

America's \$1 Billion Preventative Mental Illness Failure

CCHR says mental health programs that are supposed to educate about and prevent racist abuse, restraint deaths, student mental stress, and more have failed

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, August 4, 2020

/EINPresswire.com/ -- A mental health industry watchdog cautions local, state and federal government agencies against pouring millions of more dollars into mental health delivery in schools and the community in response to current health and police issues. [Citizens Commission on Human Rights International \(CCHR\)](#) says the push to provide more "mental health" models to address current community situations without looking at whether they even work, potentially adds more dangers. "One program is part of \$1.07 billion allocated in recent years, yet has been criticized as being a conduit for creating new patients to be prescribed potentially dangerous [psychotropic drugs](#)," said Jan Eastgate, President of CCHR International.



CCHR says mental health programs that are supposed to educate about and prevent racist abuse, restraint deaths, student mental stress and more have failed to reduce these, yet funding to them is now being increased without accountability.

"Reviewing the failure of mental health programs and ensuring accountability for the billions of dollars already spent on them should be a priority. If these programs have not effectively countered or prevented restraint deaths, stereotyping minorities, medical racism and student mental health crises, then clearly more money should not be thrown at them," Eastgate added.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) was developed in Australia and has been endorsed in the United States since 2008. U.S. Police agencies throughout the nation are already trained in de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention and (MHFA).[1]

However, Jan Nadine Defehr of the University of Winnipeg pointed out: "Rooted in psychiatry, MHFA trains citizens to pathologize human suffering rather than critique the consequences of

unjust social structures and power relations.”[2]

MHFA is sponsored by the U.S. National Council for Behavioral Health (NCBH), which Patrick Hahn, a professor of biology at Loyola University, said has 12 pharmaceutical companies supporting it.[3] Attending a Youth MFHA class, Hahn reportedly noted the training seemed geared toward pushing more young people toward more psychiatric drugs without regard for scientific evidence.[4] Hahn questioned whether those attending the program realized that they were essentially sitting through an eight-hour infomercial paid for by the drug makers.[5]

He noted that within the last 10 years, each of the pharmaceutical companies had “paid hundreds of millions of dollars to settle claims of illegal marketing, in some cases including illegal marketing of powerful antipsychotic drugs to children.” This included a jury awarding \$70 million to a boy who grew breasts after taking the antipsychotic risperidone.[6]

MHFA use is widespread; for example:

- The MFHA for Public Safety module claims to teach police officers how to safely deescalate a mental health crisis.
- In 2015, New York allocated \$850 million for mental health programs that included in partnership with NCBH offering free MHFA training to 250,000 people, beginning with first responders, including police officers.
- In 2018, over 180 police chiefs, all members of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, pledged to train 100 percent of their officers in MHFA.
- In 2013, \$50 million in federal funds were budgeted to train 5,000 mental health professionals to work with young people in communities and schools; one of the key components was MHFA.
- The Federal MHFA Act of 2015 authorized another \$20 million for the program.[7]
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration budget included \$15 million to provide MHFA training in school districts.[8]
- In the wake of mass shootings in 2019, the 2020 budget included \$133 million for school violence prevention efforts, including MFHA. MFHA reported nearly \$23 million was appropriated for it.
- Many of the mental illness advocacy group websites offering MHFA training are funded by pharmaceutical companies manufacturing psychotropic drugs that can cause debilitating side effects, including suicide, aggression, hallucinations, movement disorders, heart attacks, strokes, and death.[9] One New Jersey MHFA team received a grant from a pharmaceutical giant that has paid out billions of dollars in fines and settlements over its antipsychotic drug.

According to a PLoS journal article that provided an assessment of the effectiveness of MHFA on “improving mental health knowledge, stigma and helping behavior,” 18 trials (5,936 participants) were reviewed. It found that overall, effects were generally only small-to-moderate post-training up to six months later; effects up to 12-months later were unclear.[10]

According to Hahn's experience with a MHFA class, "Neither our facilitators nor anyone else present pointed out that mania and bipolar disorder are toxic effects of medications commonly prescribed for ADHD and depression. Our training manual didn't say anything about this either, although it did claim that depression is caused by a deficiency of serotonin — a fable that by now has become...discredited...."[11]

Defehr said MFHA "produces new, more reachable psychiatric patients, presuming and thereby increasing citizen availability to psychiatric contact and life-long patienthood."[12]

CCHR's co-founder, the late Professor Thomas Szasz warned of "The Therapeutic State" we see now, where the "state seeks to remedy personal and social problems defined as diseases; its beneficiaries are often 'helped' against their will," Szasz wrote.[13]

People rush to "embrace the therapeutic state" as a potential solution, Szasz said. However, "When they discover that the therapeutic state is about tyranny, not therapy, it will be too late."[14]

"It's not too late now to evaluate the results of mental health programs and whether they have reduced violence, suicide and rates of mental travail, to question why the number of Americans relying upon a mind-altering prescription drug hasn't decreased. Why restraint deaths in hospitals and the community haven't lessened. How electroshocking children as young as five and pregnant women is allowed. Funding should ensure effective results—people not living in fear of tyranny but leading happier lives in a safer community. Clearly, this is not happening. Funding must be kept in check with demands for results and a decrease, not increase of the problem," Eastgate said.

CCHR is a mental health watchdog responsible for more than 180 laws that protect patients from damaging psychiatric practices. DONATE to support its work here:

<https://www.cchrint.org/cchrint-donate/>

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Amber Rauscher
Citizens Commission on Human Rights
+1 323-467-4242

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