



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 25-1457A, Version: 1

Subject:

Funding Agreement with Suncoast Center, Inc. for the Sexual Assault Victim Examination program.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the funding agreement with Suncoast Center, Inc. for the Sexual Assault Victim Examination (SAVE) program.

- This agreement provides continuation of funding for the SAVE program to conduct medical examinations for eligible victims of sexual assault. SAVE served 194 victims during Fiscal Year (FY) 2025.
- The SAVE program provides critical and wraparound services to facilitate the recovery of sexual assault survivors, including timely forensic evidence collection, trauma-informed counseling, and victim advocacy. Certification as a Sexual Assault Center requires 24/7 coverage with a 1-hour response time throughout Pinellas County.
- Due to market rates for on-call forensic staffing, there has been a significant increase in costs to operate the SAVE program, on-call forensic staff hourly rate increased from \$3.50 to \$33.33. The Board of County Commissioners approved a decision package for FY26 to meet critical operational needs to maintain this critical service. Human Services will continue working with Suncoast on other avenues to fill the gap for future years. Suncoast currently blends local, state and federal funding sources to maintain the program.
- Funding in an amount not to exceed \$340,120.00 for FY26 has been identified in the Human Services proposed FY26 General Fund appropriation. For each subsequent fiscal year, compensation will be evaluated based on the previously agreed upon annual amount of \$180,810.00; no match is required. The agreement includes a fiscal non-funding clause, should funding become unavailable.

Strategic Priorities:

Healthy and Safe Communities

2.1 Improve public health

2.2 Enhance community safety

Smart Service Delivery

4.2 Achieve and maintain a high level of customer satisfaction

4.4 Pursue continuous improvement

Summary:

This Agreement provides continuation of funding for the SAVE program to conduct medical examinations for eligible victims of sexual assault. This ongoing program provides critical and comprehensive support services to facilitate the recovery of sexual assault survivors, including forensic evidence collection, mental health counseling, and trauma-informed therapy. SAVE served 194 victims during FY25.

Certification as a Sexual Assault Center requires 24/7 coverage with a 1-hour response time throughout Pinellas County. The Board approved a decision package for FY26 to meet critical operational needs to maintain this critical service. Human Services will continue working with Suncoast on other avenues to fill the gap for future years. Suncoast currently blends local, state and federal funding sources to maintain the program.

Background Information:

The SAVE program serves victims of non-caregiver assault age 13 and over who reside or were assaulted in Pinellas County. Sexual assault victims are examined by an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP), Registered Nurse (RN), or a Medical Doctor (MD) employed by Suncoast. The program provides necessary prophylactic medicine and supplies for clients as well as staff training and travel expenses for offsite or clinic-based medical exams. The practitioner can also provide expert witness testimony if a case proceeds to trial. The State Department of Health in Pinellas County provides lab testing in conjunction with the SAVE program.

In addition, Suncoast works closely with law enforcement, the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, and the State Attorney's Office to ensure holistic coordination of services. A decision package was approved by the Board due to increased market rates for on-call forensic staffing. There was a significant increase from \$3.50 per hour to \$33.33 per hour. The decision package also supported market salary adjustments for nursing staff, ensuring nurse availability and timely response.

Fiscal Impact:

Funding in an amount not to exceed \$340,120.00 for fiscal year 2026 (FY26) has been identified in the Human Services' proposed Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) General Fund appropriation. For each subsequent fiscal year, compensation will be evaluated based on the previously agreed upon annual amount of \$180,810.00; no match is required.

The agreement includes a fiscal non-funding clause, should funding become unavailable.

Staff Member Responsible:

Karen Yatchum, Director, Human Services

Partners:

Suncoast Center, Inc.
State of Florida Department of Health
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
Office of the State Attorney, Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida
Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County

Attachments:

Agreement