



NEWS



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2018 Mental Health First Aid Training Classes Announced *Board of Health funding helps cover costs to train 1,000 people next year*

BLOOMINGTON – As the year draws to a close, staff at the McLean County Health Department are encouraged by the fact that 1,200 individuals have attended a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training since the course was first offered in McLean County in 2014, but note they still have a long way to go. “Our goal remains to have a Mental Health First Aider on every McLean County block,” says Laura Beavers, Behavioral Health Division Manager at the health department. Behavioral health – which includes mental health and substance abuse – is a priority health issue in McLean County and the health department together with community stakeholders and collaborators have been actively working to address this need in the community since 2012.

With funding support from the McLean County Board of Health, the county could have another 1,000 residents trained in MHFA in 2018. Acknowledging behavioral health’s importance among the county’s top priorities, the Board of Health designated \$30,000 for MHFA trainings from the fiscal year 2018 budget -- that’s enough to cover trainer fees and purchase training materials for approximately 1000 individuals. Explains McLean County Board of Health President, Judy Buchanan, “Mental Health First Aid is a powerful way for the entire community to understand, support and assist those with mental disorders. The program teaches us how to be a good listener - how to respond to our friends and neighbors in need and connect them with appropriate services. The Board of Health is excited with the prospect of engaging even more county citizens in this program.”

Mark your calendar and register to attend an upcoming MHFA training in 2018:

Date	Event—8 Hour Course	Place	To Register...
1/18/18	Youth Mental Health First Aid (Content Covers Ages 12-18)	Advocate BroMenn Medical Center	(800) 323-8622
2/23/18	Mental Health First Aid	OSF St. Joseph Medical Center	(309) 661-5151
4/6/18	Youth Mental Health First Aid (Content Covers Ages 12-18)	Advocate BroMenn Medical Center	(800) 323-8622

4/21/18	Mental Health First Aid	McLean County Health Department	(309) 888-5539
7/30/18	Youth Mental Health First Aid (Content Covers Ages 12-18)	OSF St. Joseph Medical Center	(309) 661-5151
9/14/18	Mental Health First Aid	Advocate BroMenn Medical Center	(800) 323-8622
11/5/18	Youth Mental Health First Aid (Content Covers Ages 12-18)	OSF St. Joseph Medical Center	(309) 661-5151

Mental Health First Aid was implemented in McLean County to help reduce stigmatization around behavioral health with the added effect of increasing the number of people accessing community support sooner, rather than later. As Beavers explains, “Anyone looking for a way to get involved and help improve the mental health environment in our county should make attending a Mental Health First Aid training class a resolution for the new year. The more people learn about mental health and mental illnesses, the better equipped we become as a community to recognize and respond to individuals that may need our support.”

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based, eight-hour training course developed in Australia. Training classes in McLean County are offered through the efforts of the Mental Health First Aid Collaborative. The Collaborative includes members from Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Illinois State University Central Illinois Area Health Education Center, McLean County Center for Human Services, OSF St. Joseph Medical Center and the McLean County Health Department.

Any additions and/or changes to the 2018 schedule of MHFA classes will be posted on the McLean County Health Department website: <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov>. MHFA training classes continue to be available at a cost of just \$10.00 per participant thanks in part to the funding support received from the Board of Health and the support and contributions of our partners in the community. For more information about hosting a MHFA training class for a group or club, please contact Maureen Sollars at the health department, 309-888-5539.

If someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact the Center for Human Services at 309-827-5351 or call PATH 211.

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