

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 711

To amend section 520J of the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants for mental health first aid training programs.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 11, 2015

Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. REED, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend section 520J of the Public Health Service Act to authorize grants for mental health first aid training programs.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Mental Health First
5 Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING GRANTS.**

7 Section 520J of the Public Health Service Act (42
8 U.S.C. 290bb–41) is amended to read as follows:

1 **“SEC. 520J. MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING GRANTS.**

2 “(a) GRANTS.—The Secretary, acting through the
3 Administrator, shall award grants to States, political sub-
4 divisions of States, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and
5 nonprofit private entities to initiate and sustain mental
6 health first aid training programs.

7 “(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible for funding
9 under subsection (a), a mental health first aid train-
10 ing program shall—

11 “(A) be designed to train individuals in the
12 categories listed in paragraph (2) to accomplish
13 the objectives described in paragraph (3);

14 “(B) ensure that training is conducted by
15 trainers that are properly licensed and
16 credentialed by nonprofit entities as designated
17 by the Secretary; and

18 “(C) include—

19 “(i) at a minimum—

20 “(I) a core live training course
21 for individuals in the categories listed
22 in paragraph (2) on the skills, re-
23 sources, and knowledge to assist indi-
24 viduals in crisis to connect with ap-
25 propriate local mental health care
26 services;

1 “(II) training on mental health
 2 resources, including the location of
 3 community mental health centers de-
 4 scribed in section 1913(c), in the
 5 State and local community; and

6 “(III) training on action plans
 7 and protocols for referral to such re-
 8 sources; and

9 “(ii) where feasible, continuing edu-
 10 cation and updated training for individuals
 11 in the categories listed in paragraph (2).

12 “(2) CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUAL TO BE
 13 TRAINED.—The categories of individuals listed in
 14 this paragraph are the following:

15 “(A) Emergency services personnel and
 16 other first responders.

17 “(B) Police officers and other law enforce-
 18 ment personnel.

19 “(C) Teachers and school administrators.

20 “(D) Human resources professionals.

21 “(E) Nurses and other primary care per-
 22 sonnel.

23 “(F) Students enrolled in an elementary
 24 school, a secondary school, or an institution of
 25 higher education.

1 “(G) The parents of students described in
2 subparagraph (F).

3 “(H) Veterans and veteran stakeholders,
4 including family members and caregivers, mem-
5 bers of veteran peer support networks, and vet-
6 eran service organizations.

7 “(I) Other individuals, audiences or train-
8 ing populations as determined appropriate by
9 the Secretary.

10 “(3) OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING.—To be eligible
11 for funding under subsection (a), a mental health
12 first aid training program shall be designed to train
13 individuals in the categories listed in paragraph (2)
14 to accomplish each of the following objectives (as ap-
15 propriate for the individuals to be trained, taking
16 into consideration their age):

17 “(A) Safe de-escalation of crisis situations.

18 “(B) Recognition of the signs and symp-
19 toms of mental illness, including such common
20 psychiatric conditions as schizophrenia, bipolar
21 disorder, major clinical depression, and anxiety
22 disorders.

23 “(C) Timely referral to mental health serv-
24 ices in the early stages of developing mental
25 disorders in order to—

1 “(i) avoid more costly subsequent be-
2 havioral health care; and

3 “(ii) enhance the effectiveness of men-
4 tal health services.

5 “(c) DISTRIBUTION OF AWARDS.—In awarding
6 grants under this section, the Secretary shall—

7 “(1) ensure that grants are equitably distrib-
8 uted among the geographical regions of the United
9 States; and

10 “(2) pay particular attention to the mental
11 health training needs of populations and target audi-
12 ences residing in rural areas.

13 “(d) APPLICATION.—A State, political subdivision of
14 a State, Indian tribe, tribal organization, or nonprofit pri-
15 vate entity that desires a grant under this section shall
16 submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in
17 such manner, and containing such information as the Sec-
18 retary may require, including a plan for the rigorous eval-
19 uation of activities that are carried out with funds received
20 under such grant.

21 “(e) EVALUATION.—A State, political subdivision of
22 a State, Indian tribe, tribal organization, or nonprofit pri-
23 vate entity that receives a grant under this section shall
24 prepare and submit an evaluation to the Secretary at such
25 time, in such manner, and containing such information as

1 the Secretary may reasonably require, including an evalua-
2 tion of activities carried out with funds received under
3 such grant and a process and outcome evaluation.

4 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
5 carry out this section, there are authorized to be appro-
6 priated \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2016, and such sums
7 as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2017 and
8 2018.”.

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