

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2018 SESSION

CHAPTER 658

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 9.1-203.1 and 32.1-111.5:1, relating to mental health awareness training; firefighters and emergency medical services personnel.

[S 670]

Approved March 30, 2018

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding sections numbered 9.1-203.1 and 32.1-111.5:1 as follows:

§ 9.1-203.1. Firefighter mental health awareness training.

A. Each fire department as defined in § 27-6.01 shall develop curricula for mental health awareness training for its personnel, which shall include training regarding the following:

- 1. Understanding signs and symptoms of cumulative stress, depression, anxiety, exposure to acute and chronic trauma, compulsive behaviors, and addiction;*
- 2. Combating and overcoming stigmas;*
- 3. Responding appropriately to aggressive behaviors such as domestic violence and harassment; and*
- 4. Accessing available mental health treatment and resources.*

B. Any fire department may develop the mental health awareness training curricula in conjunction with other fire departments or firefighter stakeholder groups or may use any training program, developed by any entity, that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection A.

C. Firefighters who receive mental health awareness training in accordance with this section shall receive appropriate continuing education credits from the Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Fire Services Board.

§ 32.1-111.5:1. Emergency medical services personnel mental health awareness training.

A. Each emergency medical services agency shall develop curricula for mental health awareness training for its personnel, which shall include training regarding the following:

- 1. Understanding signs and symptoms of cumulative stress, depression, anxiety, exposure to acute and chronic trauma, compulsive behaviors, and addiction;*
- 2. Combating and overcoming stigmas;*
- 3. Responding appropriately to aggressive behaviors such as domestic violence and harassment; and*
- 4. Accessing available mental health treatment and resources.*

B. Any emergency medical services agency may develop the mental health awareness training curricula in conjunction with other emergency medical services agencies or emergency medical services personnel stakeholder groups or may use any training program, developed by any entity, that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection A.

C. Emergency medical services personnel who receive mental health awareness training in accordance with this section shall receive appropriate continuing education credits from the Office of Emergency Medical Services.