CONSORTIUM FOR A HEALTHIER MIAMI-DADE

Tobacco-Free Workgroup Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 31, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION NEEDED
Members Present (17)	1. Zinzi Bailey, Chair, University of Minnesota 2. Bill Amodeo, Co-chair, All Star Media 3. Alan Benoit, Hope for Miami 4. Belinda Gordon-Battle, Miami-Dade County Public Schools 5. Candace Williams, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 6. Emily Jones, University of Florida 7. Eunice Mesumbe, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 8. Islamiyat Adebisi, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 9. Juliana Duque, University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center 10. Laurie Varona, Florida Department of Health in Miami Dade County 11. Lourdes Castaneda, University of Miami Area Health Education Centers 12. Luis Ferrer, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 13. Melody Espinoza, Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County 14. Nakeisha Hendricks, Florida Department of Health in Miami Dade County 15. Olatokunbo Osibogun, Florida International University 16. Samantha Florez, Hope for Miami 17. Zadymon Moore, Florida Department of Health in Miami Dade County	
Welcome and Introductions	The Tobacco-Free Workgroup Meeting was called to order by Zinzi Bailey at 9:31 a.m. with all members welcomed and introduced. All members were invited to introduce themselves and answer the ice breaker question.	
Review and Approval of Minutes	The January 27, 2026 meeting minutes from the Tobacco-Free Workgroup were reviewed. Zadymon Moore motioned to approve the minutes, and Juliana Duque seconded the motion.	
Tobacco-Free Workgroup 2025-2030 Strategic Workplan	The Tobacco-Free Workgroup 2025-2030 Strategic Workplan was reviewed. Islamiyat Adebisi motioned to approve the workplan draft, and Candace Williams seconded the motion.	
Smoking and Cervical Cancer Presentation	Juliana Duque from the *University of Miami's Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center* presented on cervical cancer and emphasized that it is largely preventable through key health behaviors and early detection. The presentation highlighted the importance of	

	quitting smoking in order to strengthen the immune system and better control Human Papillomavirus (HPV), as well as practicing safe sex and limiting sexual partners. Regular screening—through Pap smears or self-collected HPV tests, which they provide in their Game Changer Mobile Unit—is essential for early detection, especially since HPV often shows no symptoms. While HPV does not always lead to cancer, consistent screening and preventive measures can significantly reduce risk and improve overall health outcomes. During the question and answers, the participants inquired whether vaping, electronic cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco fall under the same risks as smoking, and discussion clarified evolving scientific evidence and screening guidelines. It was also noted that screening recommendations have shifted to begin at age 21 to allow immune system time to respond to HPV naturally. Additionally, emerging research suggests secondhand smoke may increase cervical cancer risk, reinforcing the importance of smoking cessation as a part of overall prevention and wellness efforts.	
Partner Updates	**Hope for Miami:** Alan Benoit shared that Hope for Miami will be hosting their DEA's (Drug Enforcement Administration) National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. Please see event details below: - **Date:** April 25, 2026 - **Time:** 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. - **Layout:** Drive-thru - **Location:** 5911 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33144 There community members can safely dispose of unwanted or expired medications.	
Previous Action Items	**Mobile Smoke Shops:** Laurie Varona highlighted growing concerns around mobile smoke shops and tobacco access in the community. A total of eight mobile vendors has been identified so far, though the number is likely higher due to the difficulty in tracking them as they move across county lines. The widespread availability of tobacco and vaping products—through mobile vendors, delivery services, and online platforms—was noted as a major barrier, particularly contributing to easy access among youth. A key issue identified is the lack of zoning regulations, which allows oversaturation of tobacco retailers and limits enforcements, efforts for the upcoming fiscal year will focus on strengthening zoning policies to better protect schools, parks, and communities. Collaboration and	

	partner engagement were emphasized as essential, with a call for participation in subcommittees to develop innovative strategies and support advocacy efforts at the policy level. **Media Recruitment Posters:** Bill Amodeo provided updates on the media recruitment posters and outreach efforts. The recruitment posters have been replaced and remain active in select locations, with plans to keep them displayed as long as store owners agree to keep them. While the initial rollout was limited, the efforts aim to support ongoing recruitment, recognizing that results may vary but as an important step toward increasing community engagement and participation. **Legislative Changes:** Bill Amodeo provided an update on legislative efforts and noted that several proposed bills were not advanced, Specifically SB 986, which addresses smoking in public places, was shut down in a Senate committee meeting in March. Similarly, HB 389 was also defeated by a separate House committee on the same date. As a result, both bills were ultimately terminated and did not move forward in the legislative process. **Fight for Air Climb Event Summary:** Melody Espinoza shared an updated on the fight for Air Climb event hosted by the American Lung Association on March 1st, noting strong participation with over 640 climbers. The event involved climbing approximately 1,700 steps at the Loan Depot Park and served as both a fundraising and awareness activity focused on lung health and tobacco prevention. At the event, the partnership actively conducted partnership recruitment by staffing an outreach table where printed tobacco prevention brochures were distributed and directly engaged individuals in conversation and demonstration about available resources . The team also extended invitations to participants, organizations, and community members to join the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade, helping expand awareness and foster new collaborations. These efforts resulted in meaningful connections and engagement at the outreach table, connecting with multiple partners including clean air advocacy groups, housing agencies, healthcare organizations, firefighters, and local schools. New partnerships were formed or	

	strengthened, including with Safety Lab Plus and Miami Senior High School, with opportunities to support clean air initiatives, smoking cessation efforts, and youth programming. The event was highlighted as highly successful and strong platform for continued collaboration with the American Lung Association and other community partners.	
New Action Items	**New State Bills:** Bill Amodeo provided updates on another unsuccessful tobacco-related legislation, including SB 986 and SB 980, which did not advance past committee stages. Participants noted ongoing challenges with vaping and smoking in public spaces due to weak and inconsistent enforcement of existing smoke-free policies. While Miami-Dade and other municipalities have smoke-free rules, enforcement gaps and public confusion persist. The group emphasized the need for stronger education, clearer signage, and improved coordination to support compliance with clean air laws and reduce vaping in indoor and public settings. **Additional Media Outlets:** Bill Amodeo discussed ideas to improve recruitment and outreach for Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) and tobacco prevention efforts. A key suggestion was to develop short, positive student-led social media clips promoting smoke-free and vape-free lifestyles, leveraging peer influence to increase engagement among youth. Participants also explored using a centralized SWAT landing page to share content and expand reach. SWAT leadership in the meeting supported the idea but noted the need to address logistical and approval requirement for youth social media use. Overall the discussion emphasized peer-driven messaging, digital engagement, and strategic planning to ensure compliance while increasing visibility and recruitment. **Smokeless Tobacco Products in Non-smoking Areas:** The team highlighted concerns about the growing use of vaping and other nicotine products in public and indoor spaces. Participants noted that vaping is increasingly common even in areas where smoking is prohibited, contributing to visibility and normalization of use. There was also discussion of "smoke-free alternatives" such as nicotine pouch products like ZYN, which are sometimes introduced in certain venues as a response to vaping use, through their appropriateness and health impactions were noted as preventable. Overall, the conversation emphasized the	

	rising prevalence of alternative nicotine products and vaping in community settings and the need for clearer understanding of their use and impact. **Florida Clean Air Act (FCAA) Amendment:** Laurie Varona shared that the Florida Clean Air Act amendment was updated to explicitly include both smoking and vaping, clarifying that vaping is also prohibited in more indoor enclosed workplaces and public spaces. Covered location included places such as sopping malls, schools, healthcare facilities, offices, stores, theaters, and other public or private workspaces. Exemptions include private residences, standalone bars, designated smoking areas, and vape shops. The amendment reinforces that vaping is subject to the same indoor restrictions as smoking, though there is ongoing confusing among the public and business, highlighting the need for greater education and awareness of the law. **City of Homestead Smoke-Free Public Spaces:** Laurie Varona shared that the City of Homestead's smoke-free public spaces initiative has passed its first reading and is moving toward a second. It aims to expand smoke-free rules in parks and public areas, with next steps focused on finalizing details, improving signage, and coordinating broader countywide implementation.	
Upcoming Events	Hope for Miami will be hosting their DEA's (Drug Enforcement Administration) National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. Please see event details below: • **Date:** April 25, 2026 • **Time:** 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. • **Layout:** Drive-thru • **Location:** 5911 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33144 At the event, community members can safely dispose of unwanted or expired medications.	
Adjourn	Chair, Dr. Zinzi Bailey adjourned the meeting at 10:57 a.m. The next Tobacco-Free Workgroup meeting is scheduled to be held virtually on May 26, 2026.	