving to a permanent home (YTD) (Federal Measure)	91.7% ↑	90.9%	88.53%	90.21%	87.24%	88.00%	90.76%	90.15%	↔
Children's placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care. Rolling 12 month period. (Federal Measure)	4.12 ↓	4.532	3.40	3.57	3.66	4.46	4.64	6.57	↑
Percent of children in out of home care who have received medical services within the last twelve (12) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	98.35%	98.35%	99.00%	98.76%	99.16%	97.90%	↓
Percent of children in out of home care who have received dental services within the last seven (7) months (YTD)	95.0% ↑	89.9%	96.06%	97.66%	96.50%	96.56%	96.93%	87.89%	↓
Percent of young adults in foster care at age 18 that have completed or are enrolled in secondary education. Rolling 12 month period.	80.0% ↑	69.9%	93.85%	93.65%	94.20%	88.31%	86.25%	90.00%	↑
Percent of children achieving permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12 to 23 months (Federal Measure)	43.7% ↑	39.3%	65.64%	59.44%	55.56%	54.61%	49.80%	45.40%	↓
Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more (Federal Measure)	30.3% ↑	25.0%	51.46%	54.34%	41.70%	42.39%	48.44%	48.31%	↔

In addition to general scorecard performance, “Roll-ups” of data from ECCA QM specialist assigned reviews are completed and discussed with leadership from Eckerd Connects and the CMOs on a monthly basis, with a breakdown per agency, per agency unit, and at times per tool. Data from reviews such as: ERSF, Safe Return, CQI, and DCF RSF are utilized for systemic trending providing a large window into the current case practice. For example, Eckerd Rapid Safety Feedback represents the largest Quality Assurance sample completed in the state of Florida by any Community Based Care Organization or Region. In fiscal year 2018-2019 Circuit 13 completed over 690, with Circuit 6 completed just over 560. In combination, both circuits accounted for almost 1300 individual reviews. Staffings with frontline case management staff were completed in conjunction with these reviews in accordance with the Eckerd Rapid Safety Feedback practice model. This provides for a substantial data subset that is incorporated into case practice enhancements. It also allows for the quality team to play an active role in ongoing





coaching of front line case management staff during the staffing process. It is the primary focus of ECCA Quality Management Staff.

The below tables illustrate the CQI data trending from the last three fiscal years.

Circuit 13: Three Year Trending				
Performance Item or Outcome	FY 16-17	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	Trendline
Item 1	86.05%	100%	94.44%	
Item 2	100%	100%	91.30%	
Item 3	94.74%	94.74%	85%	
Item 4	88.89%	88.24%	85.71%	
Item 5	86.67%	76.47%	85.71%	
Item 6	95.56%	88.24%	80.00%	
Item 7	94.12%	92.59%	71.43%	
Item 8	73.17%	80.65%	82.14%	
Item 9	86.67%	82.35%	76.47%	
Item 10	55.81%	82.35%	77.14%	
Item 11	62.86%	74.19%	53.57%	
Item 12	78.95%	78.95%	56.67%	
Item 12A	94.74%	96.49%	96.67%	
Item 12B	78.79%	81.13%	57.41%	
Item 12C	100%	91.18%	88.24%	
Item 13	71.43%	63.16%	60.71%	
Item 14	86.84%	92.98%	88.33%	
Item 15	60.00%	67.92%	42.31%	
Item 16	82.22%	77.78%	83.33%	
Item 17	74.58%	83.33%	84.62%	
Item 18	69.44%	76.47%	83.33%	

Circuit 6: Three Year Trending		
Performance Item or Outcome	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
Item 1	100.00%	100.00%
Item 2	91.28%	92.25%
Item 3	74.48%	79.20%
Item 4	77.78%	92.85%
Item 5	89.58%	90.98%
Item 6	93.75%	88.10%
Item 7	82.30%	89.58%
Item 8	86.28%	73.93%
Item 9	84.53%	87.30%
Item 10	82.58%	75.05%
Item 11	79.73%	66.23%
Item 12	69.10%	61.35%
Item 12A	85.18%	84.73%
Item 12B	75.63%	62.15%
Item 12C	84.65%	87.30%
Item 13	80.20%	73.13%
Item 14	86.25%	82.45%
Item 15	57.25%	45.48%
Item 16	86.33%	76.68%
Item 17	86.10%	83.90%
Item 18	78.28%	64.93%

CQI reviews are tracked and trended to prioritize areas of improvement. These reviews included with information learned from the PIP have helped both circuits to see case level issues that have the greatest effect on overall performance. Information from each review is debriefed for strengths and opportunities for improvement. This information is shared with each case management organization as an opportunity for them to trend case practice within their control wheel. Each Circuit uses information learned from these review to develop and implement countermeasures for areas of growth. In addition the quality team continues inter-agency trainings for ongoing interrater reliability across both circuits.

FY 18-19			
Performance Item or Outcome	C13	C6	State
Item 1	94.44%	89.47%	90.50%
Item 2	91.30%	85.71%	91.50%
Item 3	85%	80.00%	73.00%
Item 4	85.71%	90.00%	80.60%
Item 5	85.71%	90.00%	83.80%
Item 6	80.00%	75.00%	64.90%
Item 7	71.43%	75.00%	79.30%
Item 8	82.14%	62.50%	60.50%
Item 9	76.47%	80.00%	71.30%
Item 10	77.14%	95.00%	78.90%
Item 11	53.57%	53.33%	46.50%
Item 12	56.67%	70.00%	57.20%
Item 12A	96.67%	100.00%	88.80%
Item 12B	57.41%	70.37%	58.70%
Item 12C	88.24%	89.47%	85.70%
Item 13	60.71%	70.37%	57.60%
Item 14	88.33%	96.67%	60.00%
Item 15	42.31%	37.04%	39.00%
Item 16	83.33%	90.48%	79.40%
Item 17	84.62%	79.17%	73.50%
Item 18	83.33%	81.25%	65.90%

## Findings:

For the above Florida CQI review table; Green indicates performance above the statewide average, red indicates performance below the statewide average. In FY 2018-2019, Circuit 13 and Circuit 6 only jointly fell below the state average in two domains. Of the areas in which we fell below state averages, 5 of the 7 areas were within 2 percentage points of the state's mean. Areas of above average performance include: Achievement of Permanency (Item6), Siblings Visits (Item8), Maintaining Important Connections (Item 9), Assessment of Child's needs (Item 12A), Home Visits with the child (Item14); and the Well-being of Medical, Educational, and Mental Health needs (Items 16,17,18).

Item 2 and Item 7 were identified as the largest gaps being roughly 8 percentage points below the mean. Item 2 correlates with safety services implemented with the family to prevent removals. We have found that both Circuits lack services necessary to prevent removal episodes. This is also true for re-removal episodes in which the family could have been linked with further supports prior to sheltering the children. As you will find below, each circuit is addressing re-removal episodes through various review practices to identify specific gaps in our service array for program development and caregiver education. Ongoing discussion through community café's and work groups will be a priority to ensure that appropriate services are available to all of the children and families that we serve. Item 7 performances reflects placement of siblings that is correlated to the overall scarcity of placements for sibling groups. This is being addressed through targeted recruitment in both circuits.

## Safety

Safety continues to be a critical focus for both circuits. Each circuit reviews cases from children affecting the measures to address various aspects of case practice that directly affect these numbers. Deep dives into these cohorts have shown that on average 30 percent of the cases that directly affect these numbers closed with verified findings relating to violation by parents of visitation restrictions rather than abuse by an out-of-home caregiver. Information gained has been shared with front line staff in efforts to open communication with caregivers and parents surrounding safety planning and contact with unapproved individuals. Additionally, a small percentage of these cases were found to be errors and submitted to the Office of Child Welfare for corrections. These errors were found to be inaccurate dates linked to the findings. The most common of these errors was linked to child disclosures of historical abuse and neglect. Each agency works with the Sherriff's department to ensure that these instances are addressed appropriately and accurate date reporting is reflected.

ECCA quality staff is working on development and monitoring of safety plans with front line staff. Ongoing trainings that range from individual to agency wide have been completed with each CMO.

The focal point of the negative correlation with overall safety was around development and ongoing monitoring of safety plans. This was evident as to the data collected from the Florida CQI reviews, and through an accumulation of review data from other assigned duties. Front line staff was struggling with completing safety plans in conjunction with the family, identifying safety monitors through support

mapping, and outlining specific safety action steps that the identified monitor/support was assigned. In addition, updating the safety plan at critical junctures and ensuring to complete collaterals with the safety monitors identified on the safety plan.

### Permanency

In Circuit 6, finding forever families for our permanently committed children continues to be a strength. Last fiscal year, we were able to complete just over 400 successful adoption closures, finding forever permanency for those children in need. In Circuit 13, ECCA transitioned adoption related case management services back to our CMO providers. This transition came with some growing pains as staff worked diligently to learn the navigation of the adoptive process. Each agency fully staffed an adoption unit, and provided training through Adoption Competency evidenced base practice. Circuit 13 was able to successfully close nearly 300 adoptions during the year, falling just short of the DCF target.

In addition to declining scorecard performance in permanency related measures, CQI data collected provided insight into the issues for both circuits. Overall performance in children returning home within 12 months saw a decline during the fiscal year in both circuits. In Circuit 6, returns to care also declined. Direct effectors on these measures were found to be related to overall family engagement, case management turnover rates, judicial delays, and general documentation delays (supervision/caseload).

**Parent Engagement** - Both Circuits declined in parent engagement stats overall. From the CQI, PIP, and ERSF reviews completed during the year; it was determined that In-home judicial cases in which a child is placed with a non-maltreating parent, most often lacked parent engagement of the maltreating parent. This was leading to increased length of judicial oversight due to lack of sufficient efforts by the case management organization to link the maltreating parent with the services necessary to achieve their case plan outcomes.

**Supervision/Caseload:** Another area of high need was identified at the case management supervisory level. The quality and quantity of overall supervision was found to be needing additional support. Due to the high turnover rates and the Transition in C13, field experience and general education was lacking at the supervisory level. Many supervisors needed additional training on data tracking and trending on a unit level. Permanency and Safety planning follow up were also needs identified for improvement. Lastly, caseload size and high turnover, often times had the supervisor working in the field to maintain ongoing supervision of families. As caseloads increase all staff have less time to spend with an individual family.

### Well-being

Circuit 6 and Circuit 13 remained above the standard for Medical Services the entire fiscal year. This is in part due to a self-imposed higher standard in which ECCA holds the case management providers contractually accountable. At present time, countermeasures have been implemented in both circuits to improve overall dental numbers. Recent numbers in C13 improved significantly over the prior fiscal year. One particular area of highlighted performance would be the percent of young adults in foster care who have completed or are enrolled in secondary education or vocational school. This is focused through

our independent living programs and extended foster care providers that work directly with youth in this cohort.

CQI data was able to provide a better picture into our provider linkages through Items 16, 17, and 18. We were able to determine that follow up appointments were a large portion of the performance issues presented in the CQI reviews. These, in combination with delays in provider linkage, were areas of focus for our circuits moving through the year.

**Placement Stability** – ECCA continued to struggle with foster bed capacity over the last fiscal year contributing to placement instability. This was influenced by continued elevated removal rate in both circuits. Information from Statewide Monthly Key Performance Indicators reports outlined that during FY18-19, removal rates in both circuits were above the state averages. In Circuit 13 we saw numbers as high as 7.62 per 100 alleged Victims, While Circuit 6 escalated to 6.2 between October and December of 2018. Although statistically Circuit 13 continued to out recruit the state in licensing new foster homes, the licensing capacity of the new homes has not been able to keep up with the system capacity needs.

## Performance Improvement Strategies

Statewide PIP reviews are debriefed with frontline staff once completed to ensure that results and areas of improvement are communicated in real time. Additionally, statistical analysis of performance from the CQI data is addressed with the case management provider leadership during PQI meetings in C-13 as well as during program director meetings held monthly in C-6. To supplement the above interventions, performance measures directly related to the identified gaps from the PIP and CQI reviews are included in the monthly Watchlist and discussed with each CMO agency. These information sharing strategies have opened additional lines of communication and brought case level insight to the front line. Ongoing educational resources and trainings directly related to the information presented have increased staff awareness of areas where we can improve systemically. Staff indicated that they were not aware of the connections between case level work and scorecard performance. To enhance this linkage, data trainings have been offered in both circuits. These trainings begin with the forward facing data packet that ECCA compiles each week, and drills down each cohort and possible countermeasures. These trainings have been offered to supervisory level CMO staff and above. Additional training to ECCA and provider staff have been provided due to a recognized gap in data understanding at the supervisory level for the lead agency. This was to enhance supervisory discussion across the agency and promote creative team work for further progress.

In C13 each quality specialist provides at least one-half day per week on site aid at the various CMO locations. The specialists are not assigned to a specific agency at this time allowing for them to forge additional relationships and connections across the circuit. For example, the Circuit 13 QM team has completed full orientation style trainings for the new hire staff at each CMO agency. This training encompassed all aspects of the QM team, review processes, incident reporting, and child exit survey completion. In C6 staff are collocated with provider agencies. Both Circuits have also completed

trainings that were requested by Case Management Supervisors specifically for their units. These trainings vary and typically surround case management practices. They are usually created upon request so that they can be individualized to the need of the supervisor and workers.

**Supervision Program** – Circuit 13 QM team developed a pilot program over the last fiscal year targeting various aspects of identified areas of need relating to Case Supervision. This was developed in conjunction with partnership from Directions for Living in Hillsborough County. The QM staff was able to observe supervisions in real time and debrief the findings with Supervisors on site. This program began late in the fiscal year and has reached all 12 of the acting supervisors on staff for Directions for Living. Data from this program will be captured through qualitative documentation improvements identified through case review, and overall timely documentation statistics gathered by the agency. This program will be monitored for further expansion if strengths are identified. It is anticipated the process will be replicated with the other CMO's in both circuits and that it will have significant impact on multiple measures.

**Joint Response Licensing Team** - Circuits 6 and 13 have worked diligently with the Sherriff's department in each county to develop a joint program that is targeted to respond in cases of abuse and neglect reports in licensed foster homes. This program was designed to support our foster families and Investigative staff through open case investigations for children in licensed care. Licensing specialists will provide joint response with the investigator for initial engagement of the foster family. This program remains in its infancy, but has had positive reviews from all parties involved.

**Family Reunification Team (FRT)** – In Circuit 13 we re-signed the contract with Gulf Coast Jewish Family Centered Services to continue implementation of the Family Reunification Team program as a major service provider to our In-home population. FRT's Reunification Support Services are designed to complement case management services by providing intensive in-home, family engagement, through case management and therapeutic services. Referrals for the program can be submitted as soon as reunification is projected. Family Reunification Team (FRT) serves families that have a reunification date within 12 months from their last date of entry into the Child Welfare System. Services can initiate with the family up to 30 days prior to reunification, but no later than 10 days after reunification. For FRT to initiate services, the CMO must have the option for reunification and have begun working transition plan with a reunification date expected within 30 days. All families are seen by an FRT staff member within 2 business days of receiving referral. FRT is in the home initially 2-3 times a week and decreasing as families are making progress to prepare them for service closure. Initial FRT staffing is held within 10 days of receiving referral to develop goals, identify family strengths, and plan for a safe and successful reunification. Bi-weekly staffings are held to ensure collaboration is occurring and that all of the family's needs are being met, as well as discuss any barriers or obstacles the family may unexpectedly face.



FRT tracks their performance in relation to the statewide contract measures pertaining to maltreatments during in-home services, re-removals, and practice trends by utilizing the data collected through independent verification specific to their service cohort.

**Rapid Reunification Team** - Circuit 6 has a contract with the case management providers to dedicate funding and develop Rapid Reunification Teams for each CMO agency. FY 17-18 and FY 18-19 additional funding was dedicated for two FTE Reunification personnel members (Licensed Therapists) that are to be hired by the Case Management Organization. Much like FRT in Circuit 13, Reunification Support Services are designed to work along with case management services by providing intensive in-home family engagement services in order to ensure a safe and permanent reunification of the child. These intensive in-home family engagement services are designed to respond to individual situations that may be impacting family's ability to provide a safe environment for the child, which include but are not limited to: mental health illness of parents and/or their children; substance abuse; and/or incidents involving domestic violence in the home. The major program goals for these teams are to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of all children under the protective supervision or legal custody of the Department, to seek permanency for all children through timely, integrated, family-centered services designed to meet the unique needs of the family and capitalize on their strengths.

**Kinship Support Program:** This program is designed to complement case management services by providing direct support to non-licensed caregivers (relatives and non-relatives) of children in the Hillsborough County child welfare system. Services are provided in the caregivers' homes and local communities. The program utilizes direct family involvement to develop an individualized support plan to address necessary service needs such as counseling, crisis intervention, advocacy, case management assistance, caregiver benefit assistance, and peer support. Kinship services provide caregivers the support and guidance they need so that children remain with family or close loved ones, preventing placement in foster care whenever possible. Length of stay is determined on a case by case basis, typically ranging from 60-90 days. Kinship is designed to serve 150 families per year.

**Diversion Enhancement:** Eckerd is partnering with Hillsborough County to provide additional diversion support for families in the community. The project includes increased capacity for the family finding team, kinship supports, an assessment team, healthy start, and CARES Model. This project will include access for a CPI to an assessment team. Assessment team staff will initiate domestic violence and mental health assessments within 1 business day. Healthy Start will also offer prioritized service for substance exposed newborns.

**Family Finding Program:** Last year ECCA saw continued high demand for services in both circuits as described above. To address this demand ECCA focused efforts on achieving permanency timely by reviewing children in licensed out of home care placements to determine possible safe reunifications or step down into relative/non-relative care. Both circuits are now fully staffed and running. These units



were modeled after the evidenced based practice of “Family Finders”. The Family Finding model offers methods and strategies to locate and engage relatives of children living in out of home care. These units were instituted with the goal to reduce the number of children in Out of Home Care by locating and engaging relatives/non-relatives and successfully transitioning children to the care of their family. In C13 the family finding team increased staffing as a result of the partnership with Hillsborough County on diversion.

**Turnover/USF/Preservice Training Expansion:** Both circuits continue to be impacted by front line staff turnover rates. This has been a critical focus across all of Eckerd Connects Community Alternatives, attempting to improve retention of staff across both circuits. In efforts to aid the case management organizations, ECCA continues its partnership with the University of South Florida to provide additional pre-service training classes and amended the training schedule to acclimate new staff into the field. This has aided in overall staffing ratio stabilization. Eckerd secured grant funding for retention bonuses for all case management staff who remain with the agency at prescribed intervals. Eckerd Connects has also expanded its relationship with USF by creating a new pilot program that will place BSW graduates directly into case management positions upon graduation without requiring additional preservice training. These graduates receive specialized training while pursuing their degree to achieve this goal. It is anticipated improvements in turnover rates will impact all contract measures.

**Dependency Court Improvement Program (DCIP)** – In efforts to streamline the court process and discuss common barriers, leadership from community stakeholders and the judiciary continue in both circuits. These meetings have been productive in decision making for known barriers and at times identifying case specifics that were able to help achieve permanency. Additionally continued efforts to address fidelity to the statewide Methodology are made to ensure linkage between the field work and the courtroom. These meetings have also prompted work groups locally and in conjunction with the Guardian Ad Litem programs to educate and promote system processes.

**Safety Plan Trainings** – Both quality teams are providing ongoing onsite safety plan trainings to front line staff. These trainings were directly related to findings from the review processes and incorporated language and education surrounding the development, implementation, and monitoring of safety plans. ECCA was also able to partner with the University of South Florida Training Consortium to provide additional safety trainings in both Circuits through various formats. To expand upon the trainings, both Circuits QM Specialists and USF trainers provide ongoing coaching in unit meetings as well as on an individual basis.

**Caregiver Court Engagement:** Education was forwarded out to all caregivers in an effort to enhance participation in court hearings and open lines of communication. This process was initiated in FY 2017-2018 and continues to be in place. The educational tools are now housed online, and information surrounding the direct link to this material is provided to new caregivers upon placement of children.

Additionally, we were able to create a caregiver input form that allows the caregiver to have a voice in court during times that they are unable to attend. The caregiver input form has been built into MindShare and can also be automatically delivered to caregivers in the system. This includes a notification of the next court hearing date.

**Supervisor Level Key Competencies:** Both circuits saw above average turnover rates for frontline and supervisory staff. The Supervisor position continues to be a focal point for enhancement and education. Across both circuits we utilized the initial proficiency training program “Supervising for Excellence” (SFE) for case management and lead agency leaders. This program is taught through the USF training consortium. In addition, USF offers Learning Circles in each circuit that addresses common practice gaps and allows for a free flowing conversation. These learning Circles are held each month, and are opened to all of the CMO and Lead agency supervisors. Supervision numbers are pulled and discussed as part of the Watchlist/PQI meetings held with each CMO’s leadership. Finally, a multidisciplinary workgroup is currently working to improve supervision processes especially as they relate to permanency in C13. This group includes representation from the Guardian Ad Litem, case management, OAG, DCF, and Eckerd.

**Targeted Recruitment:** Both circuits continue targeted recruitment process to expand licensure of sibling placements by ensuring recruitment specialists targeted homes that would be licensed for multiple bed capacity (2 or more). A second focus is to recruit homes licensed specifically to place teens. This has been an ongoing process for both circuits to combat the growing number of teens in out of home care.

**Open Service Case Staffings-** This process was instituted to increase overall communication and cohesiveness between case management and child protection agencies when an abuse investigation is initiated on a case receiving services through dependency case management. Cases included in the process are investigations initiated, in which an immediate removal of the child/children is not warranted. During the staffing, the CPI, CPIS, CM, and CMS are brought together to have a roundtable discussion, during which information about the family and case is shared. The staffing also includes a discussion of the current investigation activities, as well as the ongoing case management activities. As needed, action plans are formulated and follow-up tasks are assigned.

**Parent Advisory Council** - As part of our Community Café initiative, Casey Family Programs is continuing to partner with Eckerd Connects, the Guardian Ad Litem’s program, and community-at-large, to hold Hillsborough’s Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC includes parents who have successfully navigated the dependency system and achieved reunification with their children. These parents have made a commitment to work with current dependency parents who have had their children removed to assist with ensuring the timely and successful return of their children back to their care /custody. These meetings are held monthly, and continue to receive positive feedback from group members.