

**Opioid Abatement Funding Advisory Board
Pinellas County
August 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

The Opioid Abatement Funding Advisory Board (OAFAB) met in regular session at 8:07 AM on this date in Room 2-304 at the St. Petersburg College Epicenter, 13805 58th Street North, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Lindsay Judah, Chair, City of St. Petersburg Fire Rescue
Dr. Ulyee Choe, Co-Chair, Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County Director
Ricky Butler, City of Pinellas Park Councilman
Kathleen Peters, County Commissioner
Lina Teixeira, City of Clearwater Councilmember

Others Present

Gloria Coffey, Human Services Planning Section Manager
Sara Gordils, Human Services Contracts Section Manager
Joshua Barnett, Ph.D., Behavioral Health Data Scientist
Cody Ward, Assistant County Attorney
Ashley Pabilonia, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

All documents provided to the Clerk's Office have been filed and made a part of the record.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair Judah called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM; whereupon, she confirmed the presence of a quorum and indicated that Executive Aide Ashley Overend is sitting in place of Commissioner Peters until her arrival.

Ms. Gordils indicated that the meeting will proceed with the presentations and agenda as set forth; whereupon, she provided brief information regarding today's meeting, as well as the August 22 meeting and indicated that final scoring will take place following the completion of the three oral presentations, questions and answers, and subsequent discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In response to a query by Chair Judah, Ms. Coffey confirmed that there is no public comment.

RANK & REVIEW – FY 25 – REGIONAL OPIOID ABATEMENT FUNDING TREATMENT AND RECOVERY PROGRAM SERVICES

Oral Presentations

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF GREATER TAMPA BAY

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay Presenters: Jim Coats, Mark Sofia, and Freddy Williams

Partner Presenters: Mary Jo Plews, Healthy Start Coalition; Sandra Kearney, Angels Against Abuse; and Marc Allison, Pinellas County Schools

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Williams provided a brief overview of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay, including details regarding its history and partnerships at the federal, State, and local levels; whereupon, the above-listed presenters discussed various topics, including the following:

- Statistics related to substance abuse
- Services offered by Healthy Start Coalition and its goal to enhance early prevention for pregnant and neonatal families that are substance-involved or have a baby with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

Commissioner Peters arrived at 8:23 AM.

- Services offered by Angels Against Abuse to assist children who have been abused or neglected, including those impacted by substance abuse
- Drug prevention programs offered by the Boys & Girls' Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay, in partnership with the Pinellas County Schools District
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay's funding application's compatibility with the OAFAB's priority recommendations, core strategies and approved uses, and priority populations
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay's commitment to being fiscally responsible and its capacity to leverage national resources
- Continuum of services and care that would be provided through the partnership between Boys & Girls' Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay, Healthy Start Coalition, and Angels Against Abuse

Thereupon, Ms. Gordils indicated that, at the Board's discretion, Dr. Barnett may ask questions of the presenters regarding current best practices and funding; and that the question and answer session will now begin.

Responding to comments and queries by Ms. Teixeira, Ms. Plews, with input from Mr. Sofia, provided clarifying information regarding Healthy Start Coalition's in-home therapy service and the budget included in the funding application.

In response to comments and queries by Mr. Butler, Mr. Sofia expressed concern related to potentially receiving half of the funding requested in the application; whereupon, Mr. Williams, with input from Mr. Sofia and Ms. Plews, provided details regarding the proposed budget included in the application, indicating that the intention is to ensure full funding specific to prevention; and that this would allow a known model, with proven results, to be provided at scale.

Responding to comments and queries by Dr. Choe, Messrs. Sofia and Williams discussed the possibility of expanding Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay's program curriculum beyond the seventh grade.

In response to queries by Dr. Choe, Ms. Kearney briefly discussed client capacity at the Angels Visitation Center and provided statistics pertaining to the number of clients served each week. Responding to comments and queries by Commissioner Peters, Ms. Kearney also provided information pertaining to Angels Against Abuse's 1st Five/BabyCat Program and services offered to children in the foster care system.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Peters, Ms. Plews briefly discussed Healthy Start Coalition's Plan of Safe Care, including the process through which a safety plan for babies diagnosed with NAS is developed and implemented, as well as challenges associated with identifying babies born with NAS; whereupon, in response to additional comments and queries by Commissioner Peters, Ms. Kearney, with input from Ms. Gordils, provided information regarding Angels Against Abuse's partnership with Directions for Living and their funding sources.

In response to a query by Dr. Choe, Ms. Plews, with input from Mr. Sofia, provided information regarding the intent to utilize a portion of the requested funding to replace eliminated funding.

Responding to a query by Chair Judah, Mr. Williams briefly described Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay's plans to capture data for enhanced strategizing and resource allocation and to collaborate with other agencies selected for funding.

Responding to queries by Dr. Barnett, Ms. Plews, with input from Mr. Sofia, provided information related to Healthy Start Coalition's Plan of Safe Care, including details regarding its development, the experience and licensure of staff involved, and coordination between partners for its implementation.

The meeting was recessed at 9:42 AM and reconvened at 9:57 AM.

WESTCARE GULFCOAST-FLORIDA, INC.

Presenters: Steve Blank, Janelle Dickson, David Hassett, Linda Welborn, and Emily Zdanio

Mr. Blank introduced the members of his team; whereupon, he displayed a video summarizing WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.'s services and provided brief comments regarding the utilization of a digital campaign to bring awareness to the organization. Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, he discussed various topics, including the following:

- Statistics regarding the number of clients who received treatment for opioid use disorder from WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.
- Services and programs provided at residential facilities
- Services provided through preventative and outpatient programs, including medication assisted treatment (MAT)
- WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.'s Alumni Program
- Kitchen upgrades requested in the funding application
- Community partnerships and rapid referrals
- Sustainability of services through development of relationships and efforts to secure alternative funding
- Data collection and sharing systems
- Navigation and admissions related to the Mustard Seed Inn and Turning Point facilities
- Scalability of the budget included in the funding application

In response to queries by Ms. Teixeira, Mr. Blank, with input from Ms. Welborn, provided clarifying information regarding the utilization of alternative funding sources for the

aforementioned kitchen upgrades, WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.'s data capturing and sharing practices, and funding of peer support via other budget streams.

Responding to queries by Mr. Butler, Mr. Blank provided details related to referral sources for WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.'s youth prevention programs.

In response to queries by Dr. Choe, Mr. Blank discussed WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.'s partnership with Help Us Help U, efforts related to staff retention and recruitment, and a proposed increase to bed capacity at the Turning Point facility.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Peters, Mr. Blank, with input from Mr. Hassett and Ms. Dickson and Welborn, provided details regarding decreased referrals to the Davis-Bradley Community Involvement Center, availability at residential facilities, the mobile MAT unit's staffing and service area, and WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.'s partnerships and outreach efforts to expand services beyond St. Petersburg and into north county.

At the request of Dr. Choe, Ms. Gordils provided details pertaining to the partnership between the County and WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc. regarding various grants and monitoring conducted by staff to ensure that there are no issues related to the funding overlap; whereupon, Dr. Barnett and Ms. Gordils briefly discussed the collection of optimal data set data from WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.

In response to queries by Dr. Barnett, Ms. Zdanio provided information regarding WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.'s MAT program, including details related to qualifications for receiving treatment, opioid use disorder in remission, and dosing strategy; whereupon, responding to additional queries by Dr. Barnett, Mr. Blank provided brief comments regarding cognitive behavioral therapy provided by WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc., which is part of the proposal submitted in the funding application.

Responding to a query by Dr. Choe, Mr. Blank indicated that WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc. was awarded opioid settlement funds from Pasco County; and that the funds will go toward outreach and engagement in areas that are difficult to reach in and around Pasco County.

PROGRAM SOLICITATION DISCUSSION

Ms. Gordils reviewed next steps, including that the members will meet on August 22 to score the presentations; and that, at that point, the Board may make a motion to either allow staff to negotiate with the selected applicants and return to the Board for approval or to allow staff to negotiate under a set of parameters and move forward.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – ORAL PRESENTATIONS AUGUST 22, 2025 (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM)

Chair Judah indicated that the next OAFAB meeting will be held on August 22 in this room.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon Chair Judah's call for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Butler made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Choe and carried unanimously; whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03 AM.