

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

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BILL: CS/CS/SB 574

INTRODUCER: Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee; and Senator Sobel

SUBJECT: Establishment of Mental Health First Aid Training Program

DATE: March 18, 2014

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Crosier</u>	<u>Hendon</u>	<u>CF</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Brown</u>	<u>Pigott</u>	<u>AHS</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

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**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/CS/SB 574 requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to establish a mental health first aid training program. The program is intended to help members of the public identify and understand the signs of mental illness and substance use disorders and provide skills for individuals to help a person who is developing or experiencing a mental health or substance use problem.

The bill directs the DCF to establish the program through contracts with behavioral health managing entities<sup>1</sup> or other appropriate community providers, with first priority for the training to be given to school staff.

The bill requires the DCF to submit a report on the program to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31, 2015.

The bill appropriates \$300,000 from the DCF's Federal Grants Trust Fund for the program's implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> See s. 394.9082, F.S. A managing entity is a not-for-profit corporation organized in Florida and is under contract with the DCF on a regional basis to manage the day-to-day operational delivery of behavioral health services through an organized system of care and a network of providers who are contracted with the managing entity to provide a comprehensive array of emergency, acute care, residential, outpatient, recovery support, and consumer support services related to behavioral health.

## II. Present Situation:

The Mental Health First Aid program (MHFA) is an education program brought to the U.S. through a collaborative effort between the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.<sup>2</sup> In the U.S., the program is managed, operated and disseminated by these same entities under the name of Mental Health First Aid USA. Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) makes reference to MHFA on the department's web page entitled, "Other Disaster Behavioral Health Response Resources"<sup>3</sup> and provides a link to the MHFA USA website.

### Coursework

MHFA is an eight-hour course for members of the general public that presents an overview of mental illness and substance use disorders. The course is designed to introduce participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, build understanding of their impact, and teach participants how to assist someone experiencing a mental health related crisis.<sup>4</sup>

Specifically, the coursework includes:

- 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 five-step action plan encompassing skills, resources, and knowledge to assess a potential crisis situation, to select and implement appropriate interventions, and to help an individual in crisis connect with appropriate professional care; and
- Professional, peer, social, and self-help resources available to help someone with a mental health problem.<sup>5</sup>

There are separate MHFA courses focused on adults and youth. Between the dates of March 17, 2014, and October 16, 2014, MHFA courses are scheduled to be provided to the general public on 13 occasions by seven private-sector organizations and one public school district in six Florida cities.<sup>6</sup>

### Becoming Certified Instructor

The MHFA coursework must be taught by an instructor certified by MHFA USA. Instructors are required to complete a five-day instructor training program and pass a written exam for certification. The MHFA instructor training is taught by two authorized MHFA trainers. Tuition

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<sup>2</sup> Florida Council for Community Mental Health, *Other States' Mental Health First Aid Initiatives* (Feb. 15, 2013) available at <http://www.fccmh.org/resources/docs/OtherStatesMHFAInitiatives2-15-13.pdf> (last visited Jan. 27, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/mental-health/disaster-other-resources> (last visited February 27, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/take-a-course/what-you-learn/> (last visited February 27, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/take-a-course/find-a-course/> (last visited March 10, 2014).

for the instructor course is \$2,000 per person. Once certified, instructors must teach the course at least three times per year to maintain certification.<sup>7</sup>

MHFA instructor training is provided at various sites throughout the country. According to the MHFA USA website, 20 instructor training sessions will be held in the U.S. between the dates of March 17, 2014, and August 25, 2014. None of these instructor training sessions are scheduled within the state of Florida.<sup>8</sup>

### **MHFA Programs in Other States**

Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri have statewide programs requiring some individuals to complete MHFA coursework as part of their jobs.<sup>9</sup> 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.

### **MHFA at the National Level**

The federal Mental Health First Aid Act of 2013 (S. 153 / H.R. 274) was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Ron Barber of Arizona and in the U.S. Senate by Senators Mark Begich of Alaska and Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, to authorize \$20 million in grants to fund MHFA programs across the country.

President Barack Obama has also supported MHFA. In his report, *Now Is the Time: The President's Plan to Protect our Children and our Communities by Reducing Gun Violence*, published January 16, 2013, the President called for \$15 million of federal spending to fund MHFA coursework for teachers and other adults who interact with youth to detect and respond to mental illness in children and young adults, including how to encourage adolescents and families experiencing these problems to seek treatment.<sup>10</sup>

### **Similar Programs Currently in Florida**

Starting in 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.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/become-an-instructor/certification-process/> (last visited February 27, 2014). The tuition cost is reduced to \$1,850 for members of the National Council for Behavioral Health.

<sup>8</sup> Mental Health First Aid: *Become an Instructor*, available at <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/become-an-instructor/find-upcoming-instructor-training-courses> (last visited March 10, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Florida Council for Community Mental Health, *Other States' Mental Health Aid Initiatives* (Feb. 15, 2013) available at <http://www.fccmh.org/resources/docs/OtherStatesMHFAInitiatives2-15-13.pdf> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/preventing-gun-violence> (last visited Feb. 27, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> The Miami Herald, *Miami-Dade Teachers to Receive Mental Illness Training*, (Jan. 27, 2013), <http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/27/3204016/miami-dade-teachers-to-receive.html> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

The Mental Health Association of Palm Beach has created a new training for primary care providers that will integrate primary and behavioral health services in the community. The program helps pediatric primary care providers to proactively identify respond to potential and current mental health issues that exist in infants, children and adolescents.<sup>12</sup>

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.<sup>13</sup> NAMI/Florida offers a program called "Parents & Teachers as Allies," which is a two-hour 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.<sup>14</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

**Section 1** of the bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to establish a mental health first aid training program. The DCF is directed to ensure that instructors in the training program have been certified by a national authority on mental health first aid programs.

The program is intended to help the public identify and understand the signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders and provide the public with skills to help a person who is developing or experiencing a mental health or substance use problem.

The program must 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 schools, when appropriate.

The bill requires the mental health first aid training program to include, but not be limited to:

- 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 of mental illnesses or substance use disorders, including depression, anxiety, psychosis, eating disorders, and self-injury, as well as common treatments for those conditions; and
- An action plan that encompasses the skills, resources, and knowledge to assess a potential crisis situation, implement appropriate interventions, and help an individual with appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care.

The bill requires the DCF to submit a report, no later than December 31, 2016, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, on the

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<sup>12</sup> Be Merge: Behavioral and Primary Care Integration Project, available at <http://www.mhapbc.org/Programs> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

<sup>13</sup> About NAMI, available at <http://www.nami.org> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> 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 visited Jan. 29, 2014).

effectiveness of the program with recommendations regarding continued implementation. Section 1 of the bill expires on June 30, 2017.

**Section 2** of the bill appropriates \$300,000 from the DCF's Federal Grants Trust Fund for the training program's implementation.

**Section 3** of the bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

#### **IV. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

##### **A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

##### **B. Private Sector Impact:**

There may be a cost of approximately \$16 for a person to enroll in the coursework.<sup>15</sup> For an individual who seeks to become certified as an MHFA instructor, MHFA USA charges either \$2,000 or \$1,850 for instructor training.<sup>16</sup> MHFA USA could experience an increased demand from individuals seeking to become certified MHFA instructors in Florida. Certified MHFA instructors in Florida could experience an increased demand for their services in teaching the course.

##### **C. Government Sector Impact:**

CS/CS/SB 574 appropriates \$300,000 in nonrecurring federal funds to DCF for the training program's implementation. The bill requires the DCF to create a mental health first aid training program through contracts with managing entities or other providers and to prioritize school personnel for participation, and the DCF's contracting entities will likely be expected to make MHFA courses available to school personnel and perhaps the general public. However, the bill does not specify how the contracts will be procured, how the funds should be spent, or what measurable outcomes the program is expected to produce. It is unclear whether the program will increase the supply of certified instructors in Florida who are available to teach MHFA courses to a greater extent than those currently available in the private sector. The bill does not specify who is responsible for paying the costs of the training, i.e. the individuals who participate or the program itself.

#### **V. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

#### **VI. Related Issues:**

The bill requires the DCF to ensure that "instructors in the training program have been certified by a national authority on mental health first aid programs." At present, there is only one such

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<sup>15</sup> The Department of Children and Families, *2014 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis of SB 574*, on file with staff of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services.

<sup>16</sup> *Supra*, note 7.

national authority – Mental Health First Aid USA – which owns the trademarked MHFA program.<sup>17</sup>

The bill requires the DCF to contract with behavioral health managing entities or “other appropriate community providers” in establishing the program. The bill gives no indication as to what would qualify an organization as an “appropriate community provider.”

The bill requires the DCF’s contracting entity to “work cooperatively with local schools to provide training to the staff in schools as a first priority, when appropriate.” Because the term “schools” is very broad, it is unclear what types of schools are being targeted with the term “local schools.” It is also unclear which conditions would render the prioritization of school personnel appropriate or inappropriate.

## VII. Statutes Affected:

None.

## VIII. Additional Information:

- A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

### **Recommended CS/CS by Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services on March 17, 2014:**

- The CS adds a new section to the bill that provides for an appropriation of \$300,000 in nonrecurring federal funds to the Department of Children and Families to implement the training program.

### **CS by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs on February 3, 2014:**

- The CS removes from the bill the requirement for the Department of Children and Families to ensure that instructors in the training program have been certified by a national authority representing Mental Health First Aid USA. Instead, the CS requires that instructors be certified by a national authority on mental health first aid programs.

- B. Amendments:

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill’s introducer or the Florida Senate.

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<sup>17</sup> *Supra*, note 15.