

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/CS/HB 159 Establishment of Mental Health First Aid Training Program
SPONSOR(S): Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee; Healthy Families Subcommittee; Berman
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** CS/SB 574

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Healthy Families Subcommittee	10 Y, 0 N, As CS	Entress	Brazzell
2) Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee	12 Y, 0 N, As CS	Fontaine	Pridgeon
3) Health & Human Services Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The CS/CS for HB 159 requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to establish a mental health first aid training program (program). The program is intended to train individuals to identify and understand the signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders and help someone who is developing or experiencing a mental health or substance use problem.

The bill directs that training be provided through contract providers and that first priority for the training be given to the staff of schools.

An appropriation of \$300,000 from nonrecurring funds is provided to implement provisions of the bill.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

In 2011, 41.4 million adults in the United States experienced mental illness.¹

Mental Health First Aid, USA

Mental Health First Aid, USA (MHFA) is a public education program that helps the public identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.² Mental Health First Aid was developed in Australia in 2001, by Professor Anthony Jorm, a mental health literacy professor, and Betty Kitchener, a nurse specializing in health education. The MHFA program is currently being used around the world including the United States.³ MHFA is managed, operated, and disseminated by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.⁴

Training

MHFA is an interactive 8-hour course that presents an overview of mental illness and substance use disorders in the U.S. and introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact, and overviews common treatments.⁵ Those who take the 8-hour course to certify as Mental Health First Aiders learn a 5-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources and knowledge to help an individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional, peer, social, and self-help care.⁶

The MHFA can be conducted as one two-day seminar, two one day events spaced over a short period of time or as four 2-hour sessions. MHFA certification must be renewed every three years.⁷

Specifically, participants learn:

- The potential risk factors and warning signs for a range of mental health problems, including: depression, anxiety/trauma, psychosis, eating disorders, substance use disorders, and self-injury.
- An understanding of the prevalence of various mental health disorders in the U.S. and the need for reduced stigma in their communities.
- A 5-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources and knowledge to assess the situation, to select and implement appropriate interventions, and to help the individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional care.
- The evidence-based professional, peer, social, and self-help resources available to help someone with a mental health problem.⁸

¹ "The NSDUH Report," SAMHSA, *accessible at*: <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/spotlight/spot111-adults-mental-illness-substance-use-disorder.pdf> (Last viewed 2/4/14).

² "Other States' Mental Health First Aid Initiatives," Florida Council for Community Mental Health, *accessible at*: <http://www.fccmh.org/resources/docs/OtherStatesMHFAInitiatives2-15-13.pdf> (Last viewed 2/4/14).

³ "About the Program: Frequently Asked Questions," Mental Health First Aid USA, *accessible at*: <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/faqs> (Last viewed 2/4/14)..

⁴ "Other States' Mental Health First Aid Initiatives," Florida Council for Community Mental Health, February 15, 2013, *accessible at*: <http://www.fccmh.org/resources/docs/OtherStatesMHFAInitiatives2-15-13.pdf>.

⁵ "About the Program: What You Learn" Mental Health First Aid USA, *accessible at*: http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/what_you_learn (Last viewed 2/4/14).

⁶ "About the Program: Overview," Mental Health First Aid USA, *accessible at*: http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/program_overview/ (Last viewed 2/4/14).

⁷ "About the Program: What You Learn" Mental Health First Aid USA, *accessible at*: http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/what_you_learn (Last viewed 2/4/14).

The 8-hour MHFA course has been used by a variety of audiences and key professions, including: primary care professionals, employers and business leaders, faith communities, school personnel and educators, state police and corrections officers, nursing home staff, mental health authorities, state policymakers, volunteers, young people, families and the general public.⁹

The MHFA instructor training is held throughout the country. There are no open instructor training opportunities in Florida for 2014. There are currently 17 remaining instructor training opportunities for 2014 elsewhere in the country.¹⁰

State Use of Mental Health First Aid, USA

Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri have statewide programs requiring some people to complete this training as part of their job. For example, in Rhode Island, the course is part of police officer training and in Austin, Texas, the course is offered to every public library employee.¹¹ Mental Health First Aid Colorado is implemented through a statewide private-public partnership of local mental health centers, the Colorado Department of Public Safety, the Colorado Sheriff's Association, the Colorado Division of Behavioral Health, Mental Health America of Colorado, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Mental Health First Aid was introduced in Colorado in 2008 and the program has grown to include 136 Instructors reaching a variety of audiences statewide.¹²

Outcomes

Participants of Mental Health First Aid training have reported favorable results. An evaluation of the Mental Health First Aid England reported that the proportion of participants rating their knowledge in supporting people with mental health problems as 'Good' or 'Excellent' increase from 32% to 90% with the use of the Mental Health First Aid Program. The program also reported that use of the program caused individuals rating their confidence in supporting people with mental health problems as 'Good' or 'Excellent' to increase from 27% to 89%.¹³ An evaluation of the Mental Health First Aid Training in Wales produced similar results: 58% of participants reported that they felt better prepared to help someone in mental distress after attending the training.¹⁴

Additional Mental Health Training Programs in Florida

As of March 2013, the Miami-Dade school district began training each of its middle school and high school teachers to identify early warning signs of mental illness through a program called "Typical or Troubled?" The program was created by the American Psychiatric Foundation and is provided at no cost to the district.¹⁵

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI/Florida is an affiliate of this organization.¹⁶ NAMI/Florida works to provide education, advocacy

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ About the Program: Overview," Mental Health First Aid USA, *accessible at*: http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/program_overview/ (Last viewed 2/4/14).

¹⁰ "Find Instructor Training Programs in Your Community", Mental Health First Aid USA, *accessible at*: http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/current_instructor_courses.php?CourseType=&city=&State=Florida&postcode=&search= (Last viewed 2/4/14).

¹¹ "Other States' Mental Health First Aid Initiatives," Florida Council for Community Mental Health, February 15, 2013, *accessible at*: <http://www.fccmh.org/resources/docs/OtherStatesMHFAInitiatives2-15-13.pdf> (Last viewed 2/4/14).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ "Mental Health First Aid England and North East Mental Health Development Unit Partnership Project," Mental Health First Aid England, *accessible at*: <http://www.nemhdu.org.uk/silo/files/mhfa-england-evaluation-report-march-2011.pdf> (Last viewed 2/4/14).

¹⁴ "Evaluations of the Mental Health First Aid Training Course," Welsh Assembly Government, *accessible at*: http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CCUQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca%2FEN%2Fabout%2FDocuments%2FEvaluation%2520of%2520the%2520Mental%2520Health%2520First%2520Aid%2520Training%2520Course%2520-%2520Wales.pdf&ei=yM_vUjtmE9G0kQfu9IH0BA&usg=AFQjCNE53-enYbO4TyrF-Wpzwm2aneFwGQ&sig2=CkgzjTTzIAFxe4I59-LIcA (Last viewed 2/4/14).

¹⁵ Mental Health First Aid: *Become an Instructor*, *available at*: <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/become-an-instructor/find-upcoming-instructor-training-courses> (last viewed 2/10/14).

¹⁶ About NAMI, *available at* <http://www.nami.org> (last viewed 2/10/14).

and support group programs for people in communities living with mental illness and their loved ones.¹⁷ An example of programs offered is the NAMI Basics, a free six week education course for parents and other family caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness.¹⁸ NAMI/Florida also provides Parents & Teachers as Allies which is a two-hour in-service mental health education program for school professionals. This program focuses on helping school professionals and families within the school community better understand the early warning signs of mental illness in children and adolescents and how best to intervene so youth with mental health treatment needs are linked with services.¹⁹

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to establish a mental health first aid training program (program). The program is required to provide an interactive, mental health first aid training course through contracts with Behavioral Health Managing Entities or other appropriate community providers. The bill requires the contracting entity to work cooperatively with local school districts to give first priority for training to the staff in public schools as appropriate.

The bill does not specify how the program would operate. Thus the organization that contracted with DCF could perhaps pay for staff or individuals in the community to become certified as instructors of MHFA, contract with MHFA instructors who already possess certification, or decide to operate the program in an innovative way.

The bill requires the mental health first aid training to contain:

- An overview of mental illnesses and substance use disorders and the need to reduce the stigma of mental illness;
- Information on the potential risk factors and warning signs and common treatments of mental illnesses or substance use disorders, including depression, anxiety, psychosis, eating disorders, and self-injury; and,
- An action plan that encompasses the skills, resources, and knowledge to assess the situation, select and implement appropriate interventions, and help an individual with appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care.

The bill requires DCF to ensure that instructors have been certified by a national authority for mental health. At this time, the only program that clearly meets the specified criteria is the Mental Health First Aid, USA; however, it is possible that other programs may qualify.

The bill requires DCF to submit a report on the effectiveness of the program to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Governor by December 31, 2016.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014, and an expiration date of June 30, 2017.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Creates an unnumbered section of law, relating to mental health first aid training program.

Section 2: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

¹⁷ NAMIFlorida.org/About NAMI, *available at* <http://www.namiflorida.org/> (last viewed 2/10/14).

¹⁸ NAMI Basics Education Program: The fundamentals of Caring for You, Your Family and Your Child with Mental Illness, *available at* <http://www.nami.org/basics> (last viewed 2/10/14).

¹⁹ NAMI.org/parents and teachers: NAMI Parents and Teachers as Allies: An In-Service Mental Health Education Program for School Professionals, *available at* <http://www.nami.org/parentsandteachers> (last viewed 2/10/14).

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

The bill provides \$300,000 of unrestricted cash from the Federal Grants Trust Fund. The cost per course is \$2,000 for one trainer should Mental Health First Aid USA be selected to provide the program curriculum.²⁰

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill provides DCF the discretion to determine how to allocate these training opportunities.

While an appropriation of \$300,000 is provided to DCF, the number of qualified mental health first aid trainers produced by the bill remains indeterminate because the number of course enrollees is unknown. At a minimum, Mental Health First Aid USA recommends a community train at least two students; at a maximum, no more than 25 students are recommended per course. The cost for instruction could range from \$4,000 to \$50,000 based on the Expenditure section above. Considering the appropriation of \$300,000, at least 75 courses could be made available. The number of newly instructed trainers is a function of how many complete the courses.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not Applicable. This bill does not appear to affect county or municipal governments.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

²⁰ See Footnote 15.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

The Healthy Families subcommittee adopted an amendment on February 11, 2014, which allows the mental health first aid program to be taught by instructors certified by any national authority on mental health, rather than restricting the program to only instructors certified by Mental Health First Aid USA.

The Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee adopted an amendment on March 11, 2014, which provides a nonrecurring appropriation of \$300,000. This analysis is drafted to the committee substitute for the committee substitute for HB 159.