

Health & Social Services Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM | NOVEMBER 7, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET,
SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 3:01 PM on November 7, 2023, Jon Romine, Facilitator, convened the Health & Social Services Branch meeting with the following Members present:

- Madison Mitchell (on behalf of Jeannine Joy)
- Angela Katz
- Tom Felke
- Stefanie Ink-Edwards
- Rachel Fecteau (on behalf of David Brown)
- Julie Ferguson
- Maria Espinoza

County Liaison:

- Ben Abes

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Jon Romine, Collaboratory
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting
- Harrison Newton, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Mr. Romine provided an update on the work of the Recovery Task Force and the Recovery and Resilience Planning Process.

Upcoming Community Engagement

Mr. Romine summarized the upcoming community engagement series regarding the Initiatives of the ResilientLee Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Updated Initiative Review

The Support Team introduced each Initiative for discussion with Branch Members.

Creating a Mobile Health Clinic System

- Members suggested changes to the identified Stakeholder List and noted that volunteer organizations active in disasters (VOADs) is a broad term that would likely fall under the United Way network.
- Members requested considering building workforce and staffing into preparedness efforts to include in the Plan.
- Members suggested the Key Consideration section should include the importance of access to medical records across healthcare systems.
- Members suggested considering planning efforts for both blue sky and gray sky use. The blue sky planning approach should include a description to include communication and build upon the existing structure for coordination of services.

Establishing a Community Resilience Hubs Network

- Members suggested editing information regarding sustainable commodities because they include more than food and water.
- Members suggested expanding the narrative and cross-referencing other hardening and logistical initiatives.
- Members suggested the intent is to prioritize and bring existing buildings up to code to be resilient in disasters and return to service quickly.
- Members suggested including the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Survivor Assistance teams to support Resilience Hubs during gray skies.
- Members suggested regional resilience grouping could limit the operational and services portion of the Initiative.

Expanding Behavioral Healthcare Facilities and Resources

- Members suggested the new Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) should be referenced when it is released.
- Members stated that behavioral health is exacerbated by disasters.
- Members requested the addition of remote or telehealth access in the objective.

- Members suggested generalization by including “other mental health providers” in the psychologist and psychiatrist sentence.
- Members requested editing the Regional Approach to include additional resources and treatment options.
- Members suggested the Regional Approach should include other counties in the region beyond just Lee County.
- Members suggested that regional includes more than Lee County. For example, the local trauma center provides services to individuals beyond Lee County and that applies to the scale of behavioral healthcare as well.
- Members stated that the Health and Wellness Coalition is currently looking for regional assets in other counties for behavioral healthcare.
- Members suggested cross-referencing the Education and Workforce Initiatives. There is an opportunity to address lower-level training other than intensive care.
- Members requested consideration of other approaches related to disaster mental health which can increase training and mental health resources.

Creating a Resilient Healthcare System from Critical Infrastructure through Essential Services

- Members suggested that experts who own healthcare facilities should weigh in on this Initiative.
- Members discussed in other counties, such as Highlands County, the classification is different for group homes, and they are designated as critical. This opens the door for facilities and funding.
- Members suggested if organizations were able to get project applications on the Local Mitigation Strategy, there could be opportunities for funding. DAC and LMS require participation.
- Members suggested Key Considerations to engage the nonprofit sector in LMS and other resilience measures and repeat LMS and HIRA for emphasis.

Strengthening Emergency Logistical Resources

- Members suggested the work of Resilience Hubs and Mobile Clinics should be referenced for their roles post-disaster.

Questions and Next Steps

Mr. Romine explained the next process steps and confirmed that Members will be notified as soon as the next meeting is scheduled.

Public Comment

Stacy Cook thanked Members. She commented on behavioral health issues and cautioned members to build entire facilities and lead with data. The expansion of crisis beds needs to be data focused. Recent data may be misleading due to disasters. Numbers may not reflect the future and how we are spending money moving forward. She commented that workforce and staffing are concerning factors in the behavioral health crisis nationwide. She supported taking care of all frontline workers who are expected to show up in gray skies in the region. She commented that Salus Care was paying out of pocket to support the workforce and resources were being passed up. The workforce shortage and behavioral health are deeper than the storm and need more attention than just a coordinated system of care.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Romine thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 4:38 PM.