

Mental Health First Aid Law

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Issue

Provide an overview of Connecticut law on mental health first aid.

Mental Health First Aid Laws

Connecticut law imposes certain mental health first aid training requirements on initial paramedic licensure applicants and the safe school climate coordinators in school districts. It also allows boards of education to require other school staff to complete mental health first aid training.

Mental Health First Aid

According to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), mental health first aid training typically involves an eight-hour course.

Participants are taught how to identify, understand, and respond to someone else's developing mental or behavioral health condition or crisis. For more information, see SAMHSA's [website](#).

Schools

State law requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) commissioner, in consultation with the education commissioner, to administer a mental health first aid training program. The training must teach participants how to (1) recognize signs of mental disorders in children and young adults and (2) connect such children and youth with professionals who can provide suitable mental health services. The commissioners administering this training may seek funding from the federal or state government, as well as from private donors.

This law, passed in 2013, required DMHAS to provide mental health first aid training during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years to district safe school climate coordinators, who must successfully complete the training once.

Local and regional boards of education may also require teachers, school nurses, counselors, and other school employees to complete the training. The State Board of Education, within available appropriations and utilizing available materials, must make mental health first aid training available to boards of education ([CGS §§ 17a-453h & 10-148c](#)).

Paramedics

As of January 1, 2020, Connecticut law requires all applicants for an initial paramedic license to complete mental health first aid training as part of a program provided by a [National Council for Behavioral Health](#)-certified instructor ([CGS § 20-206mm](#), 2020 Supp.).

For more information on this requirement, see the Office of Emergency Medical Services' [website](#).

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