

Florida Behavioral Health Association

Justice Division

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2025|9-10am | Zoom

Attendees: Co-chairs Maria Alvarez and Ryan Roelans, Cheryl Bello, Stephanie Thompson, Cecilia Denmark, Jennifer Dellesanto, Steve Blank, Ivan Cosimi, Nangy Pulsfus, Roger Johnson, William Delaney, Yolanda Dorsey, Asha Pererya, Maureen Dunleavy, Alan Paulin, Mark Whalen, Roaya Tyson, Yaberci Perez-Cubillan, Josue Tercero

Staff: MK Graham, Linda Macdonald, Shane Messer, and Jennifer Johnson

Co-chairs Maria Alvarez and Ryan Roelans called the meeting to order at 9am. The first agenda item was approval of the minutes from the November 20, 2024, meeting. Cheryl Bello made a motion to approve the minutes; Nangy Pulsfus seconded the motion; and the minutes were approved.

The first agenda item was a continued discussion from the November meeting about advocacy efforts for the 2025 legislative. Shane Messer, FBHA Director of Government Relations, highlighted and reiterated the discussion at the November meeting – that given several factors associated with this year's legislative landscape; Department of Corrections' (DOC) efforts to internally manage and spend the total allocation; and the rate increases over the past two year an educational approach vs. a specific ask for advocacy would be the optimal approach. FBHA is finalizing a one-pager that providers can use when they meet with local and state stakeholders, and Shane said that FBHA can work with our lobbyists starting in February to have some meetings with new chairs and committee staff.

Co-chair Roelans shifted to the next agenda item to follow up on waitlists and circuit court support that was also discussed at the November meeting. The Division previously discussed that, in addition to general outreach to circuit courts, the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) had offered specific outreach to circuit courts. With the exception of one member in a specific circuit, providers reported that specific outreach was not necessary at this time; the member agreed that they would follow up separately with Jennifer Johnson, FBHA Senior Director of Public Policy. Jennifer will also touch base with OSCA about general education.

The next agenda item was the workshop with DOC scheduled for February 10. Jennifer provided an overview of the 2021 workshop that FBHA hosted for providers to discuss administrative and programmatic issues and challenges with DOC, which resulted in positive change and improved communication. While the first workshop was 1½ days, the February 10 work will be a condensed two-hour version. Providers highlighted several topics, for example that providers are limited in treatment decisions not being part of the program, for example, aftercare, and repeat fines for items that are not within providers' control, for example, hurricane-related actions. To develop an agenda, providers agreed to email Jennifer issues that they would like to discuss at the meeting. The meeting will be held at FBHA Carriage House on Monday, February 10 from 12-2pm; a virtual option will also be provided.

The final item on the agenda was related to background screening can rap sheets. Jennifer shared that this is an issue that has come up with the new Clearinghouse – rap sheets are no longer available. She is meeting with AHCA later that afternoon to clarify. Related to this issue, providers expressed that it would be helpful to get clarification from DOC about rap sheets and whether they need to have maintain copies in employee files.

Under new business, members mentioned additional items that could be addressed during – completion of certificates and updates on T4C trainings.

Seeing the meeting time elapsed, the co-chairs adjourned the meeting at 3pm. The next meeting is March 19.