



FLORIDA MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY COALITION

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FLMHAC HONORS TWO FLORIDA LEGISLATORS FOR THEIR WORK ON BAKER & MARCHMAN ACTS

November 10, 2024 - State Representatives Patt Maney (R-4) and Traci Koster (R-66) received 2024 Champion Legislator awards from the Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition (FLMHAC) for their legislative work to improve Florida's **Baker & Marchman Acts**.

The Baker Act (aka Florida Mental Health Act of 1971) allows for the involuntary examination and treatment of people experiencing a mental health crisis. The Marchman Act (aka Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Other Drug Services Act of 1993) seeks to help people with substance use disorders by providing a legal way for family members to seek help for loved ones. Both acts can be used to involuntarily assess someone who is a danger to themselves or others and is unable to determine their need for treatment.

Representative Patt Maney sponsored the bill in the House, and was supported by Rep. Traci Koster, who was serving as the House Chair of the Children, Families, & Senior Subcommittee with Rep. Maney serving as Vice Chair. The Subcommittee also sponsored the bill. The extensive bill, which Rep. Maney had worked on for several years, CS/CS/HB 7021 titled "Mental Health and Substance Abuse," was sponsored in the Senate (CS/SB 1784) by the Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Erin Grall.

The Champion Legislator Award was given to Rep. Patt Maney by Dr. Twanna House of NAMI Emerald Coast, a member of FLMHAC; and Robby Holroyd, Governmental Relations for FLMHAC. The Champion Legislator Award was presented to Rep. Traci Koster by Ashley Neal of the Hillsborough Recovery Coalition, a member of FLMHAC; and Robby Holroyd.



Pictured L-R: Representative Patt Maney, Dr. Twanna House, Robby Holroyd



Pictured L-R: Ashley Neal, Representative Traci Koster, Robby Holroyd

“The Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition is grateful to Representatives Patt Maney and Traci Koster for their very hard work to improve mental health and substance use crisis stabilization, assessment, and treatment. With the Baker Act being a 72-hour hold, patients and families have complained for years that there’s not enough time for treatment that leads to recovery. This bill, among other improvements, now includes expanded discharge planning and follow-up and allows for family advocacy to help loved ones continue treatment to lead to lasting recovery,” said FLMHAC President, Gayle Giese.

About the Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition

FLMHAC is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of 25 organizations throughout Florida that represent the voices of peers and families. The Coalition advocates for policy changes to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by behavioral health conditions. FLMHAC partners with NAMI Florida to provide behavioral health advocacy in the state.

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