Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration
January 27, 2026, 10:30am-12:30pm
Visionary Room - ROHDE Building and Virtual via Teams
401 NW 2 Ave, Miami, FL 33128, North Tower

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: In -Person – 47

Virtual – 44

Total - 91

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:

- Miami Dade Crisis Intervention Team - Habsi W. Kaba, MS, LMFT
- City of Miami Beach Police Department – Marchman Act Project/Homeless Resource Unit - Officer Melissa Rosa & Certified Peer Specialist, Borinquen "Bo" Hall
- Miami -Dade Sheriff's Office – Crisis Response Unit (CRU) & Threat Management Unit (TMU), Heather Winters, LMHC
- City of Miami Police Department –Co-Responder Team (CRT) - Officer Tanahiry Gonzalez, Officer Yolanda Jefferson & Certified Peer Specialist, Michael Socarras

I. CALL TO ORDER

Cristina Perez called to order the Southern Region Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 10:30am on November 13, 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.

III. PRESENTATION & NETWORKING

Miami Dade Crisis Intervention Team Habsi W. Kaba, MS, LMFT - Provided history on the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) model and discussed the engagement of the CIT Program and Community partners in Miami-Dade County stating that support is about coordination, communication and problem solving.

Data shared:
Miami-Dade County has partnerships with 36 law enforcement agencies/municipalities, the behavioral health community partners, and the Department of Children and Families. CIT has successfully trained over 9,500 law enforcement personnel in Miami-Dade County and there 100 Law Enforcement CIT Coordinators/Liaisons across municipalities including Miami-Dade Fire Rescue.

CIT Training information:

- 40-hour training including continued education for law enforcement, 911 telecommunicators and most recently, Miami-Fire Rescue.
- Eight (8)-hour. Intro to CIT
- Eight (8)-hour. CIT Refresher
- Three (3)-day CIT for 911 telecommunicators
- Three (3)-day Advanced CIT for Specialized Units, Police Executive CIT Seminars, Police Academy
- Eight (8)-hour CIT Orientation, Community Organizations

Crisis response models and approaches:

- 988-National Suicide Crisis line
- Mobile Response Teams
- 911 Crisis Call Diversion
- Crisis Intervention Teams - first responder model
- Collaborative Crisis Response – separate entities collaborate on response
- Alternative Crisis Response and Non-Police Response Teams
- Co-responder Teams - embedded clinical staff with law enforcement

Marchman Act Project/Homeless Resource Unit: City of Miami Beach Police Department – Officer Melissa Rosa & Certified Peer Borinquen "Bo" Hall - Officer Melissa Rosa- provided a brief presentation on the Homeless Resource Unit consisting of one (1) Sergeant, four (4) officers and one (1) Certified Peer Specialist. A list of services the Homeless Resource Unit provides was shared including - Family Reunification, Florida State ID, Passport, Social Security Card, Employment Relocation, Shelter Placement, Bus Pass, Birth Certificate, Government Assistance, Substance and Alcohol Treatment petitions. Officer Rosa discussed the Florida Marcham Act, Protective Custody, and the process the team follows to help the individuals they come in contact with.

Mr. Hall shared his lived experience which includes now being a staff member of the law enforcement agency that policed the same streets of Miami Beach where he was once homeless. Mr. Hall's presence on the team highlights the importance of peer specialists and community support for those individuals we serve.

Crisis Response Unit (CRU) & Threat Management Unit (TMU)- Miami -Dade Sheriff's Office – Heather Winters – Heather Winters provided a brief presentation on the CRU, a "co-responder" model, which is developed in collaboration with Miami-Dade County and Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) to provide specialized assistance for persons experiencing a mental health crisis. Their goal is to de-escalate, assess, and divert those in crisis to behavioral health services in a safe, humane, and compassionate manner by embedding clinical staff in addition to paramedic staff and responding alongside law enforcement personnel.

Data shared: CRU is part of the Community Mental Health Section within the Homeland Security Bureau of Miami-Dade. Covering Districts –, South, Hammocks, Intracoastal, Northside, and Kendall. The team is made up of one (1) Lieutenant, three (3) Sergeants, 22 officers, one (1) Community Mental Health Manager, two (2) Paramedics from MDFR, two (2) Licensed Mental Health Professionals, and a one (1) Care Coordination Specialist.

Shared benefits of a co-response model include offering more effective and compassionate approach to responding to calls, reducing unnecessary hospitalization, conduct follow-ups, connect individuals with support services and appropriate treatment, long-term cost-savings, collaboration and partnership, and strengthens law enforcement and community relations leading to safer outcomes.

Heather Winters also provided information on the use of e-Backer Act, the first in the State, which allows for the electronic creation and transmittal of the Florida Mental Health Act Form (Baker Act form) directly to receiving facilities and hospitals. The goal for this initiative is to be able to receive statistical data which can be retrieved to aid in continuity of patient care. ess time officers have to be in the receiving facility filling out paperwork, increasing legibility of the forms, and requiring supervisor approval prior to submission. Law Enforcement can utilize the system to research where an individual was transported for an involuntary examination during the previous six months.

Co-Responder Team (CRT)- City of Miami Police Department –Officer Tanahiry Gonzalez, Officer Yolanda Jefferson & Certified Peer Michael Socarras – Michael Socarras provided a brief presentation on the City of Miami's CRT which centers on a collaborative initiative where mental health professionals and law enforcement officers work together to respond to incidents involving individuals experiencing mental health crises. This team is similar to Miami-Dade Sherriff's CRU, both following a "co-responder model".

Data shared: The team consists of one (1) Lieutenant, two (2) Sergeants, ten (10) CIT-CRT Certified Officers, one (1) Licensed Clinician, and one (1) Certified Peer Specialist.

Statistical data dating to December 25, 2025:
269-Mental Health Referrals
48-Substance Abuse Referrals
15-Homeless Referrals
8-Risk Protection Order (RPO) Referrals
3-Arrests
44-Transports to Receiving Facilities

Data highlights the number of low arrests in comparison to the total number of contacts made.

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH: shared the three avenues to initiate a baker act or involuntary assessment – law enforcement, licensed mental health clinician, or ex-parte order.

Questions and Answers:

Question 1

Dr. Mari C Rodriguez- Iman's Light Foundation: What would be your advice for foundation like mine to help with children of the age of 4th grade and up with behavior modification, violence comminution and drug abuse and what else can we do to not have our children in the streets and self-medicating? How much more can my foundation help collaborate with your departments early enough to prevent

Habsi Kaba- CIT: Suggested collaborating with the CIT, giving access to the entire behavioral health community coalition. Explained how there are Coordinators in every district of the county and every city municipality and offered to connect anyone who needs it to the appropriate CIT coordinator. In addition, a regional CIT coalition meeting will be held on February 11th, and an invitation was distributed.

Bo Hall-Miami Beach Police: Mentioned based off his own experience of living on the street he suggested engaging with Miami Dade county school and Broward County. He could assist by sharing his story

Officer Yolanda Jefferson-City of Miami: suggested sharing information on the Police explorer team, a paramilitary program that exists in each district.

Question 2

Mary Jaramillo- Mount Saini: what training do officers receive to help when addressing a call with the neurodivergent individual?

Officer Yolanda Jefferson- City of Miami: shared that officers do have a training for that purpose, and she herself has taken the training three times. The training is open to anyone and not just officers.

Officer Tanahiry Gonzalez-City of Miami: shared that based on my experience in the academy, they do receive training there, and the 40 hr. CIT training allows for more specialized training. The CRT carries a duffle bag with sensory toys and blankets to help with anxiety and for nonverbal children / adults there are communication flashcards to make it easier for them.

Heather Winters- Miami-Dade Sheriffs Office: shared that training is built into a monthly in-service training and providers come in and share their experience of children on the spectrum. Shared that they are open for conjoined training.

Question 3

Hillary Jackson – Agency for Persons with Disabilities: Are all officers CIT trained and what does a caller have to say to get these specialized teams to help when their children when they are going through a crisis?

Habsi Kaba – CIT: shared that every agency has CIT officers, but not all officers are trained. However, there are specialized teams, and agencies are adopting the co responder model in the sense that when a call is being received there are 911 dispatchers who are also trained under CIT and you can request an officer by mentioning mental health or mental situation or simply requesting a CIT trained officer.

The power points presentations utilized during the meeting were shared with all members on the Southern Regional Collaborative email distribution list. In addition, contact information for the presenters was included in the presentation.

IV. 2026 VISON AND REGIONAL APPROACH

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, Regional Operations Manager- DCF SAMH shared the vision of the RBHIC for the year 2026, emphasizing a region-specific approach that will allow for set goals, outcomes, and measurable actions for our counties. She shared the upcoming meeting dates which are April 14,2026, July 15, 2026, and October 15, 2026. Also, the next statewide Lunch and Learn will be held in March and registration information will be sent out in the upcoming weeks.

In addition, the Crisis Response Card was discussed and distributed, which contains a QR code designed to provide quick access to crisis support resources in Miami-Dade and Monroe County. It was explained that the QR code helps community members, families, and providers identify appropriate points of contact during a crisis. Particularly in situations that may not require calling 911. The intent is to simplify access, promote early intervention, and reduce confusion during high stress situations.

Following a ride along with the City of Miami Police Department, **Cristina Perez, Regional Collaboration Coordinator - DCF SAMH**, identified a gap in how existing crisis response resources were shared with the community. Consideration was given to law enforcements day-to-day operations, resulting in the proposal to place a QR code on business sized cards, for ease of storage inside wallets or glove compartments, and a digital version for officers to save on their mobile devices, supporting reduced paperwork and continued digitalization efforts. In collaboration with the Managing Entity, Thriving Mind South Florida, this came to life, and the crisis response system cards have begun circulation.

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH, announced that the RBHIC has intentions of forming sub-collaboratives to address regional gaps identified in 2025. To begin this initiative, it was suggested to form a “Early Education and Prevention” subcommittee as a priority.

Quarterly collaborative meetings will continue to be held in a hybrid format, with in-person sessions held at the downtown **401 N.W. 2nd Avenue, DCF Rhode Building 10th floor, Visionary Conference Room, with an emphasis on networking**.

The collaborative will continue its overarching goal of “Strengthening Community Networks and Cross-Agency Collaboration,” which is aligned with the Commission’s report.

SUCCESS STORIES & IMPACTFUL MOMENTS

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio, DCF SAMH, shared regional success stories from the Mobile Response Team (MRT) which highlighted the collaborative work being performed with the specialty teams in attendance. These stories showcased the community impact of the work being performed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

An opportunity was provided for Public Comment.

No public comment.

VI. CLOSING REMARKS

Lourdes Dorado-Rubio thanked all attendees for their participation.

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

VII. ADJOURN

Cristina Perez adjourned the Southern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration at 12:20 a.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
Arianne Diaz	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Indira Pineda	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Valoria Thomas	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Pamela Quiroga	Carelon Behavioral Health, MMA Plan
Laurinda Andujar	Department of Children and Families, SAMH
Lauren F Rabbito	Miami -Dade County -Community Services Department
Alisa Surenskaya	Managing Entity, Thriving Mind South Florida
Tim Macsuga	Universal Health Services Inc
Jesse Kemper	Department of Children and Families
Marissa Rios	Citrus Health Network
Clinical Director	You & Us ABA
Amanda Gill	Managing Entity, Thriving Mind South Forida
Tracy Shelby	Department of Juvenile Justice, DJJ
Patrick Heidemann	Disability Rights Florida
Maha Hejazi	The Advocate Program

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Marcia Stadler	Fresh Start of Miami-Dade, Inc.
Tonya Harrison	Department of Children and Families- Support Services
Kirk Hall	Florida Agency for Health Care Administration
Kale Baker	Molina Healthcare of FL, MMA Plan
Maureen Dunleavy	Guidance/Care Center, Inc.
Tamara, Peer Bridger POTM	Fresh Start of Miami-Dade, Inc.
Michelle Raines	HCA Florida Aventura Hospital
Monique F. Peele	Sunshine Health, MMA Plan
Gina Rieger	Nicklaus Children's Hospital
Tara J Bryant	Optum/UHC, MMA Plan
Latasha Jones	Department of Children and Families- Family Navigator
Natalia Galkina	Keralty Hospital - Miami, FL
Brad Hill	Department of Children and Families, Support Services
Nusrat Karim	New Horizons CMHC
Ute Gazioch	Florida Behavioral Health Association
Jennifer Johnson	Florida Behavioral Health Association
Robert Salazar	Carelon Behavioral Health
Agape Rehab Conf Room	Agape Network Inc.
Mercedes Perez de Salazar	Keralty Hospital
Mildred Rodriguez	Equality Mental Health
Laurie Gerhard	LAB
Lina Menendez	Epilepsy Alliance Florida
Karen Moore	SPF Transportation
Kristen M Griego	The Mindful Therapy Studio Video Office
Hasbun Rene Miguel	Larkin Community Hospital
Samantha Beltran	Mount Sinai Medical Center
Risa Schwartz	Mount Siani Medical Center
Dagmara C Dupuy	Larkin Community Hospital
Crucita Martinez	Larkin Community Hospital
Alexandra Schwartzman	Larkin Community Hospital
Hillary Jackson	Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Erin Bigler	Oxford House, Inc
Silvio Padilla	Navigate Program with Citrus Health Network
Mary Distasio	Citrus Health Network
Josue Tercero	Community Health of South Florida Inc

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TarrahSwann	Community Health of South Florida, Inc
Maricarmen Soto	Community Health of South FL
Joseph Santeiro	Florida Healthcare Systems
Taja Rivers	Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Barbara Suarez	Alliance for Aging
Laura Naredo	Thriving Mind South Florida
Dulce Rodrguez	Miami Veterans Affairs
Luciana Beltran	Mobile Response Team
Adilen Cruz	Passageway Community Residences
Melissa Rosa	Miami Beach Police Department
Mina Levin	Westcare Mobile Response Team
Islamiyat Adebisi	Department of Health
Mary Jaramillo	Mount Sinai Medical Center
Alejandra Godoy	Agape Network
Kadiya Lewis	Citrus Health Network
Orlando Castro	Larkin Hospital
Denice Frieden	National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)
Jarrett Ramsey	Community Health of South Florida Inc
Claudio Perez	Agape Network
Melissa Sanabria	Department of Children and Families - Adult Protective Services
Raylin Ubeda	Department of Children and Families - Adult Protective Services
Joquetta Batista	Fresh Start of Miami Dade
Amanda Dominguez	Miami Dade County -Community Services Department
Armond Johnson	Career Source CCHR
Borinquen “Bo” Hall	Miami Beach Police Department
Norma Perez -Vivanco	Jackson South Medical Center
Evens Dorlean	Hope Florida
Dr Mari Carmen Rodrguez	Imans Light Foundation
Habsi Kaba	11th Judicial CIT
Brittany Benjamin	NAMI Miami Dade
Catheleen Kealy	Veterans Affairs Miami
Maria Preciado	Imans Light Foundation
Miacheal Socarras	Co Responder Team City of Miami Police

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Orestes Garcia	Banyan Health Systems
Heather Winters	Miami Dade Sheriff's Office
Yolanda Jefferson	Co Responder Team City of Miami Police
Tanahiry Gonzalez	Co Responder Team City of Miami Police