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Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety Class Held at the Flagler Emergency Operations Center

BUNNELL, FL – Ivan Cosimi, CEO of Stewart-Marchman-Act (SMA) Behavioral Healthcare, is pleased to announce the organization has provided a two-day Mental Health First Aid training with support from the Flagler Public Safety Coordinating Council.

The training was held at the Flagler County Emergency Operations Center April 13 and 20. The eight-hour training teaches participants a five-step action plan to support someone developing signs or symptoms of an emotional crisis, or mental illness.

Mental Health First Aid is a globally recognized training, and is considered an evidenced based practice.

"This training has been proven to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and substance use disorders, to make participants more knowledgeable about those disorders, and to increase the participant's comfort with approaching and assisting a person who is having a behavioral health crisis," said Ivan Cosimi, CEO of SMA. "We are thrilled our community partners have joined us in being better prepared to serve our community."

Presented by Tore Gintoli, Senior Director of Crisis Services at SMA, the sessions were free of charge and was attended by 27 employees from many different agencies, including the Flagler County Government, the Flagler County Court, Children's Home Society, the Flagler County Board of Commissioners, Career Source, and the City of Bunnell.

The training was organized by Sally Sherman, Flagler County Deputy County Administrator, and Nate McLaughlin, District 4 Flagler County Commissioner.

Such ongoing collaboration is in keeping with SMA's recent receipt of a DCF grant to establish a Central Receiving System in Volusia and Flagler Counties, the purpose of which is to expand services at their crisis center in a manner that includes community partners, especially Law Enforcement, to ensure that that the community understands the behavioral health system and resources available, as well as knowledge about how to access it.

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About SMA Behavioral

SMA Behavioral Healthcare has been serving the northeast Florida community with mental health and drug treatment services for over 50 years. SMA provides more than 35 mental health and substance abuse programs, providing prevention, diversion, intervention, and treatment services, delivered to diverse client populations Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, and Volusia counties.

SMA Behavioral Healthcare's mission is to deliver exceptional and comprehensive behavioral healthcare to individuals and families in our community. SMA's vision is of a community where addiction and mental illness are treated promptly, comprehensively and with respect for all. Contact SMA at 800-539-4228 or online at <http://www.smabehavioral.org/> or stay connected on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SMABehavioralHealthServices>.