



## CONTRACT OVERSIGHT DESK REVIEW

Eckerd Community Alternatives - Hillsborough

**QJ3EO**

As required by section 402.7305 F.S., The Department of Children and Families performed a Desk Review for Eckerd Community Alternatives – Hillsborough.

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## Executive Summary

Florida Statute 402.7305 requires the Department to conduct an analyses of the performance and compliance of a contracted Community Based Care (CBC) agency by means of on-site monitoring or desk reviews if the external service provider will not be monitored on site during a fiscal year. The Department’s Contract Oversight Unit performed a Desk Review for Eckerd Community Alternatives – Hillsborough (ECA-H), contract QJ3E0 which focused on key performance indicators specific to the CBC agency as compared to the overall statewide average performance. The categories reviewed included: CBC performance, practice model implementation, child safety after termination of services, financial viability, licensed and group care and feedback from the DCF contract manager.

ECA-H serves children and families in Hillsborough county in circuit thirteen, Suncoast Region. According to the U.S. Census bureau, the annual estimated resident population (from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016) in Hillsborough County was 1,376,238 which was the fourth highest population in the State. The removal rate per 100 children investigated from October thru December 2016 was 9.6 which is the highest removal rate in the State and almost double the statewide average removal rate (5.8) (Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, May 2017).

## CBC Performance

A review of ECA-H’s performance shows both strengths and areas where opportunities for improvement exist. In ten of the scorecard measures, ECA-H performed at or above the established performance standards and in two of the scorecard measures, ECA-H performed below the established performance standards for FY 16/17 Quarter 3.

ECA-H’s performance consistently (last six quarters) meets scorecard measures in the following areas:

- M02: % of children who are not abused/neglected during in-home services
- M04: % of children under supervision who are seen every 30 days

- M06: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months for those in care 12 to 23 months
- M09: % of children in foster care who received a medical service in last 12 months
- M11: % of young adults exiting foster care at age 18 who completed/are enrolled in secondary education, vocational education or adult education

The following three measures meet the performance target in five out of the past six quarters:

- M03: % of children who are not neglected or abused after receiving services
- M05: % of children exiting to a permanent home within 12 months of entering care
- M10: % of children in foster care who received a dental service in last 7 months

ECA-H's current performance on the following scorecard measures meets the established performance standards for FY 16/17, Q3 and have been trending up but warrants continued diligence and monitoring. They are:

- M07: % of children who do not re-enter care within 12 months of moving to a permanent home
- M12: % of sibling groups where all siblings are placed together

Two performance measures represent clear opportunities for improvement, both of which scored below the established performance standards for the past six quarters. They are:

- M01: Rate of abuse per 100,000 days in foster care
- M08: Placement moves per 1, 000 days in foster care

Scorecard Measure	FY 2016 Q2	FY 2016 Q3	FY 2016 Q4	FY 2017 Q1	FY 2017 Q2	FY 2017 Q3
M01: Rate of abuse per 100,000 days in foster care	12.00	11.90	11.67	10.89	10.12	10.31
M02: % of children who are not abused/neglect during in-home services	96.90	97.70	97.30	96.80	96.70	96.30
M03: % of children who are not neglected or abused after receiving services	96.00	97.90	97.70	93.20	96.30	96.70
M04: % of children under supervision who are seen every 30 days	99.90	99.90	99.90	99.90	99.90	99.90
M05: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months of entering care	47.20	46.10	39.10	52.60	49.00	42.60
M06: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months for those in care 12 to 23 months	58.60	59.20	52.00	50.70	54.40	49.80
M07: % of children who do not re-enter care w/in 12 months of moving to permanent home	85.80	82.40	88.60	90.20	91.60	93.30
M08: Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care	4.52	4.87	5.54	5.49	5.49	5.33
M09: % of children in foster care who received a medical service in last 12 months	99.20	98.10	97.80	98.10	98.90	99.00
M10: % of children in foster care who received a dental service in last 7 months	97.00	96.80	93.70	96.40	97.90	97.20
M11: % of young adults exiting foster care at age 18 completed/are enrolled in sec. ed., voc. ed., or adult ed.	91.10	86.70	87.30	98.80	96.00	95.70
M12: % of sibling groups where all siblings are placed together	67.20	64.20	62.50	64.80	66.40	65.20

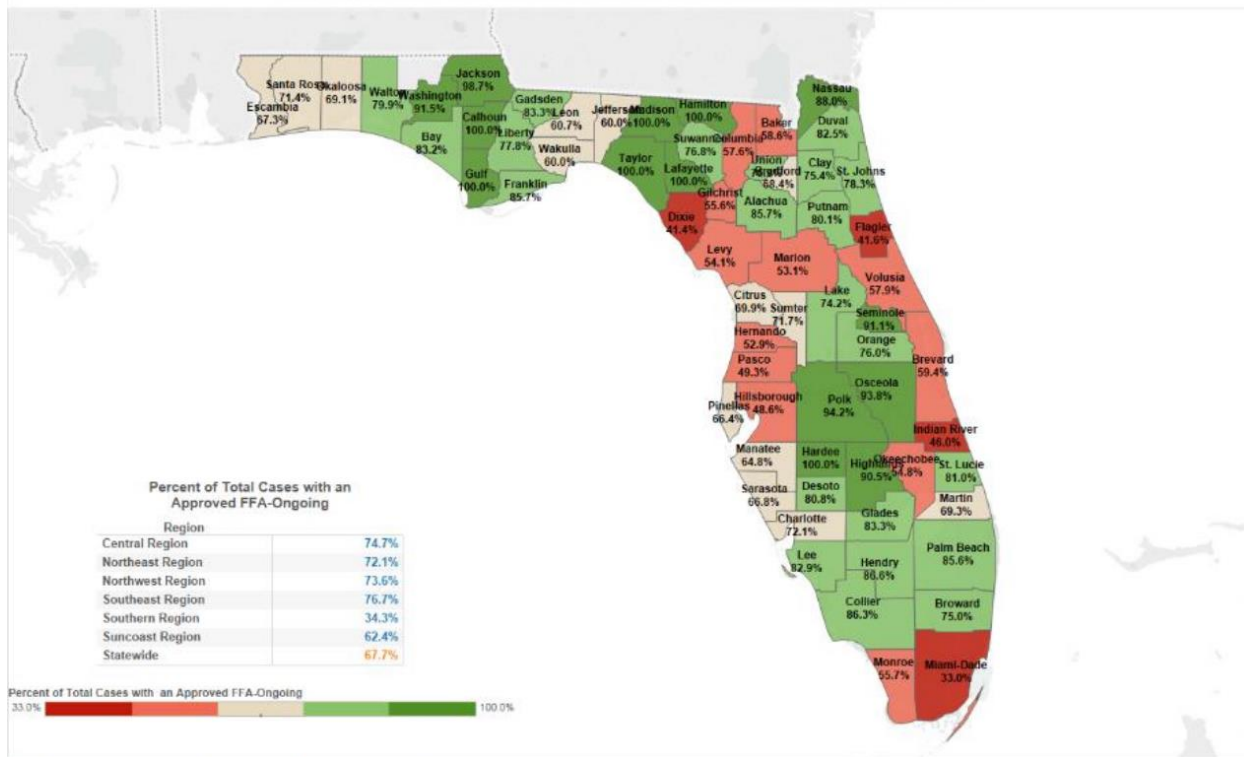
■ Standard or Better   
■ Below Standard   
■ Bad Zone

Last Updated: 4/30/2017

## Practice Model Implementation

As of 5/18/17, ECA-H's status for practice model implementation (48.6%) was below the statewide average (67.7%), which represents the total percent of active cases with an approved Family Functioning Assessment Ongoing (FFA-O). This demonstrates an area with an opportunity for improvement for ECA-H. (Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, May 2017)

Ongoing Services Safety Methodology Implementation Status as of 5/18/2017

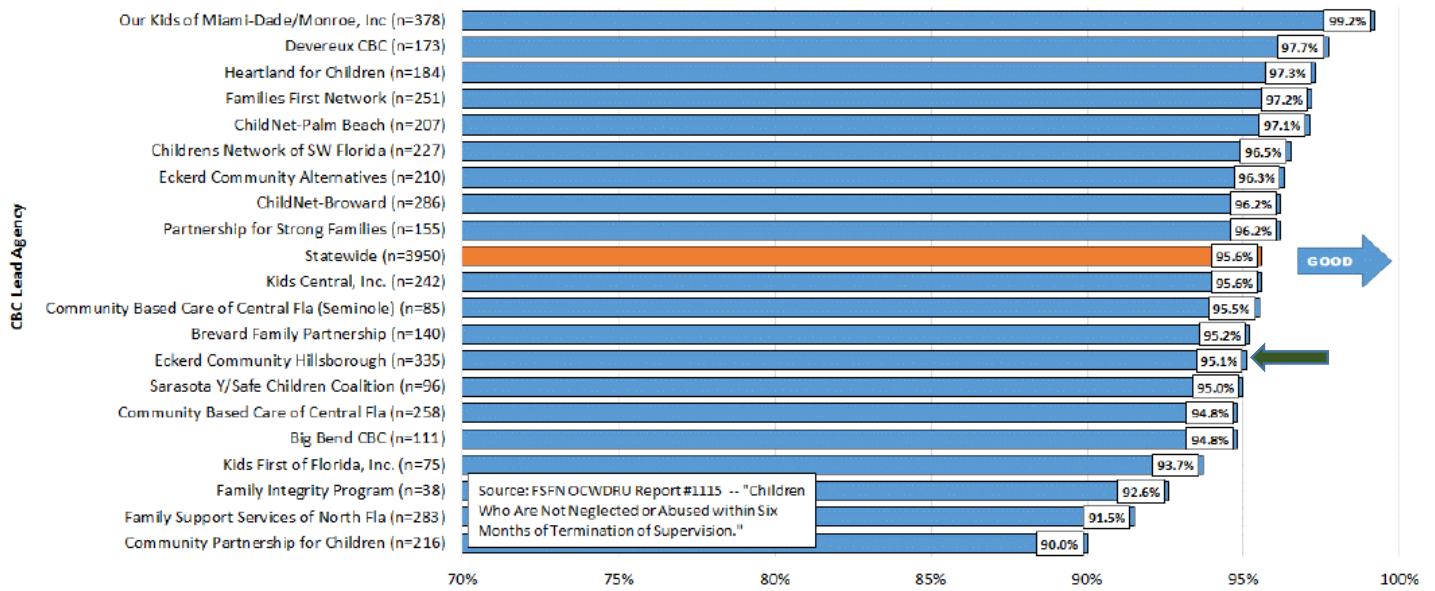


### Child Safety After Termination of Services

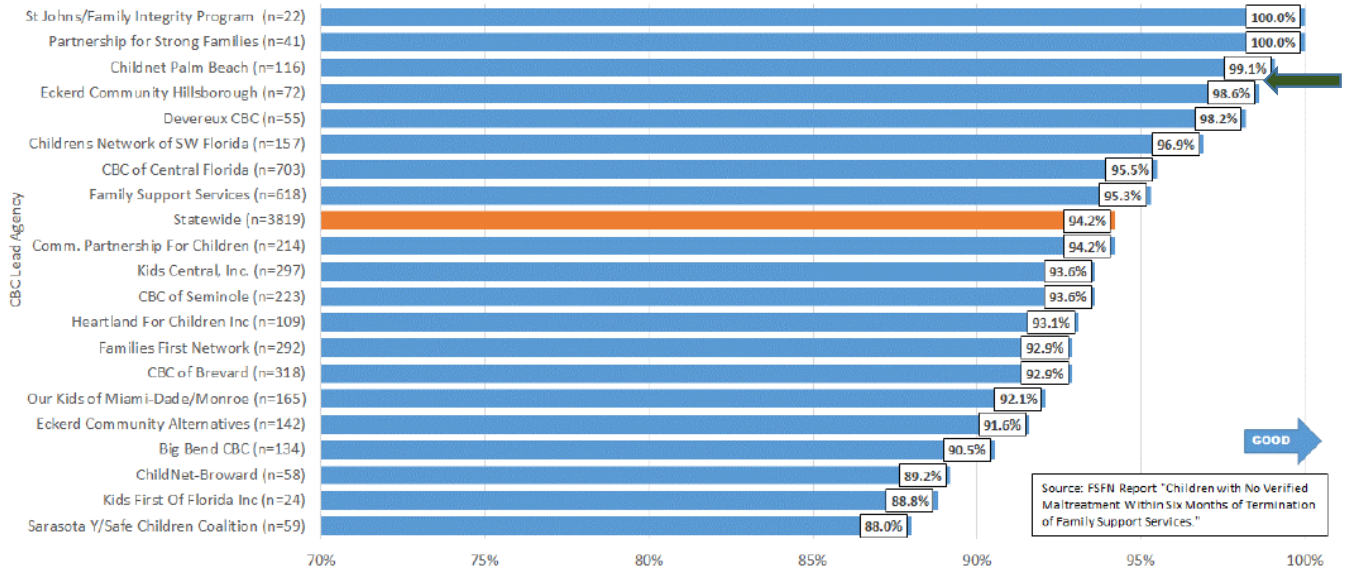
Ensuring children are safe and protected following case management & family support services service intervention is a strong indicator of overall system of care performance. For this reason, post service termination re-maltreatment episodes are measured to determine the percentage of children in case management and family support services who are not re-abused or maltreated within six months of termination of services. For the most recent quarter (services terminated between April – June 2016), ECA-H (95.1%) was below the statewide average (95.6%) for cases with no maltreatment within six months of case management services. ECA-H (98.6%) was higher than the statewide average (94.2%) for family support services during the same time period. See the charts below. (Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, May 2017)

This data represents an opportunity for ECA-H to review the performance of contracted providers who deliver case management services to determine which providers are providing the best services to families which result in strong behavioral change and a reduction in recidivism.

**Percent of Children Terminated from Case Managed Services in Quarter Who Were Not Maltreated within Six Months, for Children with Services Terminated April-June 2016**



**Percent of Children Terminated from Family Support Services in Quarter Who Were Not Maltreated within Six Months, for Children with Services Terminated April-June 2016**



### Financial Viability Report Analysis

The Office of CBC/ME Financial Accountability performed financial monitoring procedures based on the DCF 2016-17 CBC-ME Financial Monitoring Tool for Desk Reviews of ECA-H and found four areas of noncompliance. The desk review period was from July 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016. The areas of non-compliance involved allocation of invoices on the general ledger to the appropriate cost center. ECA-H corrected the issue by creating journal entries to correct the allocation in accordance with the approved Cost Allocation Plan. The other area of non-compliance involved FSFN documentation related to payment to young adults after their 23rd birthdays and payments for overlapping service dates. ECA-H corrected the FSFN entries for the applicable clients. See the financial report for additional details.

### Licensed & Group Care Placement

As of May 31, 2017, 698 children were placed in licensed care which represents 28.7% of all children on out of home care in Hillsborough county. The current statewide average of children placed in licensed care versus other

placement settings is higher at 29.54%. As of the same date, there were 233 children placed in group care, representing 9.58% of all Hillsborough County placements. The current statewide average of children placed in group care versus other placement settings is lower than ECA-H at 8.91%. This data represents an opportunity for ECA-H to review practices regarding group care placement decisions to ensure all efforts are being made to ensure least restrictive placements are being made.

Eckerd Community Alternatives - Hillsborough		
Licensed & Group Care Placements	CBC	Statewide
Number of Children in Licensed Care	698	7,183
% of Children in Licensed Care	28.7%	29.54%
Number of Children in Group Care	233	2,166
% of Children in Group Care	9.58%	8.91%

Source: Department of Children & Families - Children in Out of Home Care by Lead Agency Report (updated 6/11/17)

## DCF Contract Manager Feedback

The information contained in this section was obtained from Suncoast Region leadership.

### *Foster Home Recruitment and Retention*

ECA-H's foster home recruitment goals and strategies include the following:

**Objective:** To engage our local faith-based community in the system of care by providing them education on the need for foster families to provide for our youth.

**Impact:** To attain 300 inquiries, with 150 who participate in Orientation and 75 families enrolling in classes to result in 37 newly licensed foster parents from the faith-based community.

- Identify at least 10 churches/faith-based organizations, with at least 4 in high-removal areas that the agency can partner with to recruit foster families.
- Connect with identified organizations and schedule presentations: 10 churches have been identified around Hillsborough County where orientations will be facilitated at with a representative from the church that is a foster/adoptive home leading the initiative.
- Present to identified organizations, to include tracking face to face inquiries and number of attendees. Utilize Foster Parent Mentors to reach out to churches where they attend to involve them in fostering, either by posting fliers or getting churches to pray for children in care and hosting a foster parent training class.

In FY 16/17, Eckerd Hillsborough licensed 148 homes with 120 homes closed in the fiscal year. The annual net gain is 28 homes. Information is not available to determine if the homes licensed were recruited from the faith base initiative strategy.

- Recruitment FY15/16 – 93 homes (as of 04/30/16)
- Recruitment FY 16/17 – 116 (as of 04/30/17)
- Percentage Increase/Decrease: 25% Increase

To retain current foster homes, ECA-H provided the following strategies and efforts:

**Objective:** To improve retention rates of currently licensed foster parents within Hillsborough County by the end of the fiscal year through an Appreciation Campaign.

**Impact:** To retain 95% of the 100 families selected throughout the campaign, not losing more than 5 and increasing the available homes.

- Partner with the External Relations department to secure funding and/or tangible donations to be utilized for foster parent appreciation gifts (i.e.: gift cards, frames, inspirational item, etc).



- Provide the Licensing Agencies, Case Management Organizations, Guardian ad Litem Program, and Eckerd Directors with an overview of the Appreciation Campaign, including their responsibilities in the action plan.
- Send handwritten Appreciation Campaign “Thank you’s” to all nominated families, including an invitation to a luncheon, 13 families attended the luncheon and were presented with framed certificates, those who did not show received certificates by mail.
- Mail all foster parents Thank You Cards from various representatives in the system of care. Foster parents who get licensed over the next 6 months will receive similarly signed Thank You Cards at that time.

As of 04/07/17, received 46 nominations, 4 homes have closed during this period resulting in a 90.6% retention rate.

- Retention (closures) FY15/16 – 89 homes (as of 04/30/16)
- Retention (closures) FY 16/17 – 97 (as of 04/30/17)
- Percentage Increase/Decrease: 9% Increase

### *Placement Process*

Placement is completed in-house for Eckerd Community Alternatives in Hillsborough. ECA-H works with six Child Placing Agencies that provide licensing, recruitment and training of traditional foster parents. There are additional Child Placing Agencies for the therapeutic homes. Hillsborough County has been struggling with a significant increase in the number of children in care. This has resulted in night to night placements and a reliance on the Teen Center as a place to stay while waiting for the placement. Due to the significant increase in the number of children in care and substantial turnover of essential out of home care and placement staff, Suncoast leadership reports that the placement system has been operating in crisis mode. ECA-H has been on a Placement Action Plan since July 2016 to address placement concerns. DCF has been closely monitoring this situation in a variety of ways. Some of the efforts are summarized below:

- Monitoring the current system to escalate concerns immediately (began with daily debrief and progressed to weekly summary)
- Tracking youth that are challenging to place (refusal of placements, behaviors, etc.)
- Increase overall capacity in foster homes to meet need, with specific emphasis on recruiting homes for teens
- Review System of Care Trends concerning intakes and shelters to assess capacity of intensive in home services to meet community needs and increase efforts to locate relative/non relatives to prevent placement in licensed care
- Assess system of care for potential enhancements (Group Home that is able to take challenging youth to assess needs to make appropriate placement, Initiative to incentivize foster homes willing to take teens and reward teens for remaining stable, etc.)
- Focus on stabilization of workforce by increasing the number of case managers funded and frequency of pre-service training offerings.

### *Caregiver Support & Retention Efforts*

To support relative and non-relative placements, ECA-H has Resource Specialists co-located with the Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) to help identify relatives/non-relatives through Home Finders. The Prevention/Diversion team is able to assist with resources available through community supports and uses flex funds to support immediate needs, as well as assisting CPIs with Home Studies. Relatives/non-relatives are invited to the Family Partnership Alliance, which also has resources available in their resource rooms and food pantry. ECA-H subcontracts for kinship services to support relatives and non-relatives, which include support groups for families. Additionally, to improve the quality of group care, ECA-H hosts new provider orientations, quarterly meetings and joint partnership meetings with the provider and DCF when there are concerns.



### *Extended Foster Care*

To develop and support Extended Foster Care (EFC) placements, ECA-H has an Independent Living Specialist that assists case managers and youth understand program eligibility and requirements. ECA-H subcontracts with Camelot for Independent Living services. An EFC case manager is assigned to each EFC youth. In Hillsborough, a total of 14 young adults in licensed foster care turned 18 between January 1 and March 31, 2017. Of those 14 youth, 13 enrolled in the Extended Foster Care program. In the month of March, ECA-H served 72 youth under the EFC program.

### Conclusion

Based on the limited review of Eckerd Community Alternatives – Hillsborough contract QJ3E0 several strengths and opportunities for improvement were found.

This desk review highlights the CBC's positive performance on some of the Scorecard measures. In the past six quarters, ECA-H met the established performance target 69% of the time which is on-par with the average statewide cumulative scorecard performance. ECA-H's status toward Practice Model implementation is below the statewide average. Case Management services provided to children and families in Hillsborough county have yielded rates of re-abuse which are higher the statewide average. However, family support services provided to children and families in Hillsborough County have yielded re-maltreatment rates which are lower than the statewide average. And, while the percentage of children in licensed care is lower than the statewide average, ECA-H has a higher percentage of children in group care than the statewide average.

The Department's Contract Oversight Unit recommends the following:

1. Continue to monitor all contract and performance measures and take immediate corrective action by initiating local review and discussion of any measure which falls below the established performance target.
2. Review and discuss current practice related to the following measures and implement immediate actions to monitor and improve performance in these areas.
  - a. Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care
  - b. Rate of abuse per 100,000 days in foster care
3. Continue efforts to fully implement the Practice Model in Hillsborough County.
4. Review and discuss re-maltreatment episodes for children with case management services terminated within six months. Evaluate causality and patterns by identifying referred service providers, length of care and any other common factors that could be addressed & remedied during local level provider contract negotiations.
5. Follow all fiscal and reporting recommendations as outlined in Financial Accountability reports.
6. Review and discuss cases involving children currently placed in group care for possible step down to a less restrictive placement option.
7. Continue efforts to recruit and license quality foster homes.