

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.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

BILL: SB 574

INTRODUCER: Senator Sobel

SUBJECT: Establishment of Mental Health First Aid Training Program

DATE: February 3, 2014 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Crosier	Hendon	CF	Pre-meeting
2.			AHS	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

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 the public identify and understand the signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders and provide the public key skills to help someone who is developing or experiencing a mental health or substance use problem.

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

The department is required to submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31, 2015.

The fiscal impact of the bill is unknown. The bill provides an expiration date of June 30, 2017, for the proposed section. The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

II. Present Situation:

The Department of Children & Families (DCF) contracts with service providers in seven regions to provide substance abuse and mental health services. DCF ensures providers are trained and receive technical assistance using written Standards of Care for evidence based practices.¹

Background

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a public education program brought to the U.S. through a collaborative effort between the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, the

¹ Florida Department of Children & Families, *Substance Abuse 7 Mental Health Services Plan, 2014 Annual Plan Update* (Jan. 2014) available at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/substance-abuse/publications> (last visited Jan. 27, 2014).

Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health.² MHFA USA is managed, operated and disseminated by these same entities.

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.³ Those who take the course to be certified 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. MHFA certification must be renewed every three years.

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.

The MHFA USA 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.⁴

Mental Health First Aid Instructors

The MHFA training must be taught by an instructor certified by MHFA USA. Instructors are required to complete a 5-day Instructor Training Program and pass a written exam for certification. The MHFA Instructor training is taught by two authorized MHFA trainers connected to at least one of the Mental Health First Aid – USA Authorities. There is course work, as well as independent presentations. Trainers conduct an individual evaluation of each participant in addition to the peer feedback provided.

The MHFA instructor training is held throughout the country. There is one instructor training opportunity scheduled in Florida in February 2014, but is closed to new registrations. There are six instructor training opportunities available in other states for 2014.⁵

² 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).

³ About the Program: *Overview, Mental Health First Aid USA* available at http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/program_overview (last visited Jan. 27, 2014).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Mental Health First Aid: *Become an Instructor*, available at <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/become-an-instructor/find-upcoming-instructor-training-courses> (last visited Jan. 27, 2014).

State Use of Mental Health First Aid

Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri have statewide programs requiring some people to complete this training as part of their job.⁶ 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 163 instructors which has resulted in nearly 5,000 certified MHFA individuals.

Programs Currently Available 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.⁷ 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.⁸ These are just two examples of existing local programs that provide early detection training in various counties in Florida.

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.⁹ NAMI/Florida works to provide education, advocacy and support group programs for people in communities living with mental illness and their loved ones.¹⁰ Two examples of programs offered are NAMI Basics, a free six week education course for parents and other family caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness.¹¹ 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.¹²

⁶ 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).

⁷ Miami-Dade Teachers to Receive Mental Illness Training, available at <http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/01/27/3204016/miami-dade-teachers-to-receive.html> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

⁸ Be Merge: Behavioral and Primary Care Integration Project, available at <http://www.mhapbc.org/Programs> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

⁹ About NAMI, available at <http://www.nami.org> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

¹⁰ NAMIFlorida.org/About NAMI, available at <http://www.namiflorida.org/> (last visited Jan. 29, 2014).

¹¹ 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 visited Jan. 29, 2014).

¹² 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).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 The bill requires the Department of Children & Families (DCF) to establish a Mental Health First Aid Training Program (Program). Recent tragedies have highlighted the need for better mental health care and an increase in community awareness of the signs of mental illness.

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

An interactive 8 hour Mental Health First Aid training course will be provided 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 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 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 establish certification requirements for instructors of the Mental Health First Aid course.

The bill provides DCF rulemaking authority to implement the Mental Health First Aid Program.

Section 2 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 to recipients of the training which was approximately \$15.95 per person in 2013. There may be additional indeterminate costs for the trainer.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The fiscal impact would depend on the number of trainers DCF determines necessary to implement and administer the Program. In 2013, the fee for a training course with one

trainer was \$2,000. The 2012-2013 General Appropriations Act allocated \$150,000 to the department to implement this program.

V. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VI. Related Issues:

None.

VII. Statutes Affected:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.