**120 State and Local School Districts to Receive Funding for Mental Health First Aid Training**

*HHS¹ Project AWARE grants award $48M to support teachers, schools, and communities*

Washington (September 23, 2014) ­ 120 state and local educational agencies just found out that they will be part of a major national initiative to support teachers, schools, and communities in recognizing and responding to mental health concerns among youth.

The educational agencies­including school districts in 28 different states and departments of education in 20 states­were awarded Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to (among other activities) train teachers, school staff, and other community members in Mental Health First Aid.

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches people to identify the signs of mental illnesses and addictions, how to provide initial help, and how to connect individuals in crisis with appropriate care. Since 2008, more than 250,000 individuals in the U.S. have completed the Mental Health First Aid course. Participants who complete the training include school personnel, police officers, faith leaders, health care professionals, and human resources managers. Mental Health First Aid is listed on the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration¹s National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. The National Council for Behavioral Health (National Council), the Missouri Department of Mental Health, and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene brought Mental Health First Aid to the US in 2008.

The grant awardees were announced as part of $99 million total grants from HHS, which also included funding to train new mental health providers and to increase access to mental health services for young people. All funds were included in the President and Vice President¹s [Now Is the Time](http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/47083690:27906470185:m:1:2669807012:79F31B347CA1508C2C5BDB7F51B0FE42:r) plan to reduce gun violence, increase access to mental health services, and make schools safer.

To see the lists of award winners, visit [http://beta.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/fy14-grant-awards-nitt.pdf](http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/47083691:27906470185:m:1:2669807012:79F31B347CA1508C2C5BDB7F51B0FE42:r)

To support the new grantees, the National Council will be holding a number of dedicated instructor certification trainings for award recipients. Training dates and locations will be posted by October 1. Grantees should email Tramaine Stevenson at [TramaineS@TheNationalCouncil.org](mailto:TramaineS@TheNationalCouncil.org) with any questions.

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*The National Council for Behavioral Health (National Council) is the unifying voice of America¹s community mental health and addictions treatment organizations. Together with 2,200 member organizations, it serves more than eight million adults and children living with mental illnesses and addiction disorders. The organization is committed to ensuring all Americans have access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery and full participation in community life. The National Council pioneered Mental Health First Aid in the U.S. and has trained more than 250,000 individuals to connect youth and adults in need to mental health and addictions care in their communities. To learn more about the National Council, visit* [*www.TheNationalCouncil.org*](http://www.TheNationalCouncil.org/)*.*