



Southeast Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration

Thursday, February 13th, 2025, 9:30 A.M.-11:30 A.M.

DCF, 111 S Sapodilla Ave., West Palm Beach, FL 33401

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Department of Children and Families- Asta Trinh, Jessica Durant, Valoria Thomas, Traci Schweitzer, Robert Shea; **Agency for Health Care Administration-** Kirk Hall; **Broward Behavioral Health Coalition-** Danica Mamby Elida Segrera; **Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network -** Jill Sorenson; **Agency for Persons with Disabilities-** Rita Castor; **Florida Department of Education-** Connie Reece; **PBC Public Schools-** Dr. Mary Clair Mucenic; **Broward County Public Schools -** Jodi Washington; **Indian River School District-** Sara Ange; **Area Agency on Aging-** Elizabeth Lombardo; **Communities Connected for Kids-** Melanie Kranker; **ChildNet-** Larry Rein; **Henderson Behavioral Health-** Diane Sasser; **Evolutions Treatment Center -**James Fata; **Health Care District of PBC -** Darcy Davis; **Larkin Community Hospital-** Debbie Acevedo; **Delray Medical Center-** Jeff Lefton; **Memorial Healthcare System-** Tammy Tucker; **Sunshine Health-** Monique Peele; **Community Care Plan-** Alyssa George; **Palm Springs Police Department-** Odalis Fequiere; **Lighthouse Point PD-** David Dyess; **Florida Department of Corrections-** Derek Gibson, Chekevia Cox, John Thompson; **Florida Department of Juvenile Justice-** Angela Mitchell; **Martin County -** Joanna Greene, Yuri Parraga; **Public Defenders Office- C19-** Katharine Alonzo, Lisa Fonteyn; **Disability Rights Florida-** Leigh Markowitz; **Public Defenders Office- C17** Melinda Blostein; **Rebel Recovery-** Nancy McConnell; **South Florida Wellness Network-** Susan Nyamora; **Alpert Jewish Family Services-** Elaine Rotenberg, Marc Hopin; **PBC Youth Services Dept-** Elisa Cramer; **Broward County Human Services-** Keith Bostick;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Valoria Thomas called to order the Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Kick- Off Meeting at 9:33 A.M. on Thursday, February 13th, 2025.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jessica Durant, Regional Director, welcomed attendees. The following individuals provided introductions:

Jessica Durant, Regional Director, Department of Children and Families



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Valoria Thomas, Regional Collaboration Coordinator, Department of Children and Families

Asta Trinh, Chief of Regional Operations and Initiatives, Department of Children and Families

Kirk Hall, Government Analyst, Agency for Health Care Administration

III. OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL COLLABORATION COORDINATOR POSITION/ROLE/OBJECTIVES

PowerPoint presentation was provided by Valoria Thomas, highlighting the roles, objectives, and vision of the House Bill 7021 which allocated funds for the Regional Collaboratives and the regional coordinator position.

IV. IMPACT OF REGIONAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIVES

Jessica Durant shared an overview of the impact of the Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboratives and the importance of sharing Gap Analyses and Needs Assessments among agencies.

Jessica Durant expressed the difference that these collaboratives will make which includes bringing all those together in a way that addresses all populations needs.

From the 2025 Commission report: "As a direct result of the Commission's 2024 recommendations, regional interagency behavioral health collaboratives will be established (HB 7021), and a statewide gap analysis will be conducted to assess needs and identify key services for expansion (SB 330)."

The Regional Collaborative Project Charter was shared with the meeting invitation and briefly discussed.

Statewide quarterly and annual reports shared with Commission and public upon review and approval of the Collaborative.

V. MANAGING ENTITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Jessica Durant shared the significance of the Southeast Regions two Managing Entities (ME), Broward Behavioral Health Coalition and Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network.



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An overview of each MEds Annual Enhancement Plan and Children's Coordinated System of Care Plan was provided.

Some of the target items identified in the Needs Assessment include:

Establishing a MOU with Medicaid Managed Care Organizations for the coordination of care of children including the integration of primary care and behavioral health services.

Respite care for minors.

Crisis unit serving minors in south Dade/Monroe.

Marketing for suicide prevention.

Needs assessment is conducted triennially and was last done in 2022. A new needs assessment is due this year (2025).

VI. REVIEW OF KEY FOCUS AREAS

Jessica Durant provided overview on the 4 key focus areas recommended by the commission.

- 1. Strengthening Community networks and gross agency collaboration.**
 - The effort to dismantle the separate, isolated systems within different organizations working on mental health and substance use issues, encouraging collaboration and information sharing between agencies like law enforcement, healthcare providers, social services, and community groups to better serve individuals with mental health needs by coordinating care across various sectors, instead of operating in separate "silos."
- 2. Enhancing Crisis Care Continuum.**
 - Enhancing the crisis care continuum would be a group tasked with reviewing and improving the system of immediate support available to individuals experiencing mental health or substance use crises, aiming to provide a seamless pathway of care from initial outreach to stabilization and ongoing treatment, addressing potential gaps in access and quality across different levels of crisis response.
- 3. Improving Data Collection and Management Processes.**
 - This would aim to streamline the way mental health and substance use data is gathered, stored, and analyzed across different healthcare providers and systems, allowing for better insights into treatment effectiveness, population needs, and areas for improvement by implementing standardized data collection methods, integrating electronic health records, and ensuring data privacy while facilitating data sharing for research and policy development purposes.



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4. Optimizing the financial management of the Behavioral Health system of care.

- Strategically managing the finances of a behavioral health organization to maximize revenue, minimize costs, and ensure long-term financial stability, allowing them to provide high-quality care to patients while effectively utilizing resources and minimizing administrative burdens; essentially, it's about making the most of available funds to support quality behavioral healthcare delivery.

Darcy Davis, Healthcare District, inquired about “Enhancing Crisis Care Continuum” and if SAMHSA guidelines were being followed.

Jill Sorensen, Southeast Behavioral Health Network (ME), confirmed that SAMHSA guidelines were being followed.

VII. Open discussion

Attendees were asked to provide responses to the following questions thus opening the floor for open discussion:

- 1. Tell us about your organization gap analysis process and if it is public facing.**
- 2. What other collaboratives or workgroups are you attending, and items being addressed.**
- 3. What are opportunities for improvement?**

Keith Bostick, Broward County Human Services, expressed noticing human services, lived experts, and community members missing from the charter and queried why that was so.

Jessica Durant, DCF, highlighted that the Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Meetings are public and are welcomed to attend by individuals in the community.

Asta Trinh, DCF, provided a brief summary of how members were identified by the commission and House Bill 7021. She acknowledged the need to increase peer involvement and participation. The need to include those with lived experience was identified and recognized for future meetings.

Melinda Blostein, Broward Chief Assistant Public Defender, suggested looking to the graduates of drug courts to serve as speakers for future meetings and willing to make a connection to the Broward County Drug Court for assistance.



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Melinda Blostein, Broward Chief Assistant Public Defender, raised concern regarding funding that was approved for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Mobile Response Teams but not currently being dispersed.

Asta Trinh, DCF, shared the Department and AHCA are working on getting the program running this year.

Melinda Blostein communicated the loss of three baker act receiving facilities and how it has impacted the jails in Broward County. She questioned the best practice for an SRT being 90 days. She lastly shared there are no programs for individuals who are not medication compliant but not a danger and not willing to stay.

Elida Segrera, Broward Behavioral Health Coalition (BBHC), stated the biggest concern regarding individuals who will eventually step down from inpatient services is lack of housing.

Jessica Durant, DCF, inquired about gap analyses, meetings, and workgroups that are public facing that can be shared amongst the group.

Tammy Tucker, Memorial Healthcare System, has a required Community Health Needs Assessment that is conducted every three years and has many behavioral health components.

Dr. Elena Rotenberg, Alpert Jewish Family Services, shared the Integrative Pediatric Care Workgroup

Susan Nyamora, South Florida Wellness Network, shared the important of peers having a position as a member representative.

Asta Trinh, DCF, expressed agencies may choose to have a peer with lived experience to be their member representative.

Elida Segrera, BBHC, recommended having at least one RCO as a member representative for the collaborative.

Concern was expressed amongst several attendees regarding how members were chosen due to having two separate MEs in one region. A request to amend the membership list was raised.



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Asta Trinh, DCF, explained that the Southeast Region is the only region with more than one ME and the Regional Collaborative is a statewide approach.

Nancy McConnell, Rebel Recovery, stated that peer agencies are often not included. Expressed the importance of peer support agencies.

Danica Mamby, Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, acknowledged the differences between Broward County, Palm Beach County, and the Treasure Coast and expressed the need for changes to the required member representatives.

Melinda Blostein, Public Defender, stated plan to email representatives to share concerns regarding peers and specialty courts not being including as voting members.

Kirk Hall, AHCA, cautioned only focusing on local needs versus the region as a whole. Expressed by having larger member representatives, there will be a bigger voice to emphasize the overall needs of the Southeast Region and their agencies.

Jessica Durant, DCF, highlighted the effort made to invite agencies not mentioned in the statute.

Asta Trinh, DCF, provided the reminder that this is the kick-off meeting and feedback from all the regional meetings will be shared at the next commission meeting. There are also plans to speak with DCF attorneys to verify the language in the statute and its interpretation relating to member representative.

Larry Rein, ChildNet, provided brief clarification on the commission's recommendation on the regional collaborative. Advised it is a legislative issue and not a commission issue regarding the member representatives.

Melinda Blostein, Public Defender, shared an excerpt for the charter briefly

Asta Trinh, DCF, will share concerns with legal and SAMH Assistant Secretary about amending charter.

Marc Hopin, Alpert Jewish Family Services, stated once an amended occurs, more agencies can be added to the represented members.



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Nancy McConnell, Rebel Recovery, shared what DCF and AHCA can do better such as exemptions.

Asta Trinh, DCF, explained the plan to take the feedback from the regional collaboratives and share them with the leadership. Shared plans for agencies to provide presentations to foster partnership. Also plans to speak with legal to remove the word "voting." Not sure if there is a need to use the word.

Elida Segrera, BBHC, stated if the word "voting" is removed, it would resolve the issue of member representatives.

Nancy McConnell, Rebel Recovery, emphasized inviting the counties to the future meetings

Susan Nyamora, South Florida Wellness Network, highlighted Medicaid reimbursement, specifically for peer run organizations, and bridging the necessary gaps.

Katharine Alonzo, Public Defender C19, highlighted the differences between Okeechobee/Treasure Coast. Shared there used to be a successful collaborative meeting that no longer exist. Questioned if there are any meetings currently happening in the treasure coast similar to Broward and Palm Beach.

Lisa Fonteyn, Public Defender C19, expressed what services are available in the Okeechobee area compared to other circuits and how that impacts forensic evaluators recommendations.

Asta Trinh, DCF, shared plans to conduct a forensic presentation during future quarterly meeting.

Melissa Reesor, Archways, expressed housing being a concern. Not being able to serve individuals if there are not appropriate places to send them.

Elida Segrera, BBHC, affirmed housing, funding, and space having snowball effect on behavioral health services.

Katharine Alonzo, Public Defender C19, shared the dependency on mental health courts and lack of planning for forensic clients.



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Nancy McConnell, Rebel Recovery, inquired about forensic training for peer support.

Asta Trinh, DCF, will follow up with Wes at DCF on the status of the training.

Connie Reece, SEDNET/FLDOE, emphasized the importance of remembering children's mental health services.

Jessica Durant, DCF, highlighted the Child Welfare Behavioral Health Integration Meetings as a collaborative effort.

Yuri Parraga, Martin County, shared the difficulty of finding appropriate housing for mental health court clients in Martin County. Was able to create a mental health house that is funded by the county and has certain restrictions. Due to funding, there are drawbacks to the amount of people served and staffing is limited.

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VIII MEETING FREQUENCY/NEXT STEPS

Attendees were briefly informed of quarterly meeting frequency and next meeting date of May 13th, 2025, at 9:30A.M. Location to be announced.

Asta Trinh discussed future quarterly collaborative meetings to include agency specific presentations

X PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Rein, ChildNet, shared the need to continue to include children's issues in the regional collaboratives. Emphasized the need to educate families, not only locally but statewide, regarding resources.

John Thompson, Department of Corrections- Probation and Parole, expressed gratitude to be included in the collaborative and hope to find better ways to serve clients.

Joanna Greene, Martin County, shared how the Opioid Settlement funds have been able to provide funding for some services but there are still limitations. Would find it beneficial to hear how others are working around funding limitations.

Rita Castor, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, provided insight to the Mobile Response Initiative. In 2023 Broward County and Orange County received funding to add Board Certified Behavioral Analysts and registered behavioral techs on existing Mobile Response Teams.

Jill Sorenson, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network, shared BCBA's were added to early childhood CAT teams and are in the process of adding Behavioral Analyst to the Mobile Response Teams. The ME has contracted with a provider in the Treasure Coast and looking to do the same in Palm Beach County.

Melinda Blostein, Public Defender C17, inquired about a timeline of when the Mobile Response Initiative with APD should start.

Rita Castor, APD, will communicate with the necessary parties to provide the correct information.



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Jessica Durant, DCF, called for further questions before reminding attendees of future date for the 1st quarterly meeting.

XI MOTION TO ADJOURN

A survey code was provided to attendees for feedback.

Asta Trinh and Jessica Durant provided closing remarks thanking the group for attending. Valoria Thomas adjourned the Southeast Regional Behavioral Health Interagency kick-off meeting at 11:33 A.M. on February 13th, 2025.
