



## Mental Health First Aid Moving

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training programs have been implemented in countries around the world, parts of several states, and statewide in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, and Missouri. An evaluation of the MHFA in England found that the proportion of participants rating their knowledge in supporting people with mental health problems as 'Good' or 'Excellent' increased from 32 percent to 90 percent after completion of the MHFA program.

[CS/CS/CS 159](#) was passed out of its last referenced committee (Health & Human Services) on Thursday. It requires the Department of Children and Families to establish a MHFA training program to help the public identify and understand signs of mental illness and substance use disorders and to provide the public with skills to help a person who is developing or experiencing a mental health or substance use problem.

The bill requires the Department to use a competitive procurement process to select a statewide association for mental health or substance abuse awareness or treatment to develop, implement, and manage the program.

The training program is required 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 illness or substance use disorders, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, psychosis, eating disorders and self-injury, and common treatments for those conditions; and
- an action plan that encompasses the skills, resources, and knowledge required to assess the situation, select and implement appropriate interventions, and help an individual with appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care.

K-20 educators and first responders are to be given priority for participation in the program.