

EXHIBIT "B"

**Pasco County
Transportation Exception Plan
For Minors

2011- 2016**

**Pasco County Baker Act Transportation
Exception Plan For Minors**

Submitted to:

Department of Children and Families

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health,
SunCoast Region**

August 2011

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 For Minors**

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

The Florida Mental Health Act, commonly referred to as the “Baker Act,” allows for a community to request an exception to Florida Statute Chapter 394.462 (3), which addresses the transport of individuals in need of acute mental health services. The intent of requesting this exception is congruent with meeting the conditions of Chapter 394.462(3)(b):

1. An arrangement centralizing and improving the provision of services 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.

Purpose

The exception requested for Pasco County is to require the transportation of minors to the nearest receiving facility that has licensed psychiatric beds specifically designated for minors instead of to the nearest receiving facility serving persons of all ages. This is a permitted exception to the statutory requirements in that it improves service coordination and it better meets the special needs of minors in Pasco County. At this time, many Pasco County minors are being transported to Community Hospital, which does not have a dedicated child/adolescent unit. Morton Plant North Bay Hospital Recovery Center is the only designated receiving facility providing dedicated child/adolescent services. In the best interest of minors in need of behavioral healthcare in Pasco County, it was agreed that an approval of the “exception” to FS 394.462 was necessary. The Plan ensures that minors requiring a Baker Act received immediate access to services and a reduction in the need for transfers for psychiatric services.

The community partners that have participated in the writing of this plan include the following organizations:

- Department of Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health, SunCoast Region
- BayCare Behavioral Health, Inc.
- Morton Plant NorthBay Hospital Recovery Center (MPNB Recovery Center)
- Pasco County Sheriff’s Office
- Florida Hospital Zephyrhills
- Community Hospital
- Central Florida Behavioral Health Network

The following community partners who, by their participation in the Pasco County Acute Care Committee, assisted in developing this plan, and whose input is crucial to the success of the plan, include the following organizations:

- Pasco County - The Clerk & Comptroller
- Morton Plant NorthBay Hospital
- Regional Medical Center at Bayonet Point
- Public Defender'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 the Transportation Exception Plan in Pasco County:

- Implement a coordinated system of transportation and immediate access to psychiatric services for minors in Pasco County.
- Provide specialized services to children and adolescents.

This plan 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 North Bay Hospital 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 this population. Children and Adolescents will be assessed at Morton Plant North Bay Hospital Recovery Center and placed in the children's inpatient unit that best meets their needs. The individual's preferred health insurance provider may also direct this decision.

Transportation

In Pasco County, Law Enforcement will remain the responsible party for primary transportation for 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 any Baker Act Receiving Facility, 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. Clinical and public safety circumstances must always be assessed in the process.

Medical Clearance

The Pasco County Acute Care 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.

Inpatient System Capacity for Minors

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

Morton Plant NorthBay Hospital Recovery Center

- **Intake and admissions-** MPNB Recovery Center 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 would like to discuss it with a mental health professional. This service is located at 21808 State Rd 54, Lutz Florida. The telephone number for intake – admissions is (813) 428-6120 or crisis hotline 1-888-841-4440.
- **Children's Inpatient Unit-** This is a 16-bed, secure, short term, inpatient unit focused 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 4 days This service is located at 21808 State Rd 54, Lutz, Florida. All referrals are to be made through intake and admissions.

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
 - 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
 - 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 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 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Director for the DCF SunCoast Region Office in Tampa.

- **Law Enforcement Agencies** 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 individuals 18 or older who meet Baker Act criteria to the nearest receiving facility; children and adolescents will be transported directly to MPNB Recovery Center. They will transport to nearest Emergency Room if a medical emergency is apparent and in the best interest of the individual's safety.

Benefit to the Community

The clear benefit of a Transportation Exception Plan for Minors is designed for the child or adolescent 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 well.

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 minors. The success of this plan will only be possible with the long-term commitment of all community partners. There will be continuous system 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 minors 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 following 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 for Minors: Flow of Individuals into the Acute Care System

