

By: Schwertner, et al.

S.B. No. 955

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the training of employees of local mental health authorities and certain educators in mental health first aid and the establishment of the mental health first aid fund.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 1001, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subchapter H to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Sec. 1001.201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Educator" means a person who is required to hold a certificate issued under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Education Code.

(2) "Local mental health authority" has the meaning assigned by Section 531.002.

Sec. 1001.202. GRANTS FOR TRAINING OF MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINERS. (a) To the extent funds are appropriated to the department for that purpose, the department shall make grants of not more than \$30,000 to local mental health authorities to contract with persons approved by the department to train employees of the authorities as mental health first aid trainers.

(b) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules to establish the requirements for a person to be approved by the department to contract with a local mental health authority to train employees of the authority as mental health first aid trainers. The rules must ensure that a person who contracts with an

1 authority is qualified to provide training in:

2 (1) the potential risk factors and warning signs for  
3 various mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety, trauma,  
4 psychosis, eating disorders, substance abuse disorders, and  
5 self-injury;

6 (2) the prevalence of various mental illnesses in the  
7 United States and the need to reduce the stigma associated with  
8 mental illness;

9 (3) an action plan for use by the employees that  
10 involves the use of skills, resources, and knowledge to assess a  
11 situation and develop and implement an appropriate intervention to  
12 help an individual experiencing a mental health crisis obtain  
13 appropriate professional care; and

14 (4) the evidence-based professional, peer, social,  
15 and self-help resources available to help individuals with mental  
16 illness.

17 Sec. 1001.203. GRANTS FOR TRAINING CERTAIN EDUCATORS IN  
18 MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID. (a) To the extent funds are appropriated  
19 to the department for that purpose, the department shall make  
20 grants to local mental health authorities to provide a 12-hour  
21 mental health first aid training program at no cost to educators.  
22 The amount of a grant made by the department to a local mental  
23 health authority under this section may not exceed five percent of  
24 the amount appropriated to the department to make those grants for  
25 the year in which the grant is made.

26 (b) A mental health first aid program provided by a local  
27 mental health authority under this section must:

1           (1) be conducted by an employee of the authority  
2 trained as a mental health first aid trainer;

3           (2) provide educators with the skills necessary to  
4 help an individual experiencing a mental health crisis until the  
5 individual is able to obtain appropriate professional care; and

6           (3) include:

7           (A) instruction in a five step strategy for  
8 helping an individual experiencing a mental health crisis,  
9 including assessing risk, listening respectfully to and supporting  
10 the individual, and identifying professional help and other  
11 supports for the individual;

12           (B) an introduction to the risk factors and  
13 warning signs for mental illness and substance abuse problems;

14           (C) experiential activities to increase  
15 educators' understanding of the impact of mental illness on  
16 individuals and families; and

17           (D) a presentation of evidence-supported  
18 treatment and self-help strategies.

19           Sec. 1001.204. REPORTS. (a) Not later than February 1 of  
20 each year, a local mental health authority shall provide to the  
21 department a list of employees of the authority who were trained as  
22 mental health first aid trainers under Section 1001.202 and a list  
23 of educators who completed any mental health first aid training  
24 program offered by the authority under Section 1001.203 during the  
25 preceding calendar year.

26           (b) Not later than March 1 of each year, the department  
27 shall compile the lists submitted by local mental health

1 authorities as required by Subsection (a) and submit a report to the  
2 legislature containing a list of authority employees trained as  
3 mental health first aid trainers and a list of educators who  
4 completed a mental health first aid training program provided by an  
5 authority during the preceding calendar year.

6 SECTION 2. Section 21.054, Education Code, is amended by  
7 adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

8 (d) The board shall adopt rules that allow an educator to  
9 fulfill up to twelve hours of continuing education by participating  
10 in a mental health first aid training program offered by a local  
11 mental health authority under Section 1001.203, Health and Safety  
12 Code.

13 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.