



2019 Speakers and Bios

Featured Speakers

Major Sam Cochran (ret.) - is nationally known for his work developing the CIT model. He was the Coordinator of the Memphis Police Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) which started in 1988 from a collaboration with the local NAMI affiliate.

Wesley Evans - Statewide Coordinator of Integration and Recovery Services for the Florida Department of Children and Families and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office will address the statewide initiative to promote system trans-formation through Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) throughout the state of Florida.

Elizabeth Miller - State President, Florida, of WellCare Health Plans, Inc. Liz has responsibility for WellCare's Medicaid and Medicare Advantage businesses across Florida including strategy, regulatory compliance, network management, sales and marketing, medical management, finance and administration.

Kelly Griffin – Director, Field Resource Development. Kelly is determined to make the world a better place through mission-driven work. She develops organizational strategy, leads creation of strategic plans, drives strategy execution and guides change management processes.

CIT and Law Enforcement Initiatives:

Lieutenant Toni Roach - Certified law-enforcement officer and has worked for the Pasco County Sheriff's office in Florida for the past 18 years. She holds a Master's degree in Public Administration and is a certified Mental Health First Aid Adult and Public Safety Instructor. Lieutenant Roach's law enforcement experience includes patrol, community policing, school resource officer, and training. In 2016, Lieutenant Roach took on the role of agency liaison for mental health and community collaboration and training in Pasco County. Lieutenant Roach is a certified CIT coordinator for the Pasco Sheriffs' Office and three municipalities in her county. She instructs on topics including Calm, Assess, Facilitate, Communication Skills, and Suicide by Cop. She is currently in the development stages for a Mental Health Unit in her agency.

Thomas Kelley - Thomas Kelley began his law enforcement career in 1987 with the U.S. Air Force, serving as a military police officer for 10 years. Upon leaving the military he joined the Florida Highway Patrol in 2000 and in 2006 worked for the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office for 12 years. Tom worked as a patrol deputy, crime prevention practitioner and community police officer. Tom was instrumental in developing and training the agencies Corrections deputies in CIT in 2016-17. He served as the Sheriff's Office CIT and CISM coordinator until his departure in 2018. He currently is the President and CEO of TEK Training and Consulting Group. Tom continues being the CIT coordinator for Pinellas County and is a board member for NAMI Pinellas. He is also serving as a trainer for Mental Health First Aid and a law enforcement trainer at the local police academy for driving and firearms.

Peer Training Workshop:

Justin Volpe - Justin is a Certified Recovery Peer Support Specialist working with the 11th Judicial Circuit Criminal Mental Health Project, Jail Diversion Program since 2008. As a successful graduate of the program, Justin has firsthand knowledge of the importance of ensuring the availability of timely, high quality behavioral health treatment services in the community. After experiencing a series of psychiatric health care crises several years ago - which led to a period of unstable living conditions and brief involvement in the justice system - Justin became engaged in treatment and support services in the community. Today, he enjoys a full and productive life in recovery, serving as an inspiration and role model for others. Justin has also served as a consultant speaking nationally and locally with Miami Dade CIT Training, sharing his message of hope and inspiration. His experiences make him uniquely qualified to speak to the importance of ensuring people have access to care, as well as the unfortunate consequences that can result when they do not.

NAMI Leaders Workshop:

Helen Trainor - Ms. Trainor is a former civil rights and criminal defense attorney. She is the founder of the Virginia Institutionalized Persons Project; a clinical professor of mental health law at the University of Virginia; a 2002-03 United States Supreme Court Fellow; and a specialist in federal criminal appellate and post-conviction law. She is currently administering a grant to build a state-wide mental health advocacy coalition, working from NAMI/Palm Beach County. Ms. Trainor is also an ordained Episcopal deacon.

Saturday Table/Discussions:

Jay Reeve, PhD - President and Chief Executive Officer of Apalachee Center, in Tallahassee, Florida. Dr. Reeve received undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees from Tufts, Harvard, and Adelphi Universities. Prior to Apalachee Center, Dr. Reeve was a senior psychologist at Bradley Hospital in Rhode Island. In 2010, Dr. Reeve was awarded the Visionary Leadership award by the National Council for Community Behavioral Health. In 2014, Dr. Reeve was made a Fellow of the Florida Council for Community Mental Health.

John W. Newcomer, M.D. - Dr. Newcomer has been a Principal Investigator on research grants funded through the National Institute of Mental Health (NIH) for 19 years. Dr. Newcomer has received a number of honors and awards, including a 1999 Exemplary Psychiatrist Award from the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), an Independent Scientist Award from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and a 2002 Gerald L. Klerman Award for Outstanding Clinical Research from the National Alliance for Research on Schizophrenia and Depression (NARSAD). Dr. Newcomer has served as a reviewer for the NIH and other funding agencies, including the Department of Veterans Affairs. Dr. Newcomer has served on a number of editorial boards, including Schizophrenia Bulletin, Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, Journal of Psychotic Disorders, Neuropsychopharmacology and Obesity. He was the Chairman of the Drug Utilization Review board for Missouri Medicaid from 1997-2011.

Bill Gardam – President and Chief Executive Officer of Peace River Center since 2013. He is also chairman of the board of the Florida Council of CMHC. His team developed the first BH Home in the Wellcare Provider Network in the State of Florida and has been an innovator in integrating medical and behavioral health care.

Carole Matyas – Vice President of Behavioral Health Operations for Wellcare Florida Market. Carole has more than 30 years of behavioral health-related experience, with 15 of those years of experience in health plan operations. She joined WellCare in 2011 and previously worked for Magellan Health Services, first as a general manager for call center operations, and then as Chief of Clinic Operations.

Allen Giese, ChFC®, CLU® - Allen Giese is the founding partner and President of Northstar Financial Planners, Inc., in Plantation, Florida. He is also the father of an adult son who has a mental illness. Allen knows firsthand the impact that a child's mental illness can have on a family's finances. He has made it his mission to help other parents struggling with balancing their child's needs and their family's financial well-being. Allen is the author of When Mental Illness Strikes: Crisis Intervention for the Financial Plan.

Ask the Expert

Patricia Ares-Romero, MD, FASAM – Chief Medical Officer of Jackson Behavioral Health Hospital located in Miami-Dade County. She is a diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, and is board certified in Addiction Medicine through the American Board of Preventive Medicine. She serves as a board member of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, The Miami-Dade County Opioid Addiction Task Force, and she is the current Chairperson for the Addiction Advisory Board for Miami-Dade County. She also serves on the Health Impact Council for the United Way Miami-Dade County. She has been awarded grants through SAMHSA, BJA, and FADAA. She has received numerous awards most recently “Most Powerful Women in Healthcare Award 2017”. She also serves as Faculty for the University of Miami School of Medicine, and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry for Ross University, St. Georges University and American University of the Caribbean.

George M. Northrup, MD – Dr. George M Northrup is founder of TMS of Tampa and George M. Northrup, MD, PA, specializing in treatment resistant depression, general psychiatry, and addiction. Dr. Northrup founded TMS of Tampa in 2017 and quickly became one of the most trusted NueroStar TMS physicians in Florida. He did additional training in TMS at Harvard, one of the premiere institutions for non-invasive brain stimulation.