



A personal note from Linda McKinnon, CEO.

## **E-News This Week May 6, 2013**



*May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, and we join with all our community stakeholders and partners to continue efforts to raise awareness for mental health. Mental health disorders are real, common, and treatable and*

*together we can do more to help the 1 in 4 Americans who live with these disorders. For new resources from The National Council to mark the month, go to [link](#).*

*The Florida Legislature concluded its 2013 session last Friday in a burst of bipartisanship, taking advantage of a resurgent economy to overwhelmingly pass the biggest budget in history and giving pay raises to state workers for the first time in seven years. See the article below for more information about session activities and particularly bills that affected the provision of substance abuse and mental health services.*



*This week we E-Meet Board Member Wendy Merson. The complete Board Membership is on our website under a tab at the top of our home page. All Board Member profiles are housed there and you can also navigate to read the minutes of previous board meetings.*

*As always this week's E-News features timely information on special events that recognize people and issues we are passionate about. Here's hoping your week goes well!*

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### **Wendy Merson is a CFBHN Board Member**

#### [E-Meet Wendy](#)



Wendy Merson is the CEO of Windmoor Healthcare of Clearwater, a 120-bed hospital specializing in psychiatric and substance abuse treatment. She has 25 years of executive experience, as well as extensive knowledge in hospital management, program implementation, teamwork, strategic planning and budgeting/fiscal control — skills which she plans to use to help CFBHN strengthen and expand services. She is most proud of her staff at Windmoor Healthcare as day in and day out they display their commitment to helping those in need. Through their tireless efforts, many lives are touched and improved. Together they work to improve the quality of

life for individuals as well as their families in our community. Wendy is an active member of the Mental Health Coalition of Pinellas County, Advisory Board for National Suicide Prevention LifeLine Council, and she serves on the Advisory Board of NAMI of Pinellas. Wendy's volunteer work has always centered on her three daughters and their careers as local and collegiate student athletes. A native of Florida, Wendy is a graduate of Florida State University.

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### **President Proclaims National Mental Health Awareness Month 2013**

#### [Washington, D.C.](#)



"Today, tens of millions of Americans are living with the burden of a mental health problem. They shoulder conditions like depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress and bipolar disorder -- debilitating illnesses that can strain every part of a person's life. And even though help is out there, less than half of children and adults with diagnosable mental health problems receive treatment. During National Mental Health Awareness Month, we shine a light on these issues, stand with

men and women in need, and redouble our efforts to address mental health problems in America.

For many, getting help starts with a conversation. People who believe they may be suffering from a mental health condition should talk about it with someone they trust and consult a health care provider. As a Nation, it is up to all of us to know the signs of mental health issues and lend a hand to those who are struggling. Shame and stigma too often leave people feeling like there is no place to turn. We need to make sure they

know that asking for help is not a sign of weakness -- it is a sign of strength. To find treatment services nearby, call 1-800-662-HELP. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline offers immediate assistance for all Americans, including service members and veterans, at 1-800-273-TALK.

Our commitment cannot end there. We must ensure people have access to the care they need -- which is why the Affordable Care Act will expand mental health and substance use disorder benefits and Federal parity protections for 62 million Americans. For the first time, the health care law will prevent insurers from denying coverage because of a pre-existing condition. The Act already requires new health plans to cover recommended preventive services like depression screening and behavioral assessments for children at no extra cost to patients.

My Administration will keep building on those achievements. Earlier this year, I was proud to launch the BRAIN Initiative -- a new partnership between government, scientists, and leaders in the private sector to invest in research that could unlock new treatments for mental illness and drive growth throughout our economy. We have made unprecedented commitments to improving mental health care for veterans suffering from traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. And we have proposed new funding for mental health programs that will help teachers and other adults recognize the signs of mental illness in children, improve mental health outcomes for young people, and train 5,000 more mental health professionals to serve our youth.

Mental health problems remain a serious public health concern, but together, our Nation is making progress. This month, I encourage all Americans to advance this important work by raising awareness about mental health and lending strength to all who need it.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2013 as National Mental Health Awareness Month. I call upon citizens, government agencies, organizations, health care providers, and research institutions to raise mental health awareness and continue helping Americans live longer, healthier lives.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh."

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## **NAMI Polk Sponsoring Parents and Teachers Conference Saturday May 11**

[International and local experts will focus on children/family's needs for school success in Lakeland](#)

There is **NO CHARGE** for this one day conference designed for teachers and parents interested in recognizing the symptoms of early onset of mental illness in children and adolescents. The conference will be held at the Lakeland Center in Sikes Hall, 701 West Lime Street from 8:30 am to 4 pm. Rhonda McKillip, author of "The Basics" will be the keynote speaker, followed by a presentation from Julie Alvarado on Strengthening Relationships with Children who Experienced Trauma. Following lunch, the afternoon session will kick off with Jim Maxwell, Polk County School Board, followed by Dr. David Moore on Antipsychotic Medication and Integration of Physical and Mental Healthcare for Children, and then a panel discussion featuring family members will conclude the day along with a Q&A opportunity. The Polk County Sheriff's Office will have demos of their "Hearing Voices" and local organizations will provide tables of useful resource information. Registration can be done by phone at 863-450-2943 or email [namipolk@gmail.com](mailto:namipolk@gmail.com). Funding and support provided by Florida Department of Children and Families and Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc.

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## **"Walk A Mile For A Child" May 18<sup>th</sup> in Tampa**

[Eckerd's inaugural walk benefits Hillsborough foster children](#)

Excitement is building about what the community can do to help Florida's most vulnerable children. Each walker will be assigned the name of the child they are sponsoring and the goal is to ensure all 3,200 children are represented. If you can't join the walk on May 18<sup>th</sup>, please take a moment and sponsor a child and Eckerd will make sure a "walker" is secured to complete the mile on their behalf. It only costs \$25 to sponsor a child and all net proceeds go to help provide much needed SECOND chances! The Eckerd webpage [www.eckerdcbc.org/walk](http://www.eckerdcbc.org/walk) has a wonderful video featuring **Tony** and **Lauren Dungy** encouraging faith based partners and the community at large to come out and support the foster children of Hillsborough County. Eckerd invites everyone to link this video to their website and download it to share with staff, friends, and community stakeholders. The \$25 commitment can help purchase a camp for a child, clothes, educational supplies, sports equipment, and other needed items that will help paint a brighter future for them. Please show children matter and register today. Opening Ceremony begins at 9:00 am but registration and packet pickup starts as early as 6:30 am. Location is **Cotanchobee Fort Brooke Park** - Riverwalk in Downtown Tampa at 601 Old Water Street.

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## **2013 Florida Legislative Session Ends On Positive Note**

[Hanky-drop signified "sine die" and homemade "sausage" served](#)

The Florida Legislature concluded its 2013 session Friday in a burst of bipartisanship, taking advantage of a resurgent economy to overwhelmingly pass the biggest budget in history and giving pay raises to state workers for the first time in seven years.

On the final day, lawmakers also expanded early voting sites, carved out a nursing home for the influential developer of the Villages retirement community, and gave families a three-day back-to-school sales tax holiday in August. As the session adjourned sine die at 7:16 p.m., House Speaker Will Weatherford, R-

Wesley Chapel, and Senate President Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, heartily hugged in a crowded Capitol rotunda and noted how much more smoothly the session ended than in the past couple of years. "The age of acrimony between the House and the Senate is over," Gaetz proclaimed to loud applause. Weatherford and Gaetz celebrated passage of higher ethical standards for public officials, including limits on lobbying by former lawmakers and on patronage jobs they can take while in office.

Gov. Rick Scott praised lawmakers at the brief post-session ceremony for passing his two priorities of a teacher pay raise and a sales tax cut for manufacturing equipment. "This is a great day for Florida families," Scott said.

The final day was smooth and deliberate in contrast to the partisan rancor of recent days when the House used a rapid-fire automated female voice to recite thousands of pages of legislative jargon after Democrats demanded that bills be read in full. Like so much of the 2013 session, that clash of wills was about Medicaid. From start to finish, the dominant theme was the stalemate between the Senate and House over \$51 billion in federal money to insure 1 million or more Floridians under the federal Affordable Care Act. Scott endorsed Medicaid expansion in February but largely stayed on the sidelines as legislators battled the issue to a draw, with the Senate supporting taking the federal money and the House refusing. The governor reiterated Friday that because Florida taxpayers pay into the Medicaid program, the state should take the federal money. "You had a Senate that's open to accepting federal dollars, a governor open to it and a House that wasn't," said Sen. Andy Gardiner, R-Winter Park. "We're passing a \$74 billion budget, and over \$30 billion of it is federal dollars. If there's an overarching theme, we need to work on being consistent."

The budget is stuffed with hundreds of millions of dollars for hometown projects, from \$1 million for the Clearwater Marine Aquarium to \$1 million for a Bay of Pigs museum in Miami. It has \$70 million for the Everglades and \$10 million for natural springs. Senate Appropriations Chairman Joe Negron, R-Stuart, noted that the budget also sets aside \$2.8 billion in cash reserves and spends \$500 million to reduce the unfunded liability in the state pension fund.

The budget passed the Senate 40-0 and the House, 106-11, as 10 Democrats and Rep. John Tobia, R-Melbourne Beach, voted no. As the contentious and confusing work of lawmaking, known as the making of "sausage," wound down for another year, a creative lobbyist brought trays of homemade sausage for hungry visitors awaiting the traditional hanky-drop signifying sine die, or the end of the session. Wayne Bertsch's brats even had a Twitter handle: "You've helped make sausage, now have some @SineDieSausage."

Read update an analysis from [FADAA](#) and [FCCMH](#) regarding substance abuse and mental health issues that passed and some that didn't this year.

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## **SWFAS Receives 3 Year CARF Accreditation**

[Fifth consecutive positive survey](#)

The project to merge Southwest Florida Addiction Services and Lee Mental Health was recognized as an exemplary standard in the recent report provided to SWFAS. Chrissy DeWerff, Continuous Quality Improvement Manager, led the effort for SWFAS and the survey summary notes that current leadership is action oriented and involved. Particularly noted was the Executive leadership provided by a "highly respected, visionary, involved, and talented individual" - Mr. Kevin Lewis, CEO. It was also noted that the organization had responded positively to the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing barrier free buildings with "green" certified features. Surveyors also noted the respect displayed for cultural diversity, a compliance program that was very thorough, and excellent safety and health programs. They noted SWFAS receives input from various stakeholders and uses it in strategic planning while the prevention director and team provide very high quality services to their community. Interviews with persons served identified SWFAS as a caring and professional organization able to meet their needs. CFBHN congratulates SWFAS on this achievement!

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## **DCF & The Florida Certification Board Offer Free Training on "Seeking Safety for Veterans" May 17 in Tampa**

[This trauma and substance abuse model offers 6 free CEUs](#)

Time is 9:00 am till 4:00 pm at ACTS, 4612 N 56<sup>th</sup> St. Seeking Safety is an evidence-based present-focused therapy to help people achieve recovery from trauma/PTSD and substance abuse. The treatment has been conducted in individual counseling and for women's, men's, and mixed-gender groups in a variety of settings (outpatient, inpatient, residential). The sessions focus on both substance abuse and trauma recovery. **Kay Johnson, LICSW, Senior Associate for Seeking Safety**, is the presenter. Ms. Johnson is a therapist at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Crime Victims Treatment Center in New York City. She is the co-researcher with Lisa M. Najavits, PhD, author of Seeking Safety on "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Pathological Gambling"; "A Pilot Study of Seeking Safety Therapy for Problem Gamblers"; and "Creating Change: A Past Focused Treatment for PTSD and Substance Abuse". To register for this event, please e-mail: [lfarmer@flcertificationboard.org](mailto:lfarmer@flcertificationboard.org). Include, Name, Agency, E-mail, and Telephone Number.

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## **FADAA/DCF Sponsor Two Free Webinars**

**Solution-Focused Approach With Clients Facing Diverse Challenges**

[Friday May 17, 10:00 am till Noon with 2.0 CEU's provided](#)

Participants will review the principles of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy and incorporate SFBT skills to provide effective interventions in their work with children and families. In addition, participants will learn how to incorporate SFBT strategies with diverse challenges such as substance abuse, children and adolescents, trauma, grief and loss, and challenging clients. Dr. Arlene Brett Gordon is a licensed family therapist and

adjunct faculty at NSU. As a family therapist, she is trained to work with people facing diverse challenges that affect their daily lives. She is also the director of the Brief Therapy Institute (BTI), which includes NSU's Family Therapy Clinic that provides counseling to individuals, couples, and families. **To register for this event**, please click on the link or copy and paste into your browser <https://fadaaevents.webex.com/fadaaevents/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=294522330>.

## Secondary Traumatic Stress

[Exposure can be a peril of trauma work](#)

The date is Friday, May 24 from 10:00 am till noon EST and 2.0 CEUs are provided. Thousands of returning military personnel are struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, substance abuse, and social withdrawal as a result of multiple deployments to combat theaters. The phenomenon of Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS), which is also referred to as Compassion Fatigue, has been associated with the indirect exposure of traumatic episodes that primary victims of trauma have expressed and shared with caregivers and therapists. The result of the exposure itself is traumatizing and leads caregivers and therapists to symptoms similar to those of PTSD. In addition, the repeated graphic and painful material that clients often present to therapists facilitates the development of Vicarious Traumatization. This webinar is designed for clinicians who are interested in working with veteran survivors of trauma exposure. Attendees will obtain a greater knowledge of the concepts and effects of Compassion Fatigue/ Secondary Traumatic Stress, Vicarious Traumatization, and Empathic Strain.

**To register** please click on the link or copy and paste into your browser: <https://fadaaevents.webex.com/fadaaevents/onstage/g.php?t=a&d=667485211>. Dr. Nelson Lucca is a Researcher and Counselor at Seminole State College in Orlando, Florida. He works directly with veterans who are returning to college, assisting them as they acclimate to college and civilian life. Dr. Lucca has completed four years of research on secondary trauma, studying the effects on therapists who counsel veterans.

*FADAA uses WebEx as their online event system. Audio for the event is accessible via the internet. To receive audio, attendees must join the event by using computers equipped with speakers. There is no teleconference for this event. Once the host approves your registration, you will receive a confirmation email message with instructions on how to join the event. To avoid problems with log-in and receiving credit for attendance, please use the confirmation email to join the event. This email is coded with your registration information. Also, please confirm that email from "[MESSENGER@WEBEX.COM](mailto:MESSENGER@WEBEX.COM)" is not blocked as spam or junk by your email server.*

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## Drug Abuse Has Energetic Enemy in Lee County

[Deb Comella leads the Coalition for a Drug Free Southwest Florida](#)

Soft spoken self-proclaimed child of the 60's, Deb also possesses a soldier's ferocity, battle forged persistence, and a general's talent for rallying an all-volunteer army. Often called "torpedo" by colleagues, her single minded aim is to wipe out drug abuse in the region. She is the executive director of the Lee County Coalition for a Drug Free Southwest Florida and the sole full time employee running the nonprofit out of a borrowed second floor work cluttered office that's smaller than a respectable restaurant's ladies room. Southwest Florida Addiction Services Executive Director Kevin Lewis praises her ability to work well with all sectors and manage multiple strategies. The most visible activity the coalition sponsors is the annual Drug House Odyssey – a haunted house/live theater hybrid designed to keep kids from becoming sad statistics. Although statistics are down for abuse of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs by youth, alcohol is still readily available with some kids starting as early as age 10 – simply by opening the refrigerator door. So efforts must also reach to parents and caregivers. Deb is passionate about this work and the reason is simple she says – "She is a mom, and moms care about kids and moms want kids safe".

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## SAMHSA Sponsors Webcast and Webinar

[Children's Mental Health Awareness Day: SAMHSA Press Briefing](#)

You're invited to join the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at the National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day (Awareness Day) press briefing at the University of the District of Columbia Community College in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, May 7. Entry to the briefing is free and seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The event will be available via live Webcast at [www.samhsa.gov/children](http://www.samhsa.gov/children).

**Webinar: Understanding Child Trauma among Military Families May 17, 2013, 12:00pm – 1:00pm**  
Presented by LaVerne M. Dowling, MSW, Psy.D. Learn about the unique context of military families affected by childhood trauma, and reactions to childhood trauma. Build your awareness about resources to help manage childhood traumatic stress disorders. For more information or to register, [click here](#). Password is **Abc123**; Event number is 748 737 237.

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## Polk County Drug Court Graduation Ceremony May 17

[Fourteenth annual ceremony will be on Friday at 2:00 pm](#)

The ceremony will be held in the Oliver L. Green, Jr. Courtroom located on the first floor of the Polk County Courthouse in Bartow. This event is being held in conjunction with the Celebration of National Drug Court Month and will honor Polk County Drug Court graduates locally and from around the state of Florida. For the purpose of a reception immediately following the graduation, please **RSVP to Marla Grove at 863-534-4983** or [mgrove@Jud10.FLCourts.org](mailto:mgrove@Jud10.FLCourts.org) prior to May 10, 2013.

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## Coalition Capacity Improvement Tool

**Sponsored by FADAA and DCF for Coalition members**

The Florida Department of Children of Families and the Florida Drug and Alcohol Abuse Association are pleased to offer the opportunity to participate in a coalition capacity improvement tool. This tool will provide information for you to use in building the capacity of your coalition to meet your mission. The coalition will receive an individual report based on the responses of everyone in your coalition that participates. You will have the opportunity to re-take the tool at a later date so that you can see your progress.

After you click on the link below, you will be asked to choose your county's name from a drop down menu. Responses are anonymous and results are aggregated for the final report; individual responses will not be shared. Comments that you provide will be included in your report verbatim but anonymously. The tool is structured to allow one respondent per computer so that you can re-enter the readiness tool at any time to update your responses. The survey takes about 10-20 minutes for coalition members to complete. It would be helpful to have the tool completed by **May 10, 2013**.

Link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZVHMHHY>

By completing the tool, you are consenting that your responses will be included in the results. All the responses will be added together and no one will be able to tell which response is yours. Please contact Dr. Shelley Robertson ([info@snrobertson.com](mailto:info@snrobertson.com)) or Sheila Barbee ([Sheila.Barbee@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Sheila.Barbee@dcf.state.fl.us)) if you have any questions.

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