

MINUTES

Monday, November 30, 2020 12:10 P.M.

Palm Beach County School & Community Safety Initiative Behavioral Health Track

Online via Zoom



Members Present:

Chairman Judge James Martz, Circuit Court Judge

Chief Sean Brammer, LEPC Chairman, FAU Police Department

Darcy J. Davis, Chief Executive Officer, Health Care District of Palm Beach County

June Eassa, Ed.S, Assistant Superintendent of Student Wellness, Palm Beach County School District

Megan Eaton, Circuit 15 Juvenile Justice Advisory Board Co-Chair and Public Defender's Office

Tammy Fields, Director, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department

Lt. Randy Foley, Behavioral Services Division, PBC Sheriff's Office

Deputy Chief Robin Griffin-Kitzerow, Florida Atlantic University Police Department

Sharon L'Herrou, President/CEO, 211 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast

Beau Lynch, Behavioral Health Executive Director, JFK Medical Center North Campus

Kevin McCormick, ESE Director, Palm Beach County School District

Danielle Ouellette, LCSW, Behavioral Services Division, PBC Sheriff's Office

Dr. Gena Rowlands, Senior Planner, PBC Sheriff's Office

Robin Russo, Director of Student Well Being, Palm Beach State College

Judge Rosemarie Scher, 15th Judicial Circuit

Jill Sorensen, Director of Children's System of Care, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network

Sara Talley, Special Agent, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sharon Tarlow, Education Coordinator, JFK Medical Center North Campus

Captain Mike Waites, Palm Beach County School District Police Department

Rosella Weymer, Associate Vice President, Human Resources and School Health, Health Care District of Palm Beach County

Magistrate Maxine Williams, 15th Judicial Circuit

Craig Williams, State Attorney's Office 15th Judicial Circuit

Lisa Williams-Taylor, Ph.D., CEO, Children's Services Council

William Wims, South County Mental Health Director of Acute Care

Lauren Zuchman, LCSW, Executive Director, BeWellPBC

Guests Present:

Cassandra Atkin-Plunk, Ph.D., Associate Director and Associate Professor, Florida Atlantic University

Vaughn Crichlow, Ph.D., Associate Dean and Associate Professor, Florida Atlantic University

Simone Piteo, Director of Operations for School Health, Health Care District of Palm Beach County

Stephen Plunk, Graphic Designer, Plunk Designs

JeTawn Shannon, Palm Beach County School District

Lyliah Skinner, Marjory Stoneman Douglas Alumnae

Dr. Precious Skinner-Osei, Florida Atlantic University

Allison Vandever, Director of Nursing, Health Care District of Palm Beach County

CJC Staff Present:

Regenia Herring, Executive Director

Katherine Shover, Senior Criminal Justice Analyst

- I. Welcome and Opening Comments – Chairman Martz
 - a. Advised that a committee update was provided for the Criminal Justice Commission at the November 23rd meeting. He noted that the committee has made significant progress.
- II. Introductions were made.
- III. A motion was made to approve the agenda/minutes by Lisa Williams-Taylor, Ph.D., a second by Deputy Chief Robin Griffin-Kitzerow, and unanimously approved by the membership.
- IV. Baker Act Update: Beau Lynch, Behavioral Health Executive Director, JFK Medical Center North Campus advised that they are working with stakeholders to address the legislative challenges concerning the voluntariness of Baker Acts for minors. It poses a challenge as most of their admissions are involuntary for youth. In addition, they have piloted a process that allows for the JFK North Psychiatry team to complete an amended second opinion by the attending Psychiatrist on the week of their rotation. A recommendation has been received to continue the process as everything is within the current statute and there is no need to formalize with an MOU. Chairman Martz thanked Mr. Lynch for his work on this process.
- V. Dr. Gena Rowlands, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office discussed the inspiration for the

grant. She recounted how she received a call from her dear friend, Dr. Precious Skinner-Osei, on February 14, 2018 to see if she knew anything about the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School incident. Her niece, Lyliah Skinner, was attending Parkland and was inside one of the buildings. The phone call and subsequent conversations with Dr. Skinner-Osei inspired Dr. Rowlands to learn as much as she could about the Parkland event, other mass violence incidents, and potential grant funding opportunities that could support fortifying efforts to prevent such tragedies. They received full support from Sheriff Bradshaw to apply for the grant that was awarded in October 2018. The overarching goal of the grant is to prevent future acts of mass violence through the implementation of several actionable objectives including a robust public awareness campaign. Dr. Rowlands introduced Dr. Skinner-Osei and Lyliah Skinner who attended the meeting to describe their firsthand experience as victims and survivors of this very preventable tragedy.

Dr. Precious Skinner-Osei recounted the events that occurred the day of the Parkland tragedy. Although she has been teaching in a variety of institutions for 21 years she never thought an incident would happen in her community or impact someone so closely related to her. She feels that we often think that young people are resilient, but we lose sight that there are long term consequences. Dr. Skinner-Osei mentioned the struggles she has experienced as a mother thinking about how the tragedy was so close to where her children go to school, as well as the concern about Lyliah going away to college. She has also been impacted as an educator and feels concerned for her safety at work. As a social worker, it gives her the lens to see the incident from multiple perspectives and the need for prevention, as well as intervention. She also discussed community trauma. Dr. Skinner-Osei feels that something needs to be done to prevent future incidents and that the committee is the perfect start.

Lyliah Skinner also shared her story noting that the day was fairly normal with a fire drill earlier in the day. She was in a neighboring building hiding with friends when the incident happened. They were in denial because they couldn't see what was happening, but could hear the incident. It wasn't until they used someone's laptop in the classroom that they realized that an active shooter was in the building causing harm. About two or three hours after school was out they were allowed to evacuate with the SWAT Team. After the incident, she felt numb and mentioned that it was very difficult to return to school to finish her senior year. She noted that even though they had active shooter drills all the time at school that they panicked during the incident. She expressed her concern about desensitization to trauma and that the conversation seems to have dimmed about the tragedy.

Chairman Martz thanked Dr. Precious Skinner-Osei and Lyliah Skinner for the courage of speaking to the committee. He said that it was a good reminder to stay vigilant and to continue to work on making schools safe. Members expressed their gratitude that the guest speakers shared their stories with the committee. Deputy Chief Griffin-Kitzerow mentioned that it was an incredibly painful experience to relive. She felt that the conversation would help to inspire the committee and the mission of keeping our kids safe. Chief Brammer assured Dr. Precious Skinner-Osei and Lyliah Skinner that the discussion won't grow dim especially in Palm Beach County. He mentioned that Chief Frank Kitzerow and Deputy Chief Dan Alexander of the PBC School District Police Department came up with a program called ASHER in which fire and police departments are now training together to prevent future

incidents. He also noted that Sheriff Bradshaw has a comprehensive Behavioral Threat Assessment Team.

Chairman Martz provided an overview of the work that the committee has been doing to improve the mental health response in Palm Beach County. He also discussed the changes in law enforcement response throughout the nation. June Eassa thanked the guest speakers for sharing their stories and noted that the discussion was very valuable for the committee. She mentioned that she oversees the mental health allocation for the School District of Palm Beach County. As a result of the Parkland tragedy, the state has allocated millions of dollars to the school centers. They have thousands of mental health referrals that they have been able to address. Tammy Fields also thanked both of the speakers and mentioned that she was sorry that they went through this experience. She noted that Palm Beach County is one of the few counties that has a department solely devoted to youth programming and direct service delivery in the area of mental health. They work closely with the School District and other providers. She also addressed the importance of trauma informed care. Kevin McCormick mentioned improved coordination between community agencies, the School District and the School Police Department as a result of the tragedy. Director Herring expressed her appreciation for the guest speakers. She also recognized Chairman Martz and Chief Brammer for their efforts to coordinate an effective mental health response.

- VI. Community Awareness Goals: Dr. Gena Rowlands, PBC Sheriff's Office advised that one of the goals for the grant is a robust public awareness campaign. She mentioned that usually there was behavior prior to active attacks that caused others concern or indicated a need for help. The committee developed the website to help people when they are in need to easily obtain intervention services. In addition, they want to create an awareness campaign where people can identify red flags and know where to report concerning behavior. She noted that the committee is working on branding for the campaign, changing the website layout, a magnet, bus stops, billboards, and a summit. Lieutenant Randy Foley, Behavioral Services Unit, PBC Sheriff's Office mentioned that they are working on not only educating the public, but also law enforcement and first responders about the best way to prevent tragedies. They are working with the PBC School Board, FDLE, and the FBI to join efforts on how they can identify and communicate threats on a long-term basis.

VII. Business

- a. Branding and Informational Campaign Update: Stephen Plunk, Graphic Designer, Plunk Designs advised that the community awareness committee has been working on the website and branding. A copy of the revised Aware and Care magnet was sent out to the committee with the slogan "mass violence can be prevented it starts with you". The slogan is an action statement to drive attention to the purpose of the site. Changes will also be made to the website that will focus the messaging. He mentioned that photos will also be incorporated that are more relevant to the message. Director Herring inquired about funding for the campaign. Dr. Rowlands advised that funds are provided by the grant to cover bus wraps, billboards and other materials. Director Herring suggested that the magnet tie into the Parkland tragedy. Members suggested using a hashtag.

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- b. Feedback and thoughts from members – Director Herring thanked Dr. Precious Skinner-Osei and Lyliah Skinner for sharing their experience with the committee and commended them on their strength throughout. She also mentioned the importance of creating a better coordinated mental health system in the county. There are a lot of resources within our county, but to eliminate the silos and improve service delivery, it is important that we work together. Chairman Martz mentioned insights from the active shooter drill that was held at FAU. He thought that it was very informative to see how fire and police worked together. Initially it was awkward, because they weren't used to working in the same command center. He felt that exercise was very valuable and showed the importance of communication. He would like to do the same thing with the committee by having each area of expertise determine their needs and define them as goals for 2021.

VIII. Attachments

- a. Aware and Care Magnet

IX. Next Meeting Date – December 14, 2020

X. Adjourn