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Position: FAV



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL:	Senate Bill 324 – Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid
SPONSOR:	Senators Simonaire, Carozza, Carter, Klausmeier, Patterson, Rosapepe, Salling, and Young
HEARING DATE:	February 4, 2020
COMMITTEE:	Finance
CONTACT:	Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411
POSITION:	SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 324 – Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid** which requires Mental Health First Aid training for veterans and their immediate family members on identifying and responding to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. This training would be included in the care coordination services provided by the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration.

Maryland is home to 369,845 veterans; 54,789 (15%) of whom reside in Prince George's County.¹ Our veterans have significant mental health needs, particularly those who served in Afghanistan and Iraq during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Fourteen percent of veterans of these missions have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), 14% have major depression, and 19% reported a probable Traumatic Brain Injury.² Veterans are also 50% more likely to commit suicide than non-veterans.³

However, only 53% of veterans experiencing PTSD or major depression sought help in the past year from a physician or mental health provider.⁴

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based international training program to increase knowledge about mental health and substance use disorders (SUD). Trained participants feel more confident in their ability to help someone and may improve

¹ U.S. Census 2017 American Community Survey, Table S2101

² Jaycox, Lisa and Tanielian, Terri. *Invisible Wound of War: Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, Their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery*, RAND Corporation, 2008, pg. xxi

³ *VA National Suicide Data Report 2005-2016*, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Sept. 2018, pg. 5

⁴ Jaycox, Lisa and Tanielian, Terri. pg. xxi

their own mental wellness. This impact is well-documented: participants learn to identify signs and symptoms of mental health and SUD, how to offer help to someone in distress, and where to find treatment or self-help resources.⁵

SB 324 would expand access to Mental Health First Aid for veterans and their families. This training would equip veterans and their loved ones with the skills necessary to manage the mental health impacts of serving our country. Awareness and education could help the 47% of veterans with diagnosable PTSD or major depression who have not sought treatment to reach out for help.⁶

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 324** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

⁵ "Research and Evidence Base," *Mental Health First Aid*, viewed on Feb. 4, 2020

⁶ Jaycox, Lisa and Tanielian, Terri. pg. xxiii

ArundelLodge_FAV_SB324

Uploaded by: Banwell, Jim

Position: FAV

February 4, 2019

**Chairman Delores G. Kelley
and Members of the Finance Committee**

Testimony in Support of SB 324

I was introduced to veterans at an early age, growing up in a small southern Minnesota town. My parents would take me down to memorial day and 4th of July parades. I would see WWI and WWII vets marching proudly while those watching would all cheer. These vets were all in the bright lights.

I see some of the vets now returning from our latest conflicts - mentally ill, chemically addicted, homeless, etc. These folks, by comparison, are in darkness.

I am on the board of Arundel Lodge (www.arundellodge.org) which cares for vets and others with similar issues. We house 110 clients and see another 3200 client visits each month. I see them in a line for our clinics on a Monday morning and think, there but for the grace of God go I.

I mention this to thank the Legislature for their great support of the Lodge. I became their board president about 30 years ago. We then did an audit and discovered a cash shortfall of about \$250K - we were not going to last more than 30 days. But I knew John Astle back then, and John got us an emergency state loan. We got a new director and a new finance person and paid back the loan.

Our headquarters back then was in rented space behind the bowling alley on Generals Highway near Crownsville. We were bursting at the seams and desperately needed more space. John and Speaker Busch got us a low-interest loan that enabled us to build our present headquarters on Solomons island road, south of Harbor Center mall. We also have an outpatient treatment center on Forest Drive.

A typical day starts for our clients with a hot breakfast. Then our mental and physical health clinics are available. Both are staffed by doctors and nurses. Then other support groups are also available. And job training is also provided. Many of our clients also work.

We thank the legislature for your support. We are a team working together to help those vets and other less fortunate folks.

Someone asked me what percentage of the folks in the area in need of our services actually receive them. My guess is less than 10%. There is a great need for these services and that is why that support of this bill is so critical.

To help those vets that are in darkness back into the light.

Thank you,

Jim Banwell

AARP_FAV_SB 324

Uploaded by: Bresnahan, Tammy

Position: FAV

**SB 324 Veterans - Behavioral Health Services - Mental Health First Aid
SUPPORT
Senate Finance Committee
February 4th, 2020**

Good Afternoon Chairwoman Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. As you know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the Free State, encompassing almost 900,000 members **and more than 200,000 veterans.**

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

SB 324 requires behavioral health services for which the Maryland Department of Health provides service coordination for veterans including mental health first aid and requiring that mental health first aid consist of training for veterans and the immediate family of members of veterans on how to identify and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorder. HB 324 also requires a report be sent to the Governor. We thank Senator Simoniare for being a champion to Maryland Veterans.

This initiative is particularly important as it focuses identifying and coordinating and training for veterans and their families. There are clear links between Post Traumatic Stress Injury, pain management leading to opioid addiction, and Veteran's suicide.

Veteran's suicide statistics are disturbing. In August 2016 the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs released its landmark report on Veteran suicide. Their analysis reviewed millions of Veterans' records from 1979 to 2014 from every state in the nation. The results, updated in 2018, noted:

- About 20 Veterans a day nationwide commit suicide
- Of those, about 14 will have had little or no contact with VA Health services
- 982 Maryland Veterans committed suicide between 2005 and 2016

There is a common misperception that Department of Veterans Affairs' services are adequate to address this dire situation. Nothing could be further from reality! Nationally, only about half of our twenty million Veterans are eligible receive VA health care.

In Maryland, only about 22% of 380,000 Veterans receive care through the VA. Not to mention that Veterans family members are not eligible for VA care. **Clearly, there is still a sizeable population at risk.**

In contrast with a “government only” approach, nonprofit organizations, in partnership with the government, offer the agility to rapidly identify and respond to the immediate needs of the populations served. They also offer Maryland significant cost-savings as the participating nonprofit organizations will need to not only develop effective programs with meaningful metrics, they will have to raise their portion of the funds match. Nonprofits, with their extensive utilization of volunteer support, deliver high-value services at low cost. We urge you to favorably consider this approach.

Speaking from personal experience, and as a sister of decorated combat Vietnam Veteran with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, being able to understand and identify underlying issues is imperative to seeking treatment. My brother Michael received three purple hearts and bronze star. He went to Vietnam at age 19 and never came back the same. I only wish, that more attention could have been given to suffering veterans when he came home from Vietnam in 1970. He died in 2007 and never received the help he needed. Let’s make sure our Vets are taken care of emotionally, mentally, and financially.

AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for Senate Bill 324.

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

MNA_FAV_SB324

Uploaded by: Elliott, Robyn

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance
Title: Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid
Bill Number: SB 324
Hearing Date: February 4, 2020
Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 324, Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid*. This bill would require the Department of Health, as part of its behavioral health services coordination for veterans, to include mental health first aid for veterans and their immediate families.

Mental Health First Aid is a course developed in 2001 to train people on how to identify and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. It also teaches strategies on how to encourage an open dialogue about mental health. Studies show that the program saves lives and improves mental health literacy while decreasing the stigma associated with mental illness.

Many service members return from active duty with a mental health condition requiring treatment, and in 2017, the suicide rate for veterans was 1.5 times the rate for non-veteran adults.ⁱ MNA strongly supports providing veterans with the services they need to address these issues, and Senate Bill 324 would provide another tool to help in this effort. Please join us in supporting those who have supported us.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ References: 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. Retrieved from: https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/data-sheets/2019/2019_National_Veteran_Suicide_Prevention_Annual_Report_508.pdf

Mental Health First Aid. Retrieved from: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>

LCPCM_FAV_SB 324

Uploaded by: Faulkner, Rachael

Position: FAV



Support

SB 324 – Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid

Senate Finance Committee

February 4, 2020

The Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors of Maryland (LCPCM) supports *Senate Bill 324 – Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid*. This bill requires the Maryland Department of Health to provide Mental Health First Aid training for veterans and their immediate family members on how to identify and respond to signs of behavioral health disorders.

Currently, federal rules from the Department of Veterans Affairs and TRICARE do not permit licensed clinical professional counselors in independent practice to provide mental health services to veterans and their families, exacerbating the availability of providers even as suicide rates among veterans remains high.

LCPCM is very supportive of expanding the availability of Mental Health First Aid training to veterans and their families. This will prove especially helpful for those that either cannot access services through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or are otherwise reluctant to seek mental health treatment.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. If we can provide any further information, please contact our legislative representative, Rachael Faulkner, at (410) 693-4000 or rfaulkner@policypartners.net.

MdCSWC_JudithGallant_FAV_SB0324

Uploaded by: Gallant, Judith

Position: FAV

MdCSWC

The Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

The MdCSWC, sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, represents the interests of more than 9,500 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland.

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Bryan W. Simonaire

FROM: Judith Gallant, LCSW-C, Chair, Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition

DATE: February 4, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 324 – *Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid*

The Maryland Clinical Social Work Coalition (MdCSWC), sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work, represents the interests of more than 9,500 licensed clinical social workers in Maryland. On behalf of MdCSWC, we **support** Senate Bill 324.

The incidence of mental health and substance use disorders amongst veterans is well recognized. However, veterans and their families may not recognize their behavioral health needs, or even if recognized, do not know how to respond to those needs or access services. Recognizing the challenges faced by veterans and their families in addressing behavioral health issues, Senate Bill 324 includes “Mental Health First Aid” in the services Maryland’s Department of Health is required to coordinate with the Veteran’s Administration.

“Mental Health First Aid” is defined as training on how to identify and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. Incorporating “Mental Health First Aid” training into the services veterans and their families in Maryland are entitled to receive will greatly enhance the likelihood they will identify their behavioral health challenges and access needed services. This can positively impact the quality of the veteran’s lives, as well as that of their spouses, children and those close to them, and provide important services that veterans need to adjust to civilian life after their service to our country.

Our veterans and their families deserve the full support of the State as well as the federal government in addressing their mental health and substance use disorder challenges. Passage of Senate Bill 324 provides an effective tool to enhance that support. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
Danna L. Kauffman
Richard A. Tabuteau
410-244-7000

Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work: www.gwscsw.org

Contacts: Coalition Chair: Judy Gallant, LCSW-C; email: jg708@columbia.edu; mobile (301) 717-1004

Legislative Consultant: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer, Schwartz, Metz & Wise PA, 20 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Email: pmetz@smwpa.com; mobile (410) 746-9003

TheAmericanLegion_FAV_SB324

Uploaded by: Guibao, Patrick

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THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland
Legislative Commission

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STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 0324 VETERANS – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES – MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Madam Chairwoman Kelley, Vice Chairman Feldman and distinguished members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee...

The American Legion Department of Maryland now in its second century of representing military veterans and their families strongly believe the purpose outlined in Senate Bill 324 is a far-reaching approach to resolving the drug crises many returning servicemen and women suffer through daily and is considered by U. S. Health officials to be a leading factor in the 22 deaths by suicide average among veterans in the nation daily.

SB 324 is a monumental approach to aid veterans enduring the malignant effects of opioids and other addictive drugs. The collaboration between various Federal and State agencies will be vital of bringing direct assistance to the veteran and the care giver family member as well.

This bill also provides an in-depth approach to treatment including assessments, individual and family therapy, detoxification services and medical assisted treatment. It should be envisioned that in some cases hospitalization will be necessary but with the participation of the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs this factor should be easily remedied.

The lives at stake could be saved and the families who endure this crises could be made whole again through the success full passage of SB 324. The American Legion representing over 45,000 veterans throughout the State of Maryland fervently prays the Senate Finance Committee will issue a favorable report.

Yours, respectfully

Patrick Guibao

Patrick J. Guibao
Chairman
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Maryland
Legislative Commission

MedChi_MACHC_PamKasemeyer_FAV_SB0324

Uploaded by: Kasemeyer, Pam

Position: FAV



MID-ATLANTIC ASSOCIATION OF
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Serving Maryland and Delaware



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TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair
Members, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Bryan W. Simonaire

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Richard A. Tabuteau

DATE: February 04, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 324 – *Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid*

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, we submit this letter of **support** for Senate Bill 324.

Senate Bill 324 includes “Mental Health First Aid” in the services Maryland’s Department of Health (MDH) is required to coordinate with the Veteran’s Administration. “Mental Health First Aid” is defined as training for veterans and the immediate family members of veterans on how to identify and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders.

Under current law, subject to the limitations of the State budget, MDH, in collaboration with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, the Maryland National Guard, and the Maryland Defense Force, provides behavioral health service coordination for veterans in Maryland in order to connect them to behavioral health services which may be available through the VA. If behavioral health services are not available or accessible through the VA, MDH is to provide service coordination for veterans to connect them to behavioral health services which may be available through the Behavioral Health Administration, until such federal services can be accessed and obtained.

It is well recognized that veterans often face significant behavioral health issues that are often triggered by their experiences while serving. While it is critically important that veterans have access to the full range of behavioral health services, often veterans and their families do not recognize their behavioral health needs and/or are not knowledgeable on how to respond to mental health and substance abuse challenges or access services. Incorporating “Mental Health First Aid” training into the services veterans and their families in Maryland are entitled to receive will greatly enhance the likelihood they will identify their behavioral health challenges and access needed services.

Senate Bill 324 is a straightforward and needed expansion of the services our veterans deserve that if implemented should greatly enhance veterans and their families’ ability to access needed behavioral health services. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
Richard A. Tabuteau

410-244-7000

MHAMD_FAV_SB324

Uploaded by: Martin, Dan

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 324 Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid

Finance Committee

February 4, 2020

Position: SUPPORT

The Mental Health Association of Maryland is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health, mental illness and substance use. We appreciate this opportunity to present this testimony in support of Senate Bill 324.

SB 324 requires the Maryland Department of Health to include mental health first aid among the behavioral health services it coordinates for veterans and their families. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a world-renowned, evidence-based program that teaches how to recognize and respond to a person with a mental health or substance use concern or crisis.

MHAMD worked with the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration, the National Council for Behavioral Health, and the Missouri Department of Health to adapt MHFA for the United States. Since 2009, MHAMD has been responsible for the development, oversight and implementation of the statewide *MHFA Maryland* program. The program has trained over 36,000 Marylanders, including over 700 instructors, 15 of whom are self-identified veteran instructors. MHAMD utilizes a corps of instructors and master trainers who primarily deliver free and scholarship-based trainings through a state grant. This ensures that no one seeking MHFA training is turned away.

The availability of MHFA training for veterans and their families is particularly important given the high prevalence of behavioral health concerns among veterans and active duty military members:

- In 2015, veterans accounted for 14.3% of suicide deaths as compared to 8% of the adult US population
- On average, one US veteran dies by suicide nearly every hour
- Veteran suicides in Maryland average over 100 per year (308 from 2015-2017)

In addition to the skills taught in the core MHFA class – which includes information about various behavioral health disorders, risk factors and warning signs of mental health concerns, and a 5-step action plan to help someone in crisis – *MHFA Maryland* features a veterans' module that includes:

- A discussion of military culture and its relevance to the topic of mental health
- A discussion of the specific risk factors faced by many service members and their families such as mental and physical trauma, stress, separation, etc.
- How to break down the stigma associated with substance use disorders and mental illnesses like anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and more
- How to reach out to those who suffer in silence, reluctant to seek help
- Community resource information

SB 324 should help get MHFA training to more veterans and their family members. For this reason, MHAMD supports this bill and urges a favorable report.

10-YEAR IMPACT REPORT

Bringing essential mental health training
to communities throughout Maryland.



IMPACTING, PARTNERING, TRANSFORMING

The Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) is the second oldest mental health advocacy group in the nation. It was formed more than a century ago when a group of concerned citizens gathered in Baltimore to take action to improve the lives of individuals living with mental illness. From prevention and early intervention to treatment and crisis intervention, MHAMD works to ensure that Marylanders have access to services when and where they need them. Training individuals in Mental Health First Aid,[®] so they can better respond with care and support to loved ones, coworkers or a stranger is one of the many ways we work to improve the mental health of communities across our state. Tens of thousands of Marylanders have been helped since we worked with other national leaders to bring this evidence-based program to the U.S.

In 10 years, over 36,000 Marylanders have been trained and they in turn have made a positive impact on the lives of countless others. Our Mental Health First Aiders have created a network of awareness about mental health in communities across the state and reduce the stigma of mental illness every day. We're proud of the MHFA Maryland program's impact over the past decade and are excited about opportunities to continue to build community capacity to recognize and respond to mental health needs in every corner of Maryland.

Linda J. Raines, CEO
Mental Health Association of Maryland

Mental Health First Aid Maryland, a program of the Mental Health Association of Maryland, is pleased to present this 10-year impact report. One of the original partners of the Mental Health First Aid program, the Mental Health Association of Maryland in partnership with the State of Maryland Behavioral Health Administration, the National Council for Behavioral Health and the Missouri Department of Health worked collaboratively to develop this program and bring it to the United States.

Over the course of 10 years, our program has aimed to reach all Marylanders. Mental Health First Aid, an 8-hour public education national certification course, teaches individuals, professionals, businesses and community members how to recognize and respond to a person with a mental health concern or crisis. Many people may not talk about mental health concerns due to stigma. One of the goals of the program is to help reduce stigma by emphasizing important messages that mental health concerns are common and wellness and recovery are possible.

Mental Health First Aid Maryland looks forward to our next 10 years bringing this training to others all across Maryland. The skills taught in training empower individuals to reach out, provide help and support to a person in need. Together, we can continue to expand our reach and strengthen our communities.

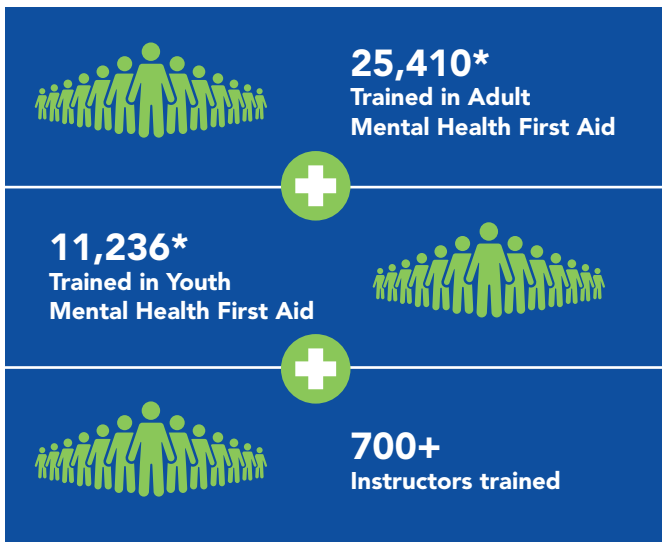
Jennifer Treger, Director
Mental Health First Aid Maryland



IMPACTING

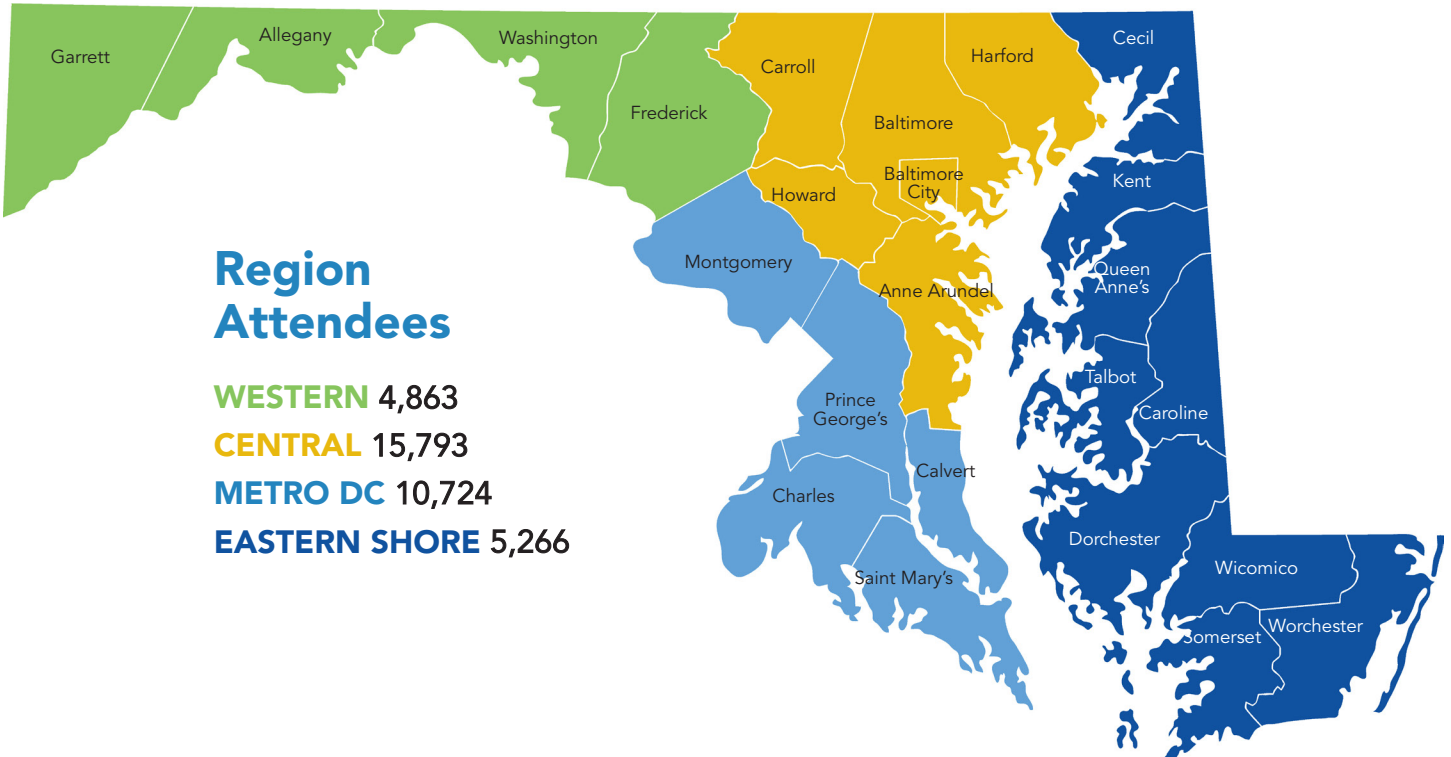
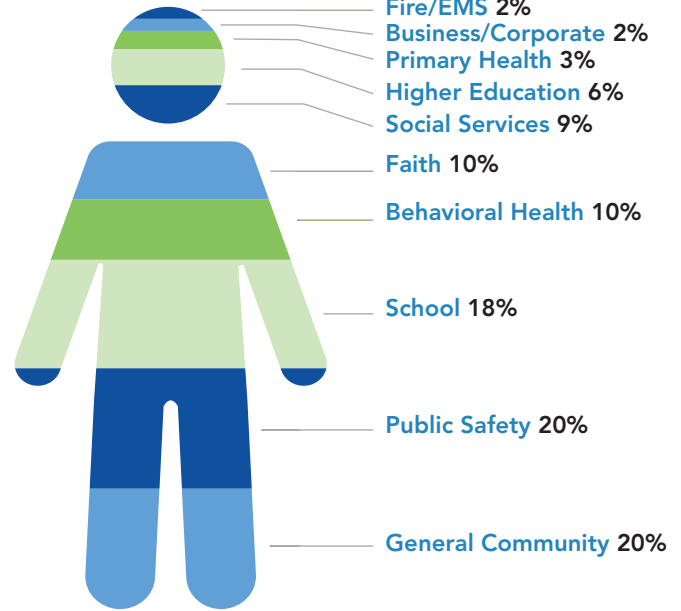
Since the inception of the program, over 36,000 people have been trained in Mental Health First Aid. Imagine the impact. 36,000 people who have the skills to provide a person who may be experiencing a mental health concern or crisis with the care support, and resources they may need. As we work to create safer, caring and more supportive communities across the state, Mental Health First Aid is critical to the support we can provide.

36,646* Marylanders trained in 10 years



*Numbers of first aiders trained are updated on a monthly basis.

Audiences



IMPACTING

Mental Health First Aid Maryland has been part of Mental Health First Aid USA since the program's inception. Together with the **State of Maryland Behavioral Health Administration (formerly known as Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)**, we leveraged federal funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to create the first Mental Health First Aid USA curriculum. This was accomplished in partnership with the Missouri Department of Mental Health and the National Council for Behavioral Health. With continued funding during the past 10 years, Mental Health First Aid Maryland has been able to make instructor and first aider training affordable and accessible to individuals across the state.

TOTAL GRANTS: \$4.7 million



PARTNERING

Key stakeholders and community partners were instrumental in the development, implementation and growth of Mental Health First Aid Maryland. Through the power of partnerships, MHFA Maryland has expanded to include State-level organizations such as the Maryland State Department of Education, State of Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission, and the State of Maryland Department of Juvenile Services.

Department of Juvenile Services:

2,000+

DJS staff trained in Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid

85% More incidents of youth at risk for self-injury or suicide identified

DJS has incorporated Youth Mental Health First Aid as mandatory training for all of its new and existing staff giving them the necessary skills to identify mental health concerns. From a study conducted with staff at DJS:

- Over 50% of the time staff used Youth Mental Health First Aid in situations of growing concern hopefully averting a crisis.

“The Maryland Department of Juvenile Services requires all staff to complete Youth Mental Health First Aid. This highly participatory training provides practical skills for our staff to respond to youth who are experiencing mental health issues or is in a behavioral health crises. In addition, YMHFA provides a foundation as they learn skills to assist youth with substance abuse or trauma issues.”

Robert Anderson, LCSW-C
Social Work Manager Department of Juvenile Services

Maryland Schools:

6,800+

First Aiders Trained

381 Instructors Trained

Over 13,500+

Referrals of Youth to Resources

- In recent years, the Mental Health Association of Maryland has partnered with the Maryland State Department of Education, local school districts and school partners to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid training through the federally funded MD AWARE grant.

6,800+ school personnel and partners trained, including:

Teachers, Coaches, Administrators, Nurses & Health Specialists, School Safety Officers, Bus Drivers, District Leaders, Guidance and Pupil Personnel Workers Parents, Community Partners
“The partnership between the Mental Health Association of Maryland and the Maryland State Department of Education has been invaluable in the implementation of Youth Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health First Aid in schools. The training content has been instrumental in building the capacity of school staff to identify, assess, and locate appropriate resources for individuals in a crisis.”

Deborah Nelson, Ph.D., NCSP
Section Chief, School Safety and Climate, Specialist, School Psychological Services Maryland State Department of Education

Police and Corrections:

7,200+

Public Safety Professionals Trained

Public safety officials were early adopters of Mental Health First Aid in Maryland.

- Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions were one of the first in the nation to offer education credit for the program.
- Several police and corrections jurisdictions have embedded the curriculum into their training and orientation programs.
- Multiple schools and universities across the state offer Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid for their school resource officers and campus police

“After a decade, Mental Health First Aid continues to be one of the flagship programs used by Maryland public safety to enhance its ability to recognize, respond to, and compassionately assist people in crisis. It has not only reduced stigma and enhanced service but has become a champion for first responder self-care, wellness and resilience.”

Lieutenant Marc Junkerman
Harford County (MD) Sheriff's Office

TRANSFORMING

BUILDING SKILLS, SAVING LIVES:

Mental Health First Aid has the power to transform communities. Anyone in our community may encounter a person who is experiencing a mental health problem or crisis at work, school or in our everyday lives. By teaching Marylanders the skills to stop, listen and provide support, we are creating the ripple effect that builds greater hope and positive change for people in distress.

Asking important questions

"We trained all of our pupil personnel workers (PPWs) as a group. I always tell people if they aren't comfortable asking the direct question if someone is thinking of suicide, they should go home and practice. About a year after the training, a young lady went missing after telling a friend she was suicidal. The PPW found her in a park and was able to be confident and ask her the question. **The young lady was actively suicidal and the PPW was able to get her to the hospital and get her the help she needed.**"

—Charles County Public Schools

Breaking down Stigma

"Because of my participation in Mental Health First Aid I now have a greater understanding of my sister Inee's struggles and a sincere appreciation of her courage and strength. I wish I had the training while she was living. That would have made a big difference in both of our lives and how I would have responded to her."

—Minister Joyce M Frazier

"**Mental Health First Aid has empowered me to not feel afraid to talk to someone who's crying...** just to stop and be in the moment with that person and let them know that they're not alone"

—MHFA Participant

RESULTS:

INITIAL RESULTS

A survey conducted with first aiders trained in Maryland showed:

Half of respondents reported using the ALGEE action plan at a time of distress as opposed to a crisis.

LASTING RESULTS



TRANSFORMING AND BEYOND

In the past 10 years, Mental Health First Aid Maryland has worked to create infrastructure and embed instructors in key agencies and organizations throughout the state. With the work we have accomplished, there is still more to do.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The goals of the Mental Health First Aid Maryland program are:

- Raise visibility of MHFA generating a ripple effect of prevention & wellness
- Create a state-wide culture of MHFA - Not as a program but as a community changer
- Focus in high need areas:
 - o Domestic Violence
 - o Farmers, Rural Communities
 - o First Responders- Law Enforcement and Fire
 - o Veterans & their Families
 - o Youth & School Systems
- Create a community among instructors especially in hard to reach areas geographically
- Increase professional development through certification and licensure requirements

**Continue to help our communities be more caring,
compassionate, and supportive.**



**“It really gives you the
skills you need to
identify—and ultimately
help—someone in need”**

—First Lady Michelle Obama
on being trained in Mental Health First Aid

WHO SHOULD BE TRAINED IN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Schools

Teachers

Coaches

Barbers

Veterans

Faith Leaders

Fire/EMS

Higher Education
staff and students

General
Community

Hospital Staff

Peer Recovery
Specialists

Behavioral Health
Professionals

Law Enforcement
Public Safety

Primary Care staff

YOU!



Mental Health First Aid Maryland is a program of the Mental Health Association of Maryland.

To learn more, please visit www.mhfamaryland.org
or email at mhfatraining@mhamd.org



MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID®
MARYLAND

Simonaire_FAV_SB0324

Uploaded by: Senator Simonaire, Senator Simonaire

Position: FAV

BRYAN W. SIMONAIRE
Legislative District 31
Anne Arundel County

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Alcohol

Health

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Written Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 324

Madam Chair and members of the Finance Committee, I am here to introduce and voice my support for Senate Bill 324 – *Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid*.

Senate Bill 324 would require that the behavioral health services for which the Maryland Department of Health provides service coordination for veterans under certain provisions of law include mental health first aid and would require that mental health first aid consist of training for veterans and the immediate family members of veterans on how to identify and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. The bill would also require entities teaching a mental health first aid course to report certain information to the Department.

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Uploaded by: Smith, Brian

Position: FAV



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

SENATE BILL 324 – SUPPORT

Senate Bill 324 – Veterans – Behavioral Health Services – Mental Health First Aid
Senate Finance Committee
February 4, 2020

The Maryland Military Coalition is a **nonprofit, all volunteer, Veterans advocacy group** representing the interests of Maryland Veterans, Service members, and their Families. Our alliance consists of sixteen organizations, listed on the following page, with over 100,000 members. We represent about one-fourth of Maryland's Veterans, Service members, and their Families.

The Maryland Military Coalition **supports Senate Bill 324.**

As you know, this legislation implements a Mental Health First Aid program for Veterans and their families. This training program will enable Veterans and their immediate family members to identify and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

Why is this so important?

- 22 Veterans die by suicide each day.
- Nearly 1 in 4 active duty members showed signs of a mental health condition according to a 2014 study by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.
- About 18.5% of Service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan have post-traumatic stress disorder.

Sadly, due to the stigma, many Veterans with mental health problems do not seek help or delay seeking help. In fact, only 41% of the people who had a mental disorder in the past year received professional health care or other services. Even when people decide to get help, it's frequently after many years of delay. The longer a person waits to seek help, the more difficult their recovery can be. All too often, these Veterans take their lives.

Mental Health First Aid provides fantastic awareness and action-oriented training that can help address this mental health crisis, and it is widely applicable beyond the Veteran community! Please see the third page of our statement for more information on this program.

The Maryland Military Coalition believes that our Veterans are living testaments to the ideals of honor, service, and sacrifice. Consequently, we must support measures that help our Veterans and their families lead healthy, productive lives where they may enjoy the same freedoms their service and sacrifice helped guarantee for us all.

We respectfully request a favorable report for Senate Bill 324.

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact me at
BTSmith1184@outlook.com or by calling 703.623.3678

Member Organizations, Maryland Military Coalition

James P. Monahan
Air Force Sergeants Association

Stacy P. May
American Military Society

Lynn A. Nash
Commissioned Officers Association of the
US Public Health Service

Wilbert B. Forbes
Disabled American Veterans

Sheldon Goldberg
Distinguished Flying Cross Association

Pleasala J. Collins
Fleet Reserve Association

Evan A. Buttrick
Jewish War Veterans of the USA

Steve L. Bloodgood
Maryland Air National Guard Retirees'
Association

Harvey Kaplan
Military Officers Association of America

Charles Egbert
Military Order of the Purple Heart

Mervyn Rice
National Association for Black Veterans

Michael P. Hays
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

Christian Andreasen
NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Catherine L. McGraw
Society of Military Widows

Arthur L. Cooper
The Retired Enlisted Association

Thomas C. Williams
Veterans of Foreign Wars



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FOR VETERANS

Nearly **1 in 4** active duty members showed signs of a MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION, according to a 2014 study.

*National Alliance on Mental Illness
via JAMA Psychiatry*

20
veterans die by
SUICIDE EACH DAY.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

About
18.5%
of service members
returning from Iraq
or Afghanistan have
post-traumatic
stress disorder
(PTSD) OR DEPRESSION.

*Substance Abuse and
Mental Health Services Administration*

Why Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid for Veterans, Military Members and their Families teaches you **how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.**

This 8-hour training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to appropriate care.

WHAT IT COVERS

- A discussion of military culture and its relevance to the topic of mental health.
- A discussion of the specific risk factors faced by many service members and their families such as mental and physical trauma, stress, separation, etc.
- How to break down the stigma associated with substance use disorders and mental illnesses like anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and more.
- How to reach out to those who suffer in silence, reluctant to seek help.
- Community resource information and support.

WHO SHOULD TAKE IT

- Military members
- Veterans
- Families and friends of military members or veterans

The course will teach you how to apply the ALGEE action plan:

- **Assess** for risk of suicide or harm
- **Listen** nonjudgmentally
- **Give** reassurance and information
- **Encourage** appropriate professional help
- **Encourage** self-help and other support strategies

TO FIND A COURSE OR CONTACT AN INSTRUCTOR IN YOUR AREA, VISIT
www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org OR EMAIL Info@MentalHealthFirstAid.org.



MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID®

“So many people are out there wishing for something better, hoping that help will show up. That’s what Mental Health First Aid is — it is help to get people connected to care and ultimately to get them to a better place.”

—Tousha Paxton-Barnes, U.S. Army Veteran

MPS_FAV_SB324

Uploaded by: Tompsett, Tommy

Position: FAV



February 4, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support– SB 324: Veterans - Behavioral Health Services - Mental Health First Aid

Dear Chairman Kelley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) is a state medical organization whose physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Formed more than sixty years ago to support the needs of psychiatrists and their patients, MPS works to ensure available, accessible and comprehensive quality mental health resources for all Maryland citizens; and strives through public education to dispel the stigma and discrimination of those suffering from a mental illness. As the district branch of the American Psychiatric Association covering the state of Maryland excluding the D.C. suburbs, MPS represents over 700 psychiatrists as well as physicians currently in psychiatric training.

MPS supports Senate Bill 324 (SB 324). The United States has been actively involved in military conflicts for almost two decades with many United States military personnel serving multiple deployments to places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Africa. Deployments of this nature are extremely stressful situations as modern-day combat has become much more non-conventional. Rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other psychiatric illnesses are extremely high with our military veterans. Unfortunately, suicide amongst active-duty soldiers and veterans has become all too commonplace. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the individual branches of the United State military are struggling to provide mental health care to both veterans and soldiers alike. Maryland, through bills such as SB 324, is taking thoughtful steps in assisting veterans and their families to heal.

SB 324 if codified will increase awareness of mental illness and substance use disorders as well as attune our community to the idea of early intervention. The training guidelines of SB 324 will reduce stigmas associated with mental illness and treatment; connect more military personnel and veterans to meaningful mental health services; potentially reduce fatalities due to overdose and suicide in the military community, and establish the complex support system that co-morbid conditions create.



Therefore, MPS asks the committee for a favorable report. If you have any questions with regard to this testimony, please feel free to contact Thomas Tompsett Jr. at tommy.tompsett@mdlobbyist.com.

Respectfully submitted,
The Legislative Action Committee for the Maryland Psychiatric Society