

# FAME's Monthly Roundup

May and June 2021

## **SURFSIDE CONDO COLLAPSE: Thriving Mind with Jewish Family Services assisting families**



In response to the recent Surfside condo collapse, Thriving Mind is working with Jewish Community Services in providing emergency mental health care services to families, first responders, and community members traumatized by recent events. "Our top priority is ensuring that all those impacted by this tragedy have access to the behavioral

health care services they may need during and after this tragedy," said CEO Dr. John Newcomer. "Thriving Mind, along with the six other Managing Entities statewide, are here to support Floridians during their times of need."

## **FAME's Quarterly Meeting**

Managing Entities from around the state met in person for the first time since the pandemic began over a year ago. State Rep. David Smith joined our discussion on the barriers to care and possible solutions to enhance services. State Rep. Christine Hunschofsky talked about the Behavioral Health Commission that was recently signed into law. DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris and Assistant Secretary Erica Floyd Thomas reviewed DCF's Strategic Plan and other priorities.



## **Children's Mental Health Coordination**

Immediately upon passage of HB 945 in 2020, FAME created a team of representatives from each Managing Entity to lead the development of a plan that promotes a coordinated system of care for children. The team methodically reviewed each section of HB 945 and worked with

Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network who developed a template, timeline, organizational framework, products, and key terms.

Most recently, the focus has been on laws and standards around system-wide communication and engagement of local stakeholders. Another focus has been on sharing best practices across multi-systems.



*The Managing Entities were joined by Louis De La Parte Florida Mental Health Institute to review Mobile Response Team protocols for school interventions.*

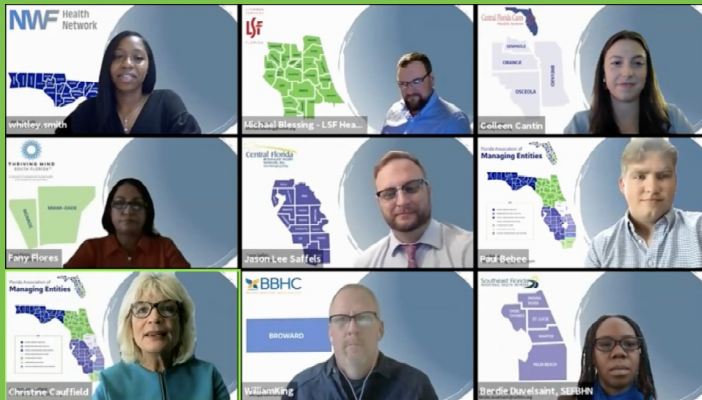
## Managing Entities Produce Project Opioid Webinars

Project Opioid partnered with Central Florida Cares Health System, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network, and LSF to produce a series of webinars from healing our communities from prescription drug misuse to peer support specialists. Click the link below to view the webinars and sign up for webinars coming up soon!



[View the Webinars!](#)

## Safe and Stable Housing: Top Priority



FAME presented before the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition's (FSHC) Annual Summit on June 9 to discuss housing programs in each region and best practices. Special thanks to Dr. Christine Cauffield for moderating the presentation. The presenters were: Whitley Smith from NWF Health Network; Michael Blessing from LSF Health Systems; Colleen Cantin from

Central Florida Cares Health Network; Jason Saffels from Central Florida Behavioral Health Network; Berdie Duvelsaint from Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network; William King from Broward Behavioral Health Coalition; and Fany Flores from Throwing Mind South Florida. Thank you to all of those who attended.

[Download the Powerpoint!](#)

## Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council

On June 10, FAME participated in the

quarterly Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council meeting at DCF's new Tallahassee headquarters. FAME was joined by DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris, Assistant Secretary Erica Floyd-Thomas, Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees, and other departments and stakeholders to review the zero suicide initiative. **The next quarterly meeting is September 2 at 1pm with First Lady DeSantis.**



## Welcome DCF Secretary Harris and Assistant Secretary Floyd-Thomas



Gov. DeSantis recently appointed Shevaun Harris to Secretary of Department of Children and Families. Sec. Harris brought with her Erica Floyd-Thomas as Assistant Secretary of Substance Abuse and Mental Health. Both Sec. Harris and Asst. Sec. Floyd-Thomas come from AHCA where they held leadership positions. FAME welcomes Sec. Harris and Asst. Sec. Floyd-Thomas and look forward to our partnership.

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## In the Spotlight



Each month, FAME will spotlight those who have made a positive impact on behavioral health in Florida. We will showcase leaders from state government, Managing Entities, providers, and stakeholders.

### **State Rep. Christine Hunschofsky**

**Nominated by Silvia Quintana, CEO, Broward Behavioral Health Coalition**

State Representative Christine Hunschofsky is our legislator of the month for June. The freshman representative passed key pieces of legislation in her first session, including the behavioral health commission which will reevaluate Florida's mental health system of care. Hunschofsky met with the Managing Entity leadership team where she discussed her passion for quality mental health care and her vision for her next legislative session.



State Rep. Christine Hunschofsky earned a bachelor's degree in administration and philosophy from Boston University and an MBA from Babson College. After moving to Parkland, she became active in local government and community efforts. In 2016, Rep. Hunschofsky was the second woman in Parkland's history elected to be mayor and was re-elected without opposition in 2018. While mayor, Rep. Hunschofsky was appointed to co-chair the United States Conference of Mayors Small Cities Forum and testified before the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force of the 116th Congress. In 2019, she joined the American Food Coalition advocating for flood mitigation legislation in Washington DC and

was inducted into the Broward County Women's Hall of Fame. Rep. Hunschofsky was elected to the Florida House of Representatives for District 96 in November of 2020.

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### **John Newcomer, MD** **President and CEO Thriving Mind South Florida**

In the early hours of June 24th, the condo collapsed to the ground, entrapping over 150 individuals inside. As the Red Cross and FEMA deployed their resources to the disaster site, Thriving Mind South Florida, which routinely deploys Crisis Counseling teams during disasters, worked to fund and deploy one of its contracted mental healthcare providers, Jewish Community Services, to assist with the behavioral health needs of those effected. John W. Newcomer, M.D., serves as president and CEO of Thriving Mind South Florida, which is the safety net mental health managing entity for Miami Dade and Monroe Counties, funded by the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families, as well as other federal, state, local and private sources. Thriving Mind, with over 40 contracted healthcare provider agencies across the region and close working relationships with the schools, the Homeless Trust, law enforcement, the courts and county and municipal leadership, has a deep understanding of local behavioral health needs and long track record of leadership in responding to mental health and substance use treatment and prevention needs that affect the community. Dr. Newcomer's extensive medical experience includes a psychiatry training at Stanford University and service as a principal investigator on grants funded by the National Institutes of Health and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for almost 30 years. Dr. Newcomer has held leadership positions at Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, and Florida Atlantic University. In 2014 he was named to the Thomson Reuters List of Highly Cited Researchers. In the public sector, he previously served as Chair of the Medicaid Drug Utilization Review Board for the State of Missouri for 13 years, providing oversight for \$1.2 billion in pharmacy expenditures.



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**PROVIDER:**  
**Jewish Community**  
**Services**

In response to the Surfside condo collapse, Jewish Community Services of South Florida is providing

emergency mental health care services to families, first responders, and community members traumatized by recent events. CEO Miriam Singer, and Heather Winters, have been providing ongoing reports. Individuals in need of on-site crisis counseling can visit the Family Reunification and Resource Centers that have been established by Miami-Dade County so that they can receive services through JCS. The Department of Children and Families is funding Thriving Mind to reimburse JCS for onsite crisis services provided to date and moving forward. Mental health services are available onsite in Surfside or by calling 2-1-1, a free, confidential helpline that connects Floridians in crisis to local community-based organizations.

## David Daniels, NWF Health Network

Nominated by Natalie Kelly

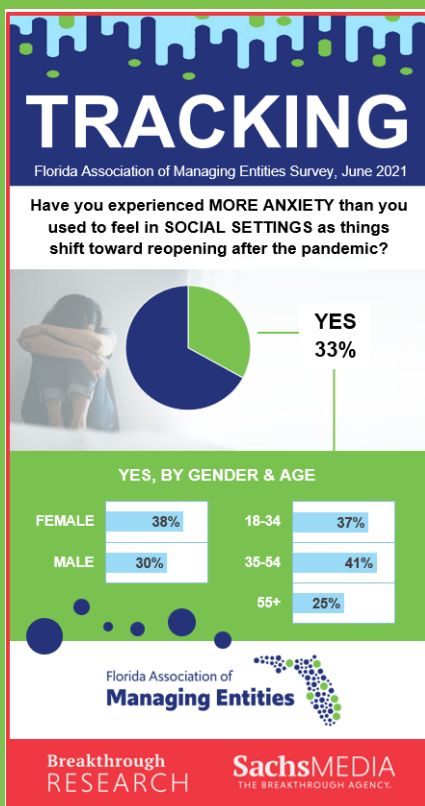


We would like to give a special token of our appreciation to NWF Health Network's Managing Entity Program Manager, David Daniels. During the COVID-19 pandemic, David spent countless hours compiling data from each managing entity so FAME could provide updates on data and trends to DCF and leaders.

All Managing Entities COVID-19 Service Availability Status Report																	
Service Level Availability by Circuit based on LICENSED BED CAPACITY																	
Circuit	Circuit Utilization Status				Rehabilitation Services				Residential Services				Residential Services Sublease Status				
	Classified Capacity	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff	Staff
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## [Survey Shows 1 in 3 Floridians Experiencing Increased Social Anxiety Following COVID-19 Pandemic Isolation](#)

The survey into mental health status, conducted for the Florida Association of Managing Entities, found significant differences among various demographic groups...“With people getting vaccinated and transitioning from the pandemic’s more isolated lifestyle to greater social settings, it’s concerning that one-third of us are experiencing higher levels of social anxiety,” said Natalie Kelly, CEO of the Florida Association of Managing Entities: [Space Coast Daily \(Brevard Region\)](#), [WUSF Tampa NPR Radio](#), [Opera News \(National\)](#), [WMFE 90.7 Orlando NPR Radio](#), [WFSU Tallahassee Radio](#), [Kaiser Health News \(National\)](#)



[Dealing with trauma](#) Dr. Christine Caulfield is a clinical psychologist whose expertise includes substance trauma recovery, grief, and loss issues. 6/26/21 News4Jax

[Governor and First Lady DeSantis Continue to Strengthen Florida Through Vital Funding for Mental Wellbeing and Substance Abuse Services](#) On June 2, Governor Ron DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis reinforced their unwavering commitment to strengthen Florida families through significant funding included in the 2021-2022 budget to support the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) as they continue bolstering access to life-changing



## [Managing 'Reopening Anxiety' And Tips To Spot It In Kids](#)

A survey conducted earlier this month by the Florida Association of Managing Entities, which works with behavioral health providers around the state, found one in three Floridians are experiencing more social anxiety than they did prior to the pandemic. 6/25/21 WMFE 90.7 NPR Orlando

## [Raise awareness about mental health in May](#)

Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, based in Tampa, encourages Floridians to prioritize their mental health and seek behavioral health services when needed.... Linda McKinnon, CEO, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Tampa 5/10/21 Sarasota Herald-Tribune

## [Drug overdose deaths in Duval increased during the pandemic, especially in Black and Latinx communities](#)

Dr. Christine Cauffield, who has been appointed to serve on the White House National Drug Control Policy Advisory Panel, said in Friday’s meeting that pandemic-related isolation combined with peoples’ co-occurring mental health struggles has exacerbated an already-existing problem. 6/25/21 Jacksonville.com

## [Florida should remove restrictions for peer recovery specialists, behavioral health leader says](#)

Christine Cauffield, MD, CEO of behavioral health Managing Entity LSF Health Systems, says it’s time to invest in effective behavioral health support systems. That includes easing licensing restrictions for certified recovery peer specialists. 6/28/21 State of Reform

## [State sending mental wellness teams to Sunrise after condo collapse](#)

Dr. Christine Cauffield, CEO of LSF Health Systems, has been deployed to help first responders during several traumatic events, including 9/11 and the crash of Flight 587 in 2001. 6/29/21 News4Jax

## [Florida rescinds COVID-19 Medicaid](#)

behavioral health services.  
6/9/21 *Alachua Chronicle*

**[Take care of your well-being: May is Mental Health Awareness Month.](#)** Central Florida Behavioral Health Network CEO Linda McKinnon, in a letter to the editor in the Tampa Bay Times, highlights the importance of prioritizing your mental health and seeking behavioral health services when needed.  
5/10/21 *Tampa Bay Times*

**[Ron and Casey DeSantis are touting a historic budget for mental health.](#)** “Opioid overdoses have skyrocketed in Central Florida, and I applaud Gov. DeSantis for taking this issue head-on by prioritizing mental health services and combating the opioid epidemic, which has plagued Florida and claimed lives for far too long,” said Maria Bledsoe, CEO of Central Florida Cares Health System. “By including more than \$137.6 million for behavioral health needs and \$3 million for the 211 helpline, Gov. DeSantis has taken an important step in ensuring all Floridians have access to the behavioral health care they need to live healthy and productive lives,” said Natalie Kelly, CEO of the Florida Association of Managing Entities.  
6/12/21 *Florida Politics*

**[How to talk to your children about Florida condo collapse](#)** News4Jax reporter Jennifer Ready explains how parents should talk to their kids about this incident with LSF CEO Dr. Christine Cauffield.  
5/26/21 *News4Jax*

**[FSU Football, Fitzgerald help local groups provide beds for 100 youths](#)** Before the big surprise was unveiled, there was fun from the start for children selected from some of Tallahassee’s elementary schools, North West Florida Health Network, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Big Bend.  
5/24/21 *Warchant.com*

**[First Lady Casey DeSantis has been central to the state's mental health efforts.](#)** “By including more than \$137.6 million for behavioral health needs and \$3 million for the 2-1-1 helpline, Governor DeSantis has taken an important step in ensuring all Floridians have access to the behavioral health care they need to live healthy and productive lives,” FAME CEO Natalie Kelly said.  
6/8/21 *Florida Politics*

**[Patel Named a 2021 CFO of the Year Honoree by TB Business Journal](#)** The

**[flexibilities](#)** Christine Cauffield, MD, director of behavioral health managing entity LSF Health Systems, says the state is still in the midst of a critical shortage of behavioral health professionals, particularly for those in the non-profit sector.  
*State of Reform* 6/30/21

**[Pandemic increases concerns about mental health for Floridians.](#)** May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and Southeast Behavioral Health Network encourages Floridians to mind their mental health and seek behavioral health services when needed.  
5/9/21 *TCPalm.com*

**[Winners and Losers Emerging from the 2021 Legislative](#)** WINNER: Florida Association of Managing Entities — The skyrocketing number of Floridians experiencing mental health issues, like depression and anxiety, has been a side effect of the pandemic. And now, more than ever, Floridians need access to behavioral health care services. The Legislature stepped up to the plate to fully fund behavioral health services, ensuring Floridians can lead lives to their fullest potential. Hat tip to First Lady Casey DeSantis, who has prioritized mental health services since moving into the Governor’s Mansion. In on the win — FAME CEO Natalie Kelly and Sachs Media.

5/8/21 *Florida Politics*

**[Managing Entities Gear Up for Active Hurricane](#)** “Hurricane preparedness starts with the essentials, like water and food, but it should also include knowing how to take care of your mental health in the wake of a disaster,” said Florida Association of Managing Entities CEO Natalie Kelly.  
5/24/21 *Capital Soup*

**[Managing Mental Health](#)** Dr. Christine Cauffield, CEO of LSF Health Systems, spoke with Action News Jax about managing your mental health during COVID-19 and the importance of seeking help when needed.  
5/21/21 *Action News Jax*

**[Telehealth video conferencing demand explodes for North Carolina provider](#)** Another area in critical need for telehealth services is jails, as the long distances required for jail staff and inmates to travel for in-person treatment sessions made access limited. LTI, in partnership with Big Bend Community Based Care, a health care network based in Tallahassee, Florida, provided telehealth kiosks for use in five rural county jails in North Florida.

Tampa Bay Business Journal recently recognized Julie Patel as a 2021 CFO of the Year honoree. Patel, who holds an MBA degree, is the chief financial officer of the Central Florida Behavioral Health Network.

6/7/21 India West

### **Florida Trend: Movers & Influencers**

Dr. Christine Cauffield of LSF health Systems was again named one of floor's top women nonprofit leaders by The Commonwealth Institute.

5/31/21 Common Wealth Institute

5/14/21 Kiosk Marketplace

**Florida child well-being improves, but ranks 35th overall in nation** Christine Cauffield, MD, CEO of Lutheran Services Florida Health Systems, was concerned about the increasing severity of child abuse cases.

6/25 State of Reform

## **2021 Bills signed into law**

**Senate Bill 96, Child Welfare by Sen. Lauren Book and House Children, Family, and Seniors Committee** The bill makes a several changes relating to the child welfare system, including the intake process and reporting requirements, investigations, penalties, the confidentiality of records and reports. Further, the bill makes changes to the Department of Children and Families' duties, lead agencies and *Managing Entities'* duties, new programs, and establishes a Behavioral Health Commission.

**SB 2006, Emergency Management by Sen. Danny Burgess** The bill better equips Florida to address a pandemic or other public health emergency, prohibits requirements of COVID-19-vaccination documentation to access, enter, or receive service from businesses, governmental entities, and educational institutions, and protects Floridians from local orders that unnecessarily infringe rights or liberties in the name of addressing a purported emergency.

**SB 804, Substance Abuse Services by Sen. Gayle Harrell, Rep. Mike Caruso (Sober Homes)** The bill makes several changes to provisions governing the licensure and regulation of substance abuse treatment programs (service provider), including recovery residences. The bill makes it a third-degree felony to falsify information, or to withhold material facts, on an application for licensure as a substance abuse service provider. Substance abuse service providers operated directly by, or under contract with, any state agency must be licensed by the Department of Children and Families (the DCF) and are not currently subject to a penalty for falsification of information or withholding of material facts in an application for licensure.



**SB 590, School Safety by Senator Harrell, Rep. Chip LaMarca, Rep. Christine Hunschofsky** Requires schools to contact a health care practitioner capable of initiating a Baker Act in person or via telehealth prior to a Baker Act being initiated. The mental health professional may be available to a school district either by contracts or interagency agreements with a local community behavioral health provider, a *Managing Entity*, or a local mobile response team. Alternatively, the mental health professionals may be a direct or contracted employee of the school district. Requires public and charter schools to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parents of a minor student before the student is removed from school, school transportation, or a school-sponsored activity for an involuntary mental health examination.

**HB 701, Behavioral Health Care Services Coverage and Access by Rep. Cyndi Stevenson and Sen. Jason Brodeur** The bill requires the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to submit a report, by January 31 2022, to the Legislature and the Governor regarding complaints received from insureds and subscribers about the adequacy of coverage and access to mental health services through their individual or group health insurance policies or health maintenance organization (HMO) contracts.



## HB 231, Services for Veterans and Their Families by Rep. Ardian Zika and Sen. Gayle Harrell

The bill creates the Florida Veterans Care Coordination Program (program), to provide veterans and their families dedicated behavioral health care referral services, primarily for mental health and substance abuse. Through the program, a veteran may call a separate veteran-dedicated support line to receive assistance and support from a trained, fellow veteran. **The Department of Veterans Affairs and its selected contractor shall work with Managing Entities** to educate service providers about the Florida Veterans Support Line and the Florida Veterans Care Coordination Program.

## HB 241, Parents Bill of Rights by Reps. Cord Byrd and Erin Grall and Sen. Ray Rodrigues

The bill establishes the Parents Bill of Rights. The bill provides that the state, its political subdivisions, any other governmental entity, or other institution may not infringe upon the fundamental rights of a parent to direct the upbringing, education, health care, and mental health of a minor child. If those entities infringe upon a parent's fundamental right, they must demonstrate that the action is reasonable and necessary to achieve a compelling state interest, and the action must be narrowly tailored and not otherwise served by less restrictive means.

## Intern Appreciation Post



Brittany Giesen, held an internship position with FAME during the 2021 spring semester. Brittany monitored all executive and legislative actions, and wrote summaries and articles for FAME's weekly reports. Brittany is graduating later this summer with a master's degree in criminology and public administration. We couldn't be happier for her and all that she has accomplished. **Good luck Brittany on your future endeavors!**

## COO Corner

### *Message from Paul Bebee*

Hello everybody! I cannot believe the first half of the year is already over. As we look ahead to the next couple of months, I wanted to highlight an important awareness campaign that happens every July, Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. It's important to highlight minorities in the mental health space because, among other things, increased stigmas related to mental health care can cause fewer minorities to seek support and counseling services. According to the American Psychiatric Association, racial minorities are less likely to receive mental health care than their white



counterparts. Among those with a mental illness, 48% of white Americans received mental health care compared to 31% of Black and Hispanic Americans. I am proud to work with an organization that values mental health care to minority populations and strives to eliminate barriers to care.

Florida Association of

**Managing Entities**

