

2016 -- H 7259

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - POLICE OFFICERS -  
COMMISSION ON STANDARDS AND TRAINING

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Lombardi, McKiernan, Williams, and  
Bennett

Date Introduced: January 20, 2016

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 42-28.2 of the General Laws entitled "Police Officers –  
2 Commission on Standards and Training" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following  
3 section:

4 **42-28.2-8.3. Educational requirements – National certified mental health first aid**  
5 **training.** – (a) The commission on standards and training shall prepare and publish mandatory  
6 training standards to provide instructions for police officers in identifying and handling of  
7 complaints involving mental health/substance abuse emergencies, and victims, witnesses or  
8 suspects with mental illness or substance use disorders and shall develop guidelines for law  
9 enforcement responses to incidents involving such persons. The course of instruction shall  
10 comply with the certified National Council of Behavioral Health Mental Health First Aid  
11 Program (MHFA) for law enforcement. Instruction and the guidelines shall include:

12 (1) Identifying and recognizing mental illness or substance use disorders for the benefit  
13 of victims and witnesses, the availability of civil remedies and community resources for persons  
14 experiencing mental health emergencies, and the protection of persons with mental illness or  
15 substance use disorders and for law enforcement officers engaging such persons;

16 (2) Providing information to law enforcement officers to recognize the signs and  
17 symptoms of common mental illnesses and substance use disorders, de-escalating crisis situations  
18 safely and initiating timely referral to mental health and substance abuse resources available in

1 the community.

2 (b) The commission shall include training in all curricula for recruits and in-service  
3 trainees, in all police academies operating or certified by the commission. All law enforcement  
4 trainees shall be certified by the National Council of Behavioral Health in Mental Health First  
5 Aid.

6 (c) All law enforcement trainees shall participate in the course of basic training for law  
7 enforcement officers, established in this section, as part of their required certification process.

8 (d) Training presenters shall include behavioral health practitioners with expertise in the  
9 delivery of direct services to individuals experiencing mental health or substance abuse  
10 emergencies and victims, witnesses and suspects with mental illness and consumer-survivors i.e.  
11 individuals with mental illness or substance use disorders. Training presentations may utilize the  
12 staff of community-based mental health treatment facilities.

13 (e) The course of instruction, the learning and performance objectives, the standards for  
14 training, and the guidelines shall be developed by the municipal police training committee in  
15 consultation with groups and individuals having an interest and expertise in the field of mental  
16 health and community-based treatment.

17 (f) The municipal police training committee periodically shall include within its in-  
18 service training curriculum a course of instruction on handling complaints from or against  
19 persons with mental illness or substance use disorders, consistent with the provisions of  
20 subsections (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section.

21 (g) As used in this section, the following words and terms shall have the following  
22 meanings:

23 (1) "Law enforcement officer" shall mean any officer of a municipal police department or  
24 a department of the state.

25 (2) "Consumer-survivor" shall mean any individual suffering from mental health  
26 disability or substance abuse disorder.

27 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - POLICE OFFICERS -  
COMMISSION ON STANDARDS AND TRAINING

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1           This act would require the commission on standards and training to provide training and  
2 instructions for police officers and trainees in order to more accurately identify complaints  
3 involving mental health/substance abuse emergencies and to develop law enforcement responses  
4 to such emergencies.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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