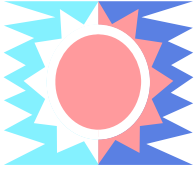


Southwest Florida Coalition for Optimal Behavioral Health and Aging



Meetings are held the 2nd Friday of each month from 10am-12pm
Ruth Cooper Center of Lee Mental Health, Inc.
2789 Ortiz Avenue, Building F Conference Room
Fort Myers, Florida 33905

Co-Chairs

Barbara Kilbride: 239/481-5999 and Karla Morgan: 239/791-1516

Mission:

Work to improve the availability and quality of behavioral health and substance abuse services for Southwest Florida's older adults and their families through networking among service providers to (a) improve communication, understanding and coordination of services; (b) promote opportunities for cross-training; (c) increase public awareness and (d) expand legislative advocacy efforts. (Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties)

Affiliates:

The Southwest Florida Coalition for Optimal Behavioral Health and Aging is comprised of advocates and key stakeholder organizations from the following entities willing to commit time, special talents and resources to carry out the mission and priorities of the coalition:

- Providers of mental health and substance abuse/addiction services
- Providers of human services through the aging network and family service agencies
- Providers of health care services (hospitals, home health agencies, primary care centers)
- Providers of information and assistance (211 and other telephone help lines)
- Public safety officials and first responders (law enforcement and EMS)
- Voluntary health organizations that serve people with dementia type illnesses, Parkinson's disease and Huntington's disease
- Primary and secondary consumers (older adults and their family members)
- Consumer advocacy organizations
- Representatives from state government responsible for planning, policy and program development (AHCA, APD, DCF, DOEA/CARES)
- State universities (Florida Gulf Coast University and the University of South Florida)
- 24-hour care facilities (assisted living facilities and nursing homes)

2006 Priorities

- Evaluate crisis response services for older adults in need of behavioral health assessment and treatment. Consider coordinated actions that can be taken to prevent and/or reduce current gaps in the continuum of behavioral health services for elders.
- Review the current need for crisis/residential beds to treat older adults who have co-morbid physical and behavioral health issues.
- Educate coalition members and about disaster preparedness arrangements and services available to older adults who have a mental illness, substance use disorder and/or dementia. Work with county emergency operations centers and other organizations responsible for disaster preparedness and recovery efforts to ensure disaster plans include provisions for this vulnerable population.
- Increase service providers' skills by identifying and promoting training opportunities on topics pertaining to behavioral health, cognitive abilities and misuse of medications or alcohol that may affect older adults, their families and other members of their informal support network.
- Work with the Florida Coalition for Optimal Mental Health and Aging and other member regional coalitions to support legislative action that may result in positive system changes.