

# Florida Lawmakers Present Nearly \$500k in Funds for Local Mental Health Services to Alpert Jewish Family Service

*Appropriations Support Alpert JFS' CALL Service "Help Line" and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Program*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Addressing dire community mental health needs, Florida lawmakers, including State Senator Lori Berman, State Representative Mike Caruso, and State Representative David Silvers, presented Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service ([Alpert JFS](#)) with a total of \$470,000 in state funding yesterday during a check presentation and program. Alpert JFS' board of directors, including Board Chair & President Gary Hoffman, along with Alpert JFS CEO Marc Hopin, were also in attendance.



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We thank them for their confidence and support in Alpert JFS and our ability to impact lives”

*Marc Hopin, Alpert JFS CEO*

“Urgent mental Health needs are escalating in our community, and thanks to the support and advocacy of our State Legislatures, including Senator Berman and Representatives Caruso and Silvers, Alpert JFS will be able to reach and respond to thousands of additional people who are in crisis,” said Hopin. “We thank them for their confidence and support in Alpert JFS and our ability to impact lives.”

Details on the provided funds:

- \$270,000 for the Alpert JFS Community Access Life Line (CALL) Service sponsored by State Senator Lori Berman and State Representative Mike Caruso.
  - o More than just a "help line," the free Alpert JFS CALL Service is staffed by master-level mental health professionals who provide a comprehensive bio-psycho-social functional assessment that identifies the caller's specific needs. Callers are then either provided services by Alpert JFS and/or referred to the right provider. Last year over 6,400 people and families were served by the Alpert JFS CALL Service at no charge.
  - o The funds will support additional full time staffing needs that will speed response time and allow Alpert JFS to help 1,600 more individuals and families.

- \$200,000 for Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) sponsored by State Senator Lori Berman and State Representative David Silvers.
  - o MHFA teaches a basic 5-step intervention that empowers participants to recognize and confront someone who is showing signs and symptoms of distress and guide them to the help they need.
  - o The funds will enable Alpert JFS to hire instructors who will train a cadre of community-members and professionals in high-risk communities to enable them to offer immediate mental health first aid (in conjunction with The National Council for Wellbeing).

State Senator Lori Berman: "I believe we have a sacred responsibility in the State Senate to advocate for those who do not have a voice, which includes those suffering from mental illness. I am thankful for the work Alpert JFS does to help us be their voice in Tallahassee, but more important, that they are there every day as the lifeline for people in crisis in our community."

State Representative Mike Caruso: "We simply cannot bury our heads in the sand and ignore mental illness any longer. Sadly, every one of us has a family member, friend, neighbor who is affected. Mental illness crosses all lines; economic, social, religious, ethnic and political party lines and if there is one issue we must work together on, this is it. I am so honored for the opportunity to work with Senator Berman and Alpert JFS and understand that there is much more we need to do."

State Representative David Silvers: "I have had the privilege of sponsoring the Mental Health First Aid appropriation for three years with Senator Berman. My hope is to see this program become as common as CPR in the near future. The value of being able to recognize the warning signs, knowing how to approach and speak to a person in crisis can mean saving a person's life."



Gary Hoffman, Senator Lori Berman, Marc Hopin, Representative Mike Caruso



Gary Hoffman, Senator Lori Berman, Marc Hopin, Representative David Silvers

## About Alpert JFS

Founded in 1974, Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) is a nationally accredited service provider for children, adults, seniors, and Holocaust survivors. The non-profit, non-sectarian organization is a trusted leader, with a team of over 140 skilled professionals delivering high-quality care to nearly 12,000 people each year, from Boynton Beach to Vero Beach. Alpert JFS works to ensure the well-being of individuals and families, the independence of older adults, and quality-of-life for individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit [www.AlpertJFS.org](http://www.AlpertJFS.org) or phone 561-684-1991. □□□ □

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