



MHA Legislative Update: April 2015

Become a Founding Member of the MHA Grassroots Network to Honor May is Mental Health Month!



Do you follow our MHA Legislative Update every month? Do you participate in Action Alerts from MHA or other mental health organizations? Have you reached out to your elected officials, or would LIKE to but need some guidance? Then May is a GREAT month for you to **sign up for the MHA Grassroots Network** and promote mental wellness!

If you are interested in legislation affecting mental health services and individuals with mental health diagnoses, you are an ideal candidate for joining the Grassroots Network. **Any individual who signs up during the month of May will become one of the Founding Members of the network.**

Why sign up?

- Continue receiving the Legislative Update. The Legislative Update will soon be emailed to ONLY those in the Grassroots Network. If you would like to continue to receive these monthly emails from MHA of Central Carolinas, sign up today!
- Receive MHA Calls-to-Action. MHA will begin to issue several Calls-to-Action that ONLY Grassroots Members will receive. Sign up to receive ALL MHA Calls-to-Action!
- Participate in Advocacy Training. Individuals who are Grassroots Network members will be the first to receive notification of public Advocacy 101 and 201 trainings through MHA.
- Receive invites to legislative/policy events. As MHA grows our legislative advocacy efforts, be the first to know of events such as rallies in Raleigh and local meet-your-legislator events. Talk one-on-one with your officials to tell your story!

How to sign up?

Email Kate McAllister at kmcallister@mhacentralcarolinas.org with the following information:

- Name (Required)
- Phone Number (Required)
- Any existing relationships with elected officials
- Any issues of specific interest

Sign up TODAY to become a go-to mental health advocate for the MHA!

Take action for Mental Health First Aid: Ask for your legislators' support!

MHA offers **FREE** Mental Health First Aid training to Mecklenburg and Cabarrus County community members. This is an eight hour evidence-based best practice training that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health conditions, builds understanding of their impact, overviews common treatments, and teaches how to get someone the help they need to prevent a crisis.

Funding for this training is CRUCIAL! Please participate in the Action Alert below, issued by the National Council for Behavioral Health.



If you met someone in the midst of a mental health or addiction crisis, would you know how to help? Would your neighbors, your local school staff, or law enforcement officers?

New legislation in Congress would authorize \$20 million for [Mental Health First Aid](#), a program that educates the public about mental illness and addiction, while teaching participants how to help people in crisis. **Now, this important bill needs your help - please take 2 minutes today to ask your Senators and Representative for their support!**

The bipartisan Mental Health First Aid Act (S. 711/H.R. 1877) was introduced by Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), with Reps. Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) and Doris Matsui (D-CA). Funding would be used to train emergency services personnel, police officers, teachers/school administrators, and other audiences in Mental Health First Aid.

Please voice your support for public education around mental illness and addiction by asking your legislators to be cosponsors! **The more cosponsors a bill has, the greater its likelihood of being enacted into law.** [Click to take action today.](#)

Thank you in advance for your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Chuck Ingoglia
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Practice Improvement
National Council for Behavioral Health

NC Senators Drop Opposition to Dix Sale

NC state Senators Ralph Hise (R-Mitchell), Louis Pate (R-Wayne), and Tommy Tucker (R-Union), have dropped SB 705, a bill that would have halted the pending \$52 million sale of the Dorothea Dix campus in Raleigh.

On April 24, Raleigh approved the sale of the \$52 Million 308-acre property. The Senators had been concerned that the sale price was too low, that the funds would not be allocated to mental health services, and where the the central offices for the Department of Health and Human Services would be relocated.



"The co-chairs now believe many of their concerns will be addressed," Senate Pro Tempore Phil

Berger stated in a news release.

Read more about the sale of the Dorothea Dix property [here](#).

Cardinal Innovations Completes First Year in Charlotte

It has been one year since Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions took over for MeckLINK Behavioral Healthcare. Cardinal now manages more than \$200 million in Medicaid spending for mental health services in Mecklenburg County.

While mental health professionals, advocates, and community members originally had concerns over service coverage with the change, a year later Cardinal seems to be quelling some of these uncertainties. MHA Executive Director, Ellis Fields is quoted in the Charlotte Observer saying, when there are concerns, "all we have to do is pick up the phone and (Cardinal) people will come to our support groups. That has been well-received." Two Cardinal staff members attended MHA's ParentVOICE Empowerment group meeting during the week of April 27 in fact, and responded to concerns from parents of youth receiving mental health treatment. Read the full article [here](#).

Mental Health Bills on the Move

With the crossover deadline of April 30 (the date wherein legislation must be engrossed in its chamber of origin and sent to the other chamber), many bills are moving out of their committee assignments and going to full floor votes. Bills not subject to the deadline include finance and appropriations measures (i.e. Medicaid or state budget related items.) Highlights include:

[HB 451](#), LRC/Study Suicide Prevention, would direct the Legislative Research Commission to examine ways to prevent suicide among minors, veterans, and emergency responders in North Carolina. This measure is supported by both Democrats and Republicans in both the House and the Senate which is projected to pass this year as a part of an omnibus "studies bill" legislation at the end of the session. It is not affected by the crossover deadline.

[HB 847](#), Amend Laws Re: Medical Treatment for Minors, as originally introduced, would require minors to get parental consent for all medical treatment, including mental health, substance abuse, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The bill passed the House on April 29, with several changes to the language. The new language protects parents from child abuse or neglect reports based solely on a parent following treatment recommendations from a doctor a mental health profession, with certain exceptions. Additionally, it strengthens parental consent for certain kinds of medical treatment, including mental health and substance abuse treatment.

[SB 288](#), Amend Laws Regarding Mental Commitment Bars, would allow individuals who have been found to lack the capacity to manage their own affairs "due to marked subnormal intelligence, mental illness, or incompetency" to file a petition to remove firearms disabilities after restoration to competency. The measure would also more narrowly restrict the types of incompetence findings that must be reported to the National Instant Criminal Background Check system. This bill passed the Senate on April 28 and is now in the House Rules Committee.

[SB 423](#), Foster Care Family Act ([HB 407](#)), would amend the law to study the use of the 1915(c) Medicaid waiver for children who qualify under "Serious Emotional Disturbance" (SED), which could help keep children in foster care with severe emotional disturbances in their homes and out of institutions. The bill would also allow foster children to participate in various activities that non-foster children have access to, such as applying for a driver's license or playing sports in school, thereby reducing stigma for foster care children. This bill passed Senate on April 29 and is now in the House

Health Committee. Companion legislation (HB 407) passed the House on April 28 and is now in the Senate Rules Committee.

SB 445, Burt's Law, would increase punishment for abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a consumer enrolled in a mental health, developmental disability, or substance abuse program. This bill passed the Senate on April 20 and is now in the House Judiciary II Committee.

SB 490, Increase Access to MH Services, would direct the Legislative Research Commission to study a public-private hospital partnership to increase access to mental health services. This bill is still in the Senate Rules Committee.

SB 496, Protect MH/DD/SA Clients from Abuse, would increase penalties for employees who fail repeatedly to report abuse, neglect, exploitation, or injury of people being served in a facility for mental illness, developmental disabilities, or substance abuse. This bill is still in the Senate Judiciary I Committee.

SB 676, Autism Health Insurance Coverage, would provide health insurance for Autism spectrum disorders. The bill passed the Senate on April 29 and is now in the House Rules Committee.

Medicaid Remains a Hot Topic, No Consensus Yet

State leaders have just about three months to address the issue of Medicaid Reform before the legislature will likely adjourn, though legislators are hoping to have it settled by early July. However, lawmakers do not appear to have made any headway in finding a solution.

"Both chambers say they're committed to staying here until we get it done," said Sen. Tommy Tucker (R-Union). Several bills have been introduced in both the House and the Senate on Medicaid Reform. Many lawmakers and Governor Pat McCrory would like Medicaid to move to a capitated system, under which providers would be paid a flat fee for each patient, regardless of whether or not that patient seeks services, or which services are provided.

"There are some of us who believe that reforming Medicaid is a requirement for us to have predictability overall in the budget. I am definitely one of those," Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger said. "The difference is that different members have different approaches on how to do that."

Read more [here](#).

Remember, you can contact your policy makers at any time:

<http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Representation/WhoRepresentsMe.aspx>

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

Mental Health Training Opportunities

Inquire about MHA Training opportunities in your area. We offer Mental Health First Aid (Youth, Adult and Public Safety versions), QPR Suicide Prevention (Gatekeeper, Adapted for Refugees and Train the Trainer), Advocacy, and

MHA

Spreading Hope, Spurring Action, Supporting Families, Saving Lives! Contact us at 3701 Latrobe Drive, Ste 140, Charlotte, NC 28211. Visit www.mhacentralcarolinas.org or email at mha@mhacentralcarolinas.org or call us at 704.365.3454. Our mission is to promote mental wellness

Managing Money in Recovery.

through advocacy, prevention and education.

[Register for upcoming trainings now!](#)

Contact Nancy Woodard about MHA trainings at email: nwoodard@mhacentralcarolinas.org Or Phone 704-365-3454.

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Mental Health Association of Central Carolinas
3701 Latrobe Drive, Suite 140
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