



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families


Rick Scott  
Governor

Mike Carroll  
Secretary

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**DATE:** October 16, 2017

**TO:** SAMH Regional Directors/SAMH Contract Managers/Managing Entities

**FROM:** Ute Gazioch, Director   
Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH)

**SUBJECT:** Funding for Mental Health First Aid Programs and Crisis Intervention Training

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy guidance is to clarify that Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant funds and Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) Block Grant funds cannot be used to pay for Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) programs.

Primary prevention set-aside funding from the SAPT Block Grant must be used for programs that are designed to prevent substance use and that have documented evidence of effectiveness at preventing substance use. MHFA programs do not meet these standards. Furthermore, since MHFA programs do not provide treatment for substance use disorders, SAPT Block Grant treatment funds cannot be used to pay for MHFA programs.

CMHS Block Grant funding also cannot be used to fund MHFA programs, unless those programs train individuals who exclusively serve adults with a serious mental illness (SMI) or children with a serious emotional disturbance (SED). CMHS Block Grant funds must target the provision of mental health services to adults with SMI and children with SED. Since MHFA programs typically provide training to members of the general public, school officials, and law enforcement officers who do not exclusively provide mental health services to individuals with SMI or SED, CMHS Block Grant funds cannot be used for these programs. The same conclusion applies to Crisis Intervention Training (CIT).

If you are currently using Block Grant funds for MHFA or CIT, please discontinue this immediately so you are not put in a position to re-pay the funds in the future.

**DISCUSSION:**

Representatives from SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) reviewed summaries of evaluation research on MHFA programs, the relevant entry in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, and CAPT Decision Support Tools and found no evidence that MHFA programs prevent or reduce substance use.

Conversations with the CMHS Block Grant Project Officer confirmed that CMHS Block Grant funds cannot be used for MHFA unless the training is provided to individuals that exclusively serve individuals with SMI or SED.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

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Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

Please note that the Department supports MHFA and CIT programs, but we need to ensure that appropriate funding sources are used for these purposes. Managing Entities that attempt to find other funding sources to support MHFA and CIT programs should explore the possibility of using state General Revenue funds. They should also monitor other SAMHSA discretionary funding opportunities that explicitly authorize the use of funds for MHFA programs, like the Project Advancing Wellness and Resilience Education (AWARE) grant, for example.

Please contact the Department's Block Grant Coordinator, [Jeffrey.Cece@myFLfamilies.com](mailto:Jeffrey.Cece@myFLfamilies.com), should you have any questions.

cc: John Bryant, Assistant Secretary for SAMH  
Regional Managing Directors