

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2014 SESSION

CHAPTER 601

An Act to require the Secretary of Public Safety and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to encourage dissemination of information about specialized training in evidence-based strategies to prevent and minimize mental health crises.

[H 1222]

Approved April 4, 2014

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *That the Secretary of Public Safety and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall encourage the dissemination of information about specialized training in evidence-based strategies to prevent and minimize mental health crises in all jurisdictions. This information shall be disseminated to, but not limited to, law-enforcement personnel, other first responders, hospital emergency department personnel, school personnel, and other interested parties, to the extent possible. These strategies shall include (i) crisis intervention team (CIT) training for law-enforcement personnel and other first responders as designated by the community CIT task force and (ii) mental health first aid training for other first responders, hospital emergency department personnel, school personnel, and other interested parties. The Secretary of Public Safety and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources shall encourage adherence to the models of training and achievement of programmatic goals and standards. The goals for CIT training shall include (i) training participants to recognize the signs and symptoms of behavioral health disorders; (ii) teaching participants the skills necessary to de-escalate crisis situations and how to support individuals in crisis; (iii) educating participants about community-based resources available to individuals in crisis; and (iv) enhancing participants' ability to communicate with health systems about the nature of the crisis to include rules regarding confidentiality and protected health information. The goals for mental health first aid training shall be to teach the public (to include first responders, school personnel, and other interested parties) how to recognize symptoms of mental health problems, how to offer and provide initial help, and how to guide a person toward appropriate treatments and other supportive help.*