



**FOTM**

**Families On The Move of New York City, Inc. (FOTM)**

*Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow...Families On The Move.*

January 19, 2016

The Honorable Jesse Hamilton  
Member, State Mental Health Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 608  
Albany, New York 12247

RE: Support of Mental Health Legislation S.6234 Mental Health First Aid Bill (Hamilton)

Dear Senator Hamilton,

On behalf of Families On The Move of NYC, Inc. (FOTM), it is with great enthusiasm that we support BILL NUMBER S.6234 to amend the education law mandatory continuing education for teachers relating to mental health issues. FOTM is in support of the proposed legislation S.6234, Mental Health First Aid Bill as it requires teachers to participate in a state certified Continuing Education Unit to learn how to be supportive to youth as a first responder providing crisis intervention as it relates to mental wellness challenges that arise with students, and thus making them more aware of mental health, mental wellness challenges, trauma, and mental health disorders, in a way that has not been possible before.

By ensuring teachers are educated about mental health (mental wellness) the proposed Legislative Mental Health First Aid Bill, S.6234 will help teachers better understand students living with mental wellness challenges, and the impact of trauma on mental health. Moreover, Mental Health First Aid will: 1) help change perceptions about those who have mental wellness challenges, 2) help end discrimination against students / people living with mental wellness challenges, 3) help decrease and eventually end the stigma often associated with Mental Health Disorders, and 4) help teachers provide immediate support to a student in crisis until the appropriate professional help arrives, which would be a major accomplishment for schools.

As a family run agency, not only does Families On The Move of NYC, Inc., provide peer support services to families and youth that live with, or are at risk of, mental wellness challenges, but our staff has personal lived experience and understands how important it



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is to have teachers that are able to de-escalate situations safely, in a way that the student is able to maintain a sense of dignity, and is not stigmatized after a crisis situation. In addition, FOTM is a provider of both Youth Mental Health First Aid (for youth) and Mental Health First Aid (for young adults and adults) trainings, and is confident that the tools gained from the training required by the proposed Mental Health First Aid Bill S.6234 will provide teachers with the necessary strategies to support, encourage, and connect youth to appropriate professional mental health support services, peer support, self –help and other supportive strategies, training on mental health resources, as well as better engage the student in school settings.

For these reasons Families On The Move of NYC, Inc., thanks you Senator Hamilton, and stands in support of Mental Health First Aid Bill Number S.6234.

Sincerely,



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Euphemia S. Adams, CMHFAI, CMHFAI, CFPA, CRPA, CPSP, CHMH, MSW, FDC  
Chief Executive Officer

