



Presentation to the House Committee on Public Education: Mental Health First Aid

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Intellectual and Developmental
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Services



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Mental Illness Impact

- One in five Americans has a mental illness.
- In Texas, approximately one million adults are affected by a serious mental illness.
- Texas spends more than \$2 billion annually for emergency room costs.
- As identified by the *Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan*, prevention and early intervention services, including Mental Health First Aid, are critical to mitigating the impact of mental illness.



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What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an eight hour, evidence-based course which:

- Teaches signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use problems;
- Increases awareness of mental health and building an understanding of its impact;
- Provides an overview of common treatments; and
- Provides an action plan to follow.



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Mental Health First Aid Legislative History

HB 3793 (83R) required HHSC to train local mental health authority (LMHA) and local behavioral health authority (LBHA) staff as MHFA instructors.

- After receiving certification, MHFA instructors provide MHFA training to educators at no cost.
- All 39 LMHAs and LBHAs contract with HHSC to provide the training.
- SB 133 (84R) broadened eligibility criteria for school district employees and resource officers to receive MHFA training.
- SB 1533 (85R) further expanded eligibility for training to include employees of public or private institutions of higher education.



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Why is MHFA Important?

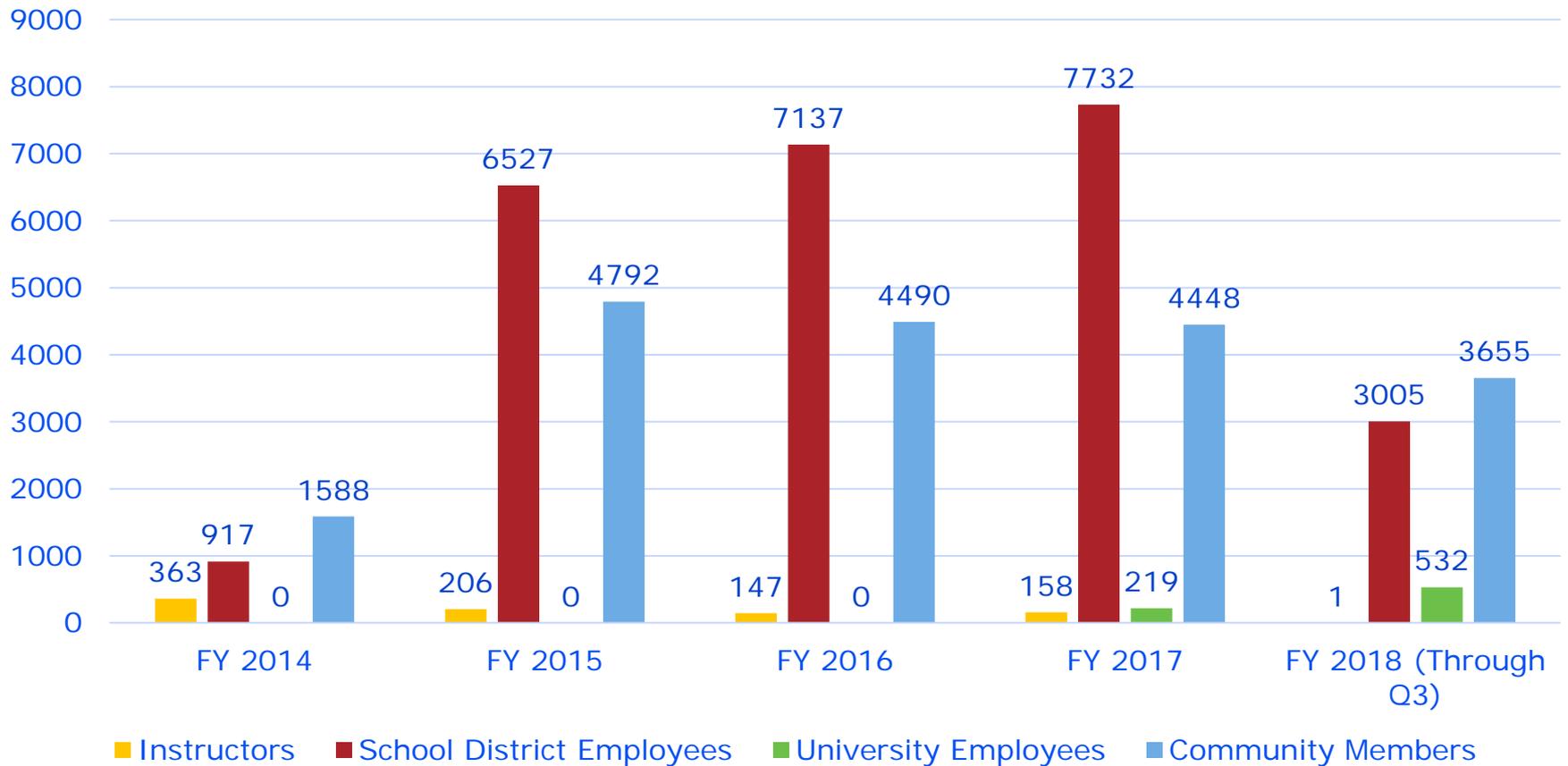
HHSC aims to maximize the number of Texas students who have direct contact with an individual who has successfully completed a MHFA training program.

- Many people who are struggling with mental illness are reluctant to seek help.
- Often, those who want to help do not know how to offer assistance or intervene effectively.
- MHFA builds an understanding of mental illness and substance use disorders.
- Awareness and understanding help reduce stigma, which can save lives.



MHFA Numbers Trained

FY 2014 Through FY 2018, Quarter 3





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Quarterly MHFA Survey Results

MHFA training participants' survey responses from Quarter 2 of FY 2018:

- 97 percent found training to be helpful;
- 93 percent reported MHFA increased their ability to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness;
- 90 percent reported MHFA increased their crisis intervention skills;
- 92 percent feel they would be able to intervene during a mental health crisis; and
- 76 percent had already used the training to help a student.



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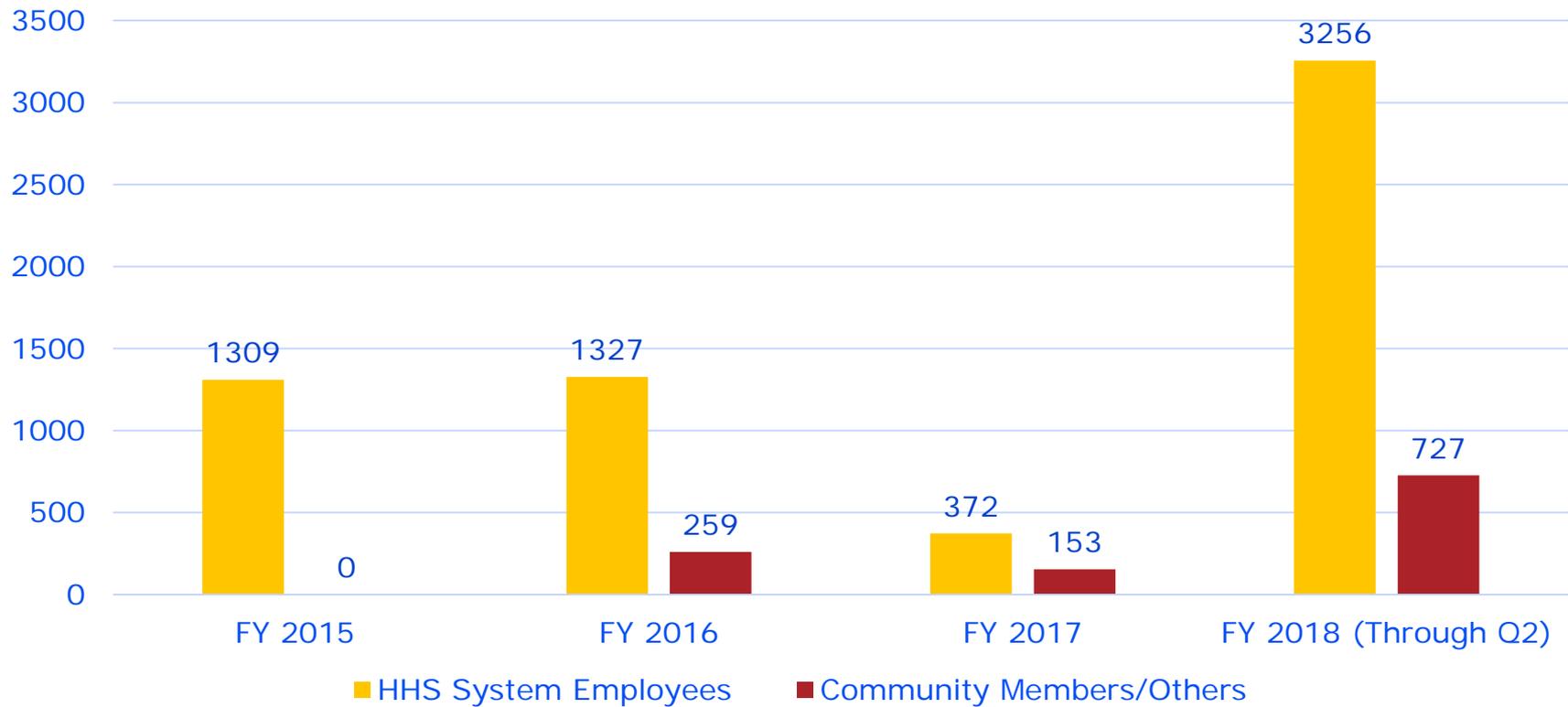
HHS System Employee Initiative

In 2015, the HHSC Office of Mental Health Coordination (OMHC) identified a gap across the Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council agencies.

- OMHC further identified existing funds to provide train-the-trainer MHFA courses to employees of Coordinating Council agencies.
- These certified trainers now provide MHFA trainings within Coordinating Council agencies.
- Employees are able to build awareness and reduce stigma.



MHFA HHS System Employee Initiative Numbers Trained FY 2015 Through FY 2018, Quarter 2





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HHSC and Texas Education Agency (TEA) Collaboration

School and Firearm Safety Action Plan:

- Directs HHSC to partner with TEA, LMHAs, and LBHAs to increase training opportunities in the summer of 2018; and
- Seek potential federal funding opportunities through the 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

MHFA Training

- HHSC will continue to collaborate with TEA and education service centers (ESCs) to increase training.
- HHSC will continue to share resources and information between agencies.



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The Future of MHFA

- Expansion opportunities based on legislative directives.
- Continual increase of public school employees trained.
- Expanding partnerships between LMHAs and school districts, ESCs, and other service organizations.
- Increasing awareness and decreasing stigma.