

[As Approved]

MENTAL HEALTH / POINT OF CONTACT THROUGH JAIL RELEASE TASK FORCE

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION PRESENTED TO THE
COLORADO COMMISSION ON CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE

December 9, 2016

FY17-MH #04. Include Mental Health First Aid® Curriculum in POST: Basic Academy

Recommendation FY17-MH #04

Officials from the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) will work with staff from the Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council (CBHC) to review the Mental Health First Aid® curriculum, and modify when possible, for inclusion in the POST basic academy standard curriculum.

Discussion

POST officials report that approximately 4,500 law enforcement officials in Colorado have received Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, a 40-hour training that includes information on signs and symptoms of mental illnesses, mental health treatment, co-occurring disorders, legal issues and de-escalation techniques. However, many law enforcement agencies, particularly smaller agencies, cannot send staff to participate in a week-long CIT training. Mental Health First Aid® (MHFA) is an eight hour training focused on risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, and strategies to help individuals in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Under the umbrella of the Commission's Mental Health/Jail Task Force, POST officials met with Task Force members and together the group developed the concepts described here regarding integrating MHFA training into the POST curriculum. CBHC may be able to assist with funding through grants and fund matching. The course is expected to be available in the spring of 2017.