

EXHIBIT "A"

Pasco County Transportation Exception Plan

2008-2013

**Pasco County Baker Act
Transportation Exception Plan**

Submitted to:

**Department of Children and
Families**

**Substance Abuse and Mental
Health, SunCoast Region
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In accordance with:

**Florida Mental Health Act (Baker
Act) Florida Statute 394.462(3)**

**Department of Children and Families
Substance Abuse and Mental Health, SunCoast Region
Pasco County Baker Act
Transportation Exception Plan**

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Substance Abuse and Mental Health, SunCoast Region
Pasco County Baker Act
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Introduction

In accordance with Florida Statute Chapter 394.462 (3), Florida Mental Health Act, commonly referred to as the “Baker Act”, The Suncoast Region has revised The Pasco County Transportation Exception plan to provide a coordinated system for acute care services in Pasco County. This plan has been revised by The Pasco County Baker Act Transportation Exception Plan Advisory Committee. Approval of this revised plan will allow for the continuation of an exception to Florida Statute 394.462(3).

The intent of requesting this exception is congruent with meeting the conditions of Chapter 394.462(3)(b):

1. An arrangement within a district, which may include an exception to the requirement for transportation to the nearest receiving facility;
2. An arrangement by which a facility may provide, in addition to required psychiatric services, an environment and services which are uniquely tailored to the needs of an identified group of individuals with special needs, such as individuals with hearing impairments or visual impairments, or elderly with physical frailties, or
3. A specialized transportation system that provides an efficient and humane method of transporting patients to receiving facilities, among receiving facilities, and to treatment facilities.

Background/Purpose

In June 2002, a committee of community partners was formed to discuss an acute care system that would be responsive to individuals in need of mental health and substance abuse services in Pasco County. The objective was to create a system that would equally serve those individuals who lived in both East and West Pasco County. This was in response to a community partner, Florida Hospital Zephyrhills, who was pursuing the designation of Baker Act Receiving Facility status. However, this designation was jeopardized based upon the system’s current structure. The current structure would lead to “guess work” for Law Enforcement officers out in the field and would potentially lead to the unnecessary transportation of those individuals in need of services from one side of the county to another. After discussion, it became clear that a system with additional “built in” supports would ensure that all the available bed capacity was utilized in an efficient manner. The Exception Plan ensures that individuals in need of mental health services get immediate access to acute care services. The community partners that have participated in the revision of this plan include the following organizations:

- Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Suncoast Region
- The Harbor Behavioral Health Care Institute, Inc.; Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center
- Pasco County Sheriff's Office
- Florida Hospital Zephyrhills
- Community Hospital
- VA

The community partners whose participation in this plan is crucial to the success of the plan include the following organizations:

- Pasco County Government
- The Local Advisory Council
- Pasco Regional Medical Center
- Morton Plant NorthBay Hospital
- Regional Medical Center at Bayonet Point
- State Attorney's Office
- Zephyrhills Police Department
- Dade City Police Department
- Port Richey Police Department
- New Port Richey Police Department

Goals and Objectives

The following are objectives that are expected to be met by renewing the Transportation Exception Plan in Pasco County:

- Provide specialized services to children and the elderly.
- Provide a dignified, humane and streamlined method of transportation to and among acute care facilities, and for individuals in need of acute psychiatric care from nursing homes, assisted living facilities or other residential settings.
- Assist Law Enforcement in the efficient transport of individuals in need of services.
- Divert psychiatric admissions from hospital emergency rooms and update medical clearance policies as necessary.
- Enhance the ability to fully utilize the capacity of acute care services in the county and reduce the unnecessary delay between facilities.
- Provide services to those individuals incarcerated in the county detention center that meet the criteria for crisis stabilization.
- Reduce the need for law enforcement to transport individuals in need of mental health services from one side of the county to the other.

In order to accomplish this, the Pasco County Transportation Exception Plan requests that Law Enforcement transport individuals in need of mental health services under the Baker Act to the "nearest receiving facility". The plan will focus on the following populations:

Individuals that are ages 55 and older

Individuals that are ages 55 and older will be transported to the nearest receiving facility that specializes in that age group.

East Pasco County

Law Enforcement assigned to work in East Pasco County will transport older individuals, ages 55 and older, which reside in East Pasco County directly to Florida Hospital Zephyrhills. East Pasco County is defined as that area which is east of State Road 41 in Pasco County. This will reduce the travel time for Law Enforcement in addition to the travel time for the older individual who is in need of mental health services. Florida Hospital Zephyrhills has a program that is uniquely tailored to treat individuals, 55 years of age and older, with both psychiatric and medical conditions that meets the criteria for treatment under the Baker Act.

West Pasco County

For those individuals that reside in West Pasco County that are ages 55 and older, the **?Coordination Center will route** Law Enforcement who work in West Pasco to Community Hospital. West Pasco County is defined as that which is west of State Road 41 in Pasco County. Community Hospital has a program that is uniquely tailored to treat individuals, 55 years of age and older, with both psychiatric and medical conditions that meet the criteria under the Baker Act.

If in the event that an individual does not meet the criteria for admission at the receiving facility that they were transported to, that individual will be transferred to the appropriate facility. The transportation to the correct receiving facility will be the responsibility of the transferring facility.

Children and Adolescents

This plan also meets the needs of children in all of Pasco County. The Transportation Exception Plan requests that all children and adolescents will be transported by Law Enforcement directly to Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center. This plan will alleviate the unnecessary transport of children by Law Enforcement to the “nearest receiving facility” even though that facility does not serve their population. Children and Adolescents will be assessed through the Intake Department at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center and placed in the Children’s inpatient unit that best meets their needs. Based upon bed availability, this may be the Children’s Crisis Stabilization Unit (CCSU). If placement cannot occur at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center, then placement will be found in an expedient manner in another facility within the SunCoast Region that specializes in Children’s inpatient services. The individual’s preferred health insurance provider may also direct this decision.

Transportation

The Pasco County Transportation Exception Plan specifically requests the authority for Law Enforcement to transport age specific individuals in need of mental health services under the Baker Act to a specialized receiving facility: a) individuals age 55 and older to Florida Hospital Zephyrhills and b) children and adolescents to Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center.

In Pasco County, Law Enforcement will remain the responsible party to transport those individuals in need of mental health services under the Baker Act.

Transportation from one facility to another will be coordinated and paid for by the transferring facility. A non-emergent transportation company may provide this service. Law Enforcement is not responsible to transport from one facility to another.

Individual and Family Choice

When an individual presents him/herself to a Baker Act Receiving Facility, Law Enforcement, or an Emergency Room that individual or his/her family continues to have a choice of which provider he/she wants to receive services. The individual's preferred health insurance provider may also direct this decision. If deemed to be in need of inpatient services, that individual will be transported to the receiving facility where his/her insurance benefits will cover the cost of inpatient care, when at all possible. This will be accomplished by maintaining a master list of which provider an insurance company chooses to contract with for mental health services. Clinical and public safety circumstances must always be assessed in the process.

Medical Clearance

The Pasco County Baker Act Transportation Exception Plan Advisory Committee will continue to maintain and revise the "Community Standards for Medical Clearance". These community guidelines will be used among all the community partners to ensure that individuals who are assessed to need medical care are treated in an Emergency Room or medical facility. Once the individual is "medically cleared" the medical facility will find the Baker Act Receiving Facility that best suits that individual's needs. Transportation from one facility to another will be coordinated and paid for by the transferring facility. A non-emergent transportation company may provide this service. Law Enforcement is not responsible to transport from one facility to another.

System Capacity

The following reflects the capacity of Mental Health Services available throughout Pasco County:

Public Receiving Facility

- **Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center-**
 - **Intake-** Morton Plant NorthBay Hospital Recovery Center's Intake Department is the public Baker Act Receiving Facility for Pasco County. At this location,

individuals in need of mental health services under the Baker Act would be assessed 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week to determine the most appropriate placement within the acute care system. In addition, this is also the location of the 24-hour crisis hotline. This hotline is available to any individual in Pasco County who is experiencing a crisis and 21808 SR 54; Lutz, Florida 33549. The telephone number for both Intake Department and the Crisis Hotline is (727) 849-9988.

- **Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)-** This is a 56-bed, secure, short term, inpatient unit at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center that focuses on the immediate needs of an individual that meets Baker Act criteria. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and serves those individuals that are 18 years of age and older. The average length of this service is 4 days. Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center's CSU is located at 21808 SR 54; Lutz, FL 33549. The main telephone number for the CSU is (813) 428-6125. All referrals are to be made through Intake Department at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center.
- **Children's Crisis Stabilization Unit-** This is a 16-bed, secure, short term, inpatient unit at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center that focuses on the immediate needs of a child that meets Baker Act criteria. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and serves those children that are 4 years old to 17 years old. The average length of this service is 3 days. Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center CCSU is located at 21808 SR 54; Lutz, FL 33549. The main telephone number for the CCSU is (813) 428-6130. All referrals are to be made through the Intake Department at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center.

Private Receiving Facilities

- **Florida Hospital Zephyrhills-** Florida Hospital Zephyrhills is a private Baker Act Receiving Facility. The Hospital's Senior Behavioral Health Unit is a 15-bed unit that specializes in the acute care treatment of adults age 55 and older who are experiencing signs and symptoms of a mental illness that meet Baker Act criteria. This unit has the ability to address both mental health and medical needs of the individual who is age 55 and older. This unit is located at 7050 Gall Blvd. Zephyrhills 33541 and will serve the defined population in East Pasco County. The main telephone number for the Senior Behavioral Care Unit is (813) 779-6328.
- **Community Hospital -** The Behavioral Health Center at Community Hospital is a 46-bed private Baker Act Receiving Facility offering acute psychiatric inpatient care for adults 18 years of age and older. The behavioral Health Center is a 46-bed unit that is divided into sections to provide services to the geriatric population and those adults that may also have medical needs, as well as, the chronically mentally ill population suffering from acute symptoms. The length of stay of this unit is 8-10 days. This unit is located at 5637 Marine Parkway New Port Richey 34656 and will serve the defined population in West Pasco County. The main telephone number for the Behavioral Health Center is (727) 845-9180 or (727) 834-5966.

Accountability

- **Department of Children and Families/SAMH, SunCoast Region** has the ultimate accountability as the state “Mental Health Authority”. The state of Florida mental health and substance abuse system is a community-based system with the majority of services contracted with non-profit behavioral healthcare providers. The DCF/SAMH office is responsible for the following:
 - Continuing system oversight and contract management
 - Monitoring the Transportation Exception Plan in accordance with the Florida State Statute, the Baker Act.
 - Safeguarding that individuals rights are protected under contracts
 - Recommending the designation of public and private Baker Act receiving facilities
 - Evaluating the quality of services through annual contract review
 - Facilitating transportation meetings between providers when they can't be resolved through committees
 - Participating in Subcommittees of the Baker Act Advisory Committee
 - Resolving issues related to the implementation of the plan
 - Addressing individual disputes or grievances. In the event that an individual voice concerns to DCF or file a grievance with the Local Advisory Council, it will be the responsibility of providers to intervene with the initial complaints through their quality improvements committees. The providers will have policy and procedures in place to address this type of issue.

- The public official responsible for overseeing the Transportation Exception Plan is the Region Administrator for the DCF Suncoast Region Office in Tampa.

- **Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center** is responsible for the following services:
 - **Intake Department** at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center will receive those individuals in need of mental health services under the Baker Act. Once an individual is under a Baker Act and transported to the Intake Department by Law Enforcement, Intake Department will assess the individual 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week to determine the most appropriate placement within the acute care system. The Intake Department will coordinate the appropriate facility to meet the individual's needs with capacity to take the admission. This service will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
 - **CSU/CCSU** will continue to serve those individuals, without insurance, in the county that need inpatient admission.

- **Florida Hospital Zephyrhills** will maintain the Senior Behavioral Care Center and provide inpatient services to those individuals who are 55 years of age and older who also meet Baker Act criteria. As a designated Baker Act receiving facility they will participate in an overflow rotation, if necessary. This overflow will include all individuals in need of an inpatient bed that are 18 years of age or older, regardless of payor source.

- **Community Hospital** will maintain the Behavioral Health Center and continue to provide inpatient services to those who meet Baker Act criteria. As a designated Baker Act receiving facility they will participate in an overflow rotation, if necessary. This overflow will include all individuals in need of an inpatient bed that are 18 years of age or older, regardless of payor source.
- **Law Enforcement Agencies** will maintain active communication with the Coordination Center at the Harbor. They will continue to be responsible for the transportation of those individuals in need of mental health services in Pasco County as defined in the Baker Act. They will transport those who meet Baker Act criteria to the nearest receiving facility or specialty. They will transport to nearest Emergency Room if a medical emergency is apparent and in the best interest of the individual's safety.

Rotation/Overflow System

The Baker Act Transportation Advisory Committee has developed a rotation system to address how to meet an individual's needs when all publicly funded bed capacity is occupied at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center. If Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center, as the Public Receiving Facility, becomes full it will be necessary to find alternative placement for those individuals in need of mental health services under the Baker Act. The solution to this problem includes a rotation between the two Private Receiving Facilities, Florida Hospital Zephyrhills and Community Hospital. When it is deemed necessary due to the census at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center CSU, the Rotation/Overflow System will be activated. East Pasco individuals will be referred to Florida Hospital Zephyrhills and West Pasco individuals will be referred to Community Hospital. During this rotation plan, individuals who are ages 18 years of age and older, will be accepted by the Private Receiving Facilities regardless of the funding source. This arrangement will only be in effect when Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center's CSU; the Public Receiving Facility is at capacity. If Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center's CSU and one of the Private Receiving Facilities are both at capacity, the remaining Private Receiving Facility will receive all of the referrals until capacity becomes available at one of the other units. Once capacity becomes available at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center, the rotation/overflow plan will cease.

Children and Adolescents:

An overflow of Children and Adolescents will result in Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center making referrals to other facilities that serve children and adolescents within the SunCoast Region. These children and adolescents that are needing placement due to the lack of availability at Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center's CCSU will then be transported from the Intake Department to that receiving facility by transportation arranged by Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center. Transportation of that individual from Intake Department to the accepting facility will be at the expense of Morton Plant NorthBay Recovery Center. Law Enforcement is not responsible to transport in this instance.

Benefit to the Community

The clear benefit of the continuation of a Transportation Exception Plan is designed for the individual in need of mental health services in Pasco County. However, by continuing to work together in a united front, this plan will benefit all the community partners. This plan will continue to result in a benefit to other Baker Act Receiving Facilities as it will decrease the number of inappropriate admissions to a facility's inpatient unit. The coordination of the system will ensure that individuals go to the correct facility as prescribed by their preferred health insurance provider. This plan will also benefit law enforcement by potentially reducing their need to drive from one side of the county to the other.

Community Partner Collaboration and Commitment

The previously mentioned community partners have shown an insurmountable level of commitment to improve the access of the acute care services system to Pasco County residents. The success of this plan will only be possible with the long-term commitment of all community partners. There will be continuous contractual oversight by the Department of Children and Families, SAMH, SunCoast Region office to ensure that all services outlined here by the Public Baker Act Receiving Facility meet the standards as outlined by Florida Statute. The benefit of a coordinated system results in a less fragmented system of care that will also result in a more efficient and cost effective method of providing care. This is because the provisions outlined in this plan will decrease unnecessary transports of individuals by law enforcement to the incorrect facility, reduce the number of transfers between facilities, and reduce the need for area emergency rooms to treat those individuals that need to be in a more appropriate setting.

Flow Sheet

The attached flow chart shows the anticipated flow of individuals to their level of care in the community based upon the severity of the mental health symptoms they are experiencing.

Pasco County Transportation Exception: Flow of Individuals into the Acute Care System

