

STATE OF NEW YORK

4261

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 5, 2019

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, SEPULVEDA -- read twice and ordered printed,
and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Veterans, Home-
land Security and Military Affairs

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing a
peer support program for veterans

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new section
2 7.42 to read as follows:

3 § 7.42 Peer support program for veterans.

4 (a) For the purpose of this section the term "peer support services"
5 shall mean any service designated by the office used in the treatment
6 and recovery of mental illness, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and/or
7 chemical dependence that is delivered by a certified peer counselor; and
8 the term "certified peer counselor" shall mean an individual with
9 personal experience as a mental health recipient and/or an individual in
10 recovery from alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and/or chemical depend-
11 ence, who has served in the active military or naval service of the
12 United States and has been released from such service otherwise than by
13 dishonorable discharge and as documented by his or her discharge papers
14 or who has been furloughed to the reserve components of the armed forces
15 of the United States who has training, credentials or experience recog-
16 nized by the office.

17 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the
18 commissioner, in conjunction with the commissioner of alcoholism and
19 substance abuse services, and the state director of the division of
20 veterans' affairs shall develop and establish a minimum of two regional
21 peer support services programs for veterans. One regional peer support
22 services program shall be located within the city of New York and one
23 regional peer support services program shall be located in upstate New
24 York outside of the city of New York or Long Island. Services provided

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 by the peer support services program shall include, but not be limited
2 to, peer counseling for mental illness including post-traumatic stress
3 disorder, alcohol and substance abuse counseling, information on access
4 to services, family support services, and where applicable, specialized
5 services for female veterans.

6 (c) The commissioner, in conjunction with the commissioner of the
7 office of alcoholism and substance abuse services and the state director
8 of the division of veterans' affairs shall foster programs for the
9 training and development of persons capable of providing the services
10 set forth in this section, including, but not limited to, a process of
11 issuing, either directly or through contract, credentials for certified
12 peer counselors in accordance with the following:

13 1. The office shall establish minimum qualifications for certified
14 peer counselors in all phases of delivery of services to veterans who
15 are suffering from any or a combination of the following: mental
16 illness, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and/or chemical dependence that
17 shall include, but not be limited to, completion of approved courses of
18 study or equivalent on-the-job experience in mental health counseling
19 and/or alcoholism and substance abuse counseling; and

20 2. The office shall establish procedures for issuing, directly or
21 through contract, credentials to certified peer counselors who meet
22 minimum qualifications, and shall further establish procedures to
23 suspend, revoke, or annul such credentials for good cause.

24 § 2. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
25 have become a law. Effective immediately the addition, amendment and/or
26 repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of
27 this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed
28 on or before such date.