

**ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION - 2014**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LB931**

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**Hearing Date:** Thursday January 30, 2014  
**Committee On:** Health and Human Services  
**Introducer:** Bolz  
**One Liner:** Adopt the Nebraska Mental Health First Aid Training Act

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**  
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

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**Vote Results:**  
**Aye:** 7 Senators Campbell, Cook, Crawford, Gloor, Howard, Krist, Watermeier  
**Nay:**  
**Absent:**  
**Present Not Voting:**

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<b>Proponents:</b> Senator Kate Bolz Beth Baxter Russ Uhing Paul Greenwell	<b>Representing:</b> Self Region 3 Behavioral Health Lincoln Public Schools Nebraska Association of Behavioral Health and Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Inc.
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<b>Opponents:</b>	<b>Representing:</b>
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<b>Neutral:</b>	<b>Representing:</b>
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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:**

The purpose of this bill is to create the Nebraska Mental Health First Aid Training Act (NMHFATA).

Section 1: Sections 1 to 5 shall be known and may be cited as the NMHFATA.

Section 2: The Legislature finds that (1) national statistics show one in four Americans will face a mental illness in his or her lifetime, and that (2) mental health first aid builds an understanding of how mental illness affects Nebraskans, provides an overview of common treatments, and teaches basic assistance skills.

Section 3: For purposes of the NMHFATA, mental health first aid means "the help provided to a person who is experiencing a mental health or substance abuse problem or in a mental health crisis before the appropriate professional assistance or other support are secured."

Section 4: (1) The Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") shall establish a mental health first aid training program ("the program") to help the public identify and understand signs of mental illness, substance abuse, and mental health crises, help a person dealing with one of those situations, and de-escalate crisis situations if needed. The program shall provide an interactive mental health first aid training course through the state's regional behavioral health authorities. The program's instructors shall be certified by a national authority for Mental Health First Aid USA or a similar organization. The program shall cooperate with local entities to provide instructor training.

(2) The program shall be designed to train individuals to accomplish three objectives as deemed appropriate for the trainee's age: (a) help the public identify, understand, and respond to the signs of mental illness and substance abuse; (b) emphasize the need to reduce the stigma of mental illness; and (c) assist a person believed to be developing or having developed a mental health problem, substance abuse problem, or mental health crisis.

Section 5: HHS shall ensure the establishment of evaluative criteria are established to measure the efficacy of the program. HHS shall submit an annual report electronically to the Legislature on trainee demographics and outcomes of the established criteria.

Section 6: HHS shall offer services to a number of agencies and organizations, including those named in this section, to implement the NMHFATA.

Section 7: The Legislature intends to appropriate \$100,000 annually to HHS to carry out the NMHFATA.

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**Explanation of amendments:**

There are three sections to this amendment.

The first defines a mental health first aid program as an education program recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, clarifies language, and clarifies that section 4 of the bill refers to the Division of Behavioral Health.

The second replaces DHHS with the behavioral health regions established pursuant to section 71-807 in section 6, and clarifies that those regions shall work with agencies and local health departments.

The third directs those regions to develop a program to implement the Act in ways that are representative and inclusive with respect to the economic and cultural diversity of Nebraska.

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Kathy Campbell, Chairperson