



## Florida Behavioral Health Association

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### **2025 Behavioral Health Day Focuses on Whole-Person Care**

*~More than one hundred Behavioral Health Partners in Tallahassee to Advocate and Educate~*

**Tallahassee, FL** –Mental health and substance use providers from across Florida stood shoulder to shoulder at the Florida Historic Capitol Museum on Wednesday to celebrate this year’s Behavioral Health Day. Each year the Florida Behavioral Health Association (FBHA), its over 70 community mental health and substance use treatment provider members, and statewide partners gather in Tallahassee to advocate on behalf of Florida’s families.

“Behavioral Health Day provides us the opportunity to share the incredible innovations Florida’s mental health and substance use treatment providers and partners are doing each day to help heal our communities,” **said Melanie Brown-Woofter, President and CEO of FBHA.** “As many of us know, behavioral health challenges and disorders can affect anyone at any time, and making sure that every family has access to services is our top priority.”

During the event, speakers addressed the importance of mental health and substance use disorder treatments, whole-person care, and transformative innovations, and shared why it is important to get the right treatment services when necessary. Some of those steps include:

- Improving treatment by transitioning the current system into a transformative, innovative care model that brings together siloed programs and systems.
- Ensuring that patients receive the services they need when they need them, regardless of who funds the services.

- Receiving whole-person care under one roof or through coordinated partnerships, ultimately removing the patients' burdens of having to find different treatment providers and worrying about payments.
- Committing to safe, secure, and affordable housing.

FBHA and its vast network of partners remain committed to emphasizing the importance of comprehensive mental health services.

Joining FBHA at the news conference was Shevaun Harris, secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), Stefan Grow, chief of staff for the Florida Agency for Healthcare Administration (AHCA), and Scott Burgess, CEO of David Lawrence Centers in Naples and chair of FBHA.

"Our Department is responsible for supporting the behavioral health system of care for individuals with serious mental illnesses or substance abuse disorders, and with the help of our many partners we have come so far in building a robust system," said **DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris**. "Thanks to the leadership of Governor and First Lady DeSantis, and the Florida Legislature, and through investments to reduce the number of Baker Acts and increase access to key services such as the 988 Florida Lifeline, Care Coordination, multidisciplinary teaming models, mobile response teams and substance abuse prevention and treatment, we are better able to support recovery and resiliency."

"Governor and First Lady DeSantis have been champions in their unwavering commitment to mental health, prioritizing awareness and creating meaningful improvements to Florida's system of care," said **AHCA Chief of Staff Stefan Grow**. "Our community partners are integral to this process to ensure individuals have access to quality mental health services to live healthier lives. AHCA proudly supports its state partners and is honored to be included here today."

Behavioral Health Day would not have been possible without Representative Traci Koster who works tirelessly in Tallahassee to fight not only for the needs of her constituents but also for the overall well-being of all Floridians.

"I am deeply committed to ensuring that every Floridian has access to the tools and resources needed to thrive in their mental well-being," said **Representative Traci Koster**. "Advocating for mental health and substance use treatment is a cause I fight for every day, both in Tallahassee and within my district."

FBHA's 2025 Behavioral Health Day was made possible by the collaboration with organizations including:

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Florida Association of Managing Entities
- Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
- Florida Psychiatric Society
- Florida Recovery Friendly Workplace

- Mental Health Association of Central Florida
- NAMI Florida
- Net Institute – Center for Addiction and Recovery Education

Advocates also met with elected leaders to spread the message of hope, resilience, recovery, and healing.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, dial 9-8-8. Hope Navigators, created by First Lady Casey DeSantis' [HopeFlorida initiative](#), can help families and children get connected to behavioral health services.

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*FBHA represents over 70 community mental health and substance use treatment providers throughout the state. FBHA's members span from Pensacola to Key West, serve over 604,000+ individuals each year, and provide services in every county in Florida. These community providers primarily serve the uninsured, underinsured, and the Medicaid populations. Visit [Floridabha.org](http://Floridabha.org) to find a list of community providers and get connected with mental health and substance use treatment along with other services.*