



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, please contact:

Dawn Heje at (989) 797-3451

dheje@sccmha.org

Mental Health First Aid Training Available at SCCMHA

SAGINAW, MI – Since 2014, Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA) has been a proud host of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings at its Albert & Woods facility in an effort to help promote greater community understanding about mental health conditions. SCCMHA was the local partner in a multi-county regional grant awarded by the State of Michigan to offer these evidence-based trainings endorsed by the National Council for Behavioral Health. SCCMHA set a goal to train 1,000 persons locally by January 2016; having met that 2014 – 2015 grant goal, SCCMHA continues to offer these all-day training programs free of charge as a community benefit to any Saginaw citizen who wishes to know more about mental health and substance use disorders, as well as learn ways to intervene in the community with an individual who might be experiencing behavioral health symptoms.

“This is a wonderful program,” notes Dawn Heje, Continuing Education Supervisor at SCCMHA. “We went into this project not having any trained instructors in Saginaw at the time, and now we have a pool of qualified instructors who can provide either Youth or Adult MHFA for us. We also continue to receive very positive feedback from those who attend - that they find it is so worthwhile, and it is a definite commitment to attend a full day training to obtain the MHFA certificate.”

Mental Health First Aid provides an easy to remember five step system for supporting anyone in the community who might be developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves. The curriculum not only provides core information about common mental health and substance use conditions, it also helps to reduce the common stigma about these conditions.

“We have had participants from all areas of the community such as local businesses, law enforcement, courts and schools as well as family members take this course,” comments Ms. Heje.

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MHFA Training at SCCMHA

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Patricia Krogman of the Saginaw Housing Commission states, “Our entire staff attended the Mental Health First Aid Training and found it to be an amazing experience as well as very informative in identifying symptoms and behaviors relating to mental health concerns. The training allowed group participation and lead staff to consider problems individuals can be dealing with. The trainers were very knowledgeable and answered many questions from our staff. The Saginaw Housing Commission highly recommends this training for anyone having contact with those that may have mental health concerns.”

“Police Officers, regardless of rank, may find themselves challenged with a mental health crisis while on duty,” notes Gary Fitzmaurice, Sergeant with the Saginaw County Sheriff Department. “Mental Health First Aid training can be an important resource for an officer to provide resolve to the situation, minimizing the chances of violent incidents. With 7% of police contact involving a person with mental illness there is no denying the importance of the training. Personally it has helped me to identify situations involving mental illness, communicate and intervene effectively, so as to minimize the chances of violent incidents or simply direct the subject to access for care. MHFA has made me a better officer and has improved my chances to intervene effectively and I have nothing but praise for the program.”

Anyone in Saginaw County interested in attending a MHFA training may contact SCCMHA at (989) 797-3400 to learn more. Upcoming MHFA sessions are also posted on the SCCMHA website at www.sccmha.org.

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Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority is the local, separate governmental unit serving Saginaw County, a Community Mental Health Services Program (CMHSP), which provides and manages publicly funded specialty mental health and substance use disorder services. SCCMHA is part of the Mid-State Health Network 21 county region.

SCCMHA is headquartered at 500 Hancock Street in Saginaw and provides numerous services including evaluations, screenings, treatments and referrals. SCCMHA assists approximately 5,000 Saginaw County citizens each year.