

# STATE OF NEW YORK

4130

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

February 3, 2025

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law and the executive law, in relation to providing legal assistance to youth ordered by the court into the custody of the office of children and family services and placed or committed to a state operated juvenile detention center

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

1 Section 1. Subdivision (a) of section 47.01 of the mental hygiene law,  
2 as amended by chapter 658 of the laws of 2019, is amended to read as  
3 follows:  
4 (a) There shall be a mental hygiene legal service of the state in each  
5 judicial department. The service shall provide legal assistance to  
6 patients or residents of a facility as defined in section 1.03 of this  
7 chapter, patients or residents of residential healthcare facilities  
8 licensed and operating pursuant to article twenty-eight of the public  
9 health law who have been admitted directly from a facility as defined in  
10 section 1.03 of this chapter and who have a serious mental illness as  
11 defined in section 1.03 of this chapter and are receiving services  
12 related to such illness, or any other place or facility which is  
13 required to have an operating certificate pursuant to article sixteen or  
14 thirty-one of this chapter, and to persons alleged to be in need of care  
15 and treatment in such facilities or places, and to persons entitled to  
16 such legal assistance as provided by article ten of this chapter. The  
17 service shall also provide legal assistance to youth offered by the  
18 court into the custody of the office of children and family services and  
19 placed or committed to a state operated juvenile detention center. The  
20 head of such service in each judicial department and such assistants and  
21 such staff as may be necessary shall be appointed and may be removed by  
22 the presiding justice of the appellate division of the judicial depart-  
23 ment. Appointments and transfers to the service shall comply with the

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

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1 provisions of the civil service law. Standards for qualifications of the  
2 personnel in the service shall be established by the presiding justice  
3 of the appellate division of the judicial department. The presiding  
4 justice of the appellate division of the judicial department shall  
5 promulgate such rules or regulations as may be necessary to effectuate  
6 the purposes of this article.

7 § 2. Section 47.03 of the mental hygiene law, as added by chapter 789  
8 of the laws of 1985, subdivision (c) as amended by chapter 408 of the  
9 laws of 1999, subdivisions (d) and (e) as amended and subdivision (f) as  
10 added by chapter 7 of the laws of 2007, is amended to read as follows:

11 § 47.03 Functions, powers and duties of the service.

12 The mental hygiene legal service in each judicial department of the  
13 state shall perform the following duties:

14 (a) To study and review the admission and retention of all patients or  
15 residents which shall include a review of the willingness of the patient  
16 or resident to remain in [~~his or her~~] their status and the determination  
17 of the facility director as to suitability of such status, as provided  
18 for by this chapter;

19 (b) To inform patients or residents and, in proper cases, others  
20 interested in such persons' welfare of procedures for admission and  
21 retention and of the patients' or residents' right to have judicial  
22 hearing and review, to be represented by legal counsel, and to seek  
23 independent medical opinion;

24 (c) To provide legal services and assistance to patients or residents  
25 and their families related to the admission, retention, and care and  
26 treatment of such persons, to provide legal services and assistance to  
27 subjects of a petition or patients subject to section 9.60 of this chap-  
28 ter, and to inform patients or residents, their families and, in proper  
29 cases, others interested in the patients' or residents' welfare of the  
30 availability of other legal resources which may be of assistance in  
31 matters not directly related to the admission, retention, and care and  
32 treatment of such patients or residents;

33 (d) To provide legal services and assistance to youth residing in  
34 juvenile detention centers and their families related to the retention,  
35 care and treatment of such persons, and to inform youth and their fami-  
36 lies and in proper cases, others interested in the youths' welfare, of  
37 the availability of other legal resources which may be of assistance in  
38 matters not directly related to the retention, care and treatment of  
39 such youth;

40 (e) To be granted access at any and all times to any facility or place  
41 or part thereof described in subdivision (a) of section 47.01 of this  
42 article, and to all books, records and data pertaining to any such  
43 facility or place deemed necessary for carrying out its functions,  
44 powers and duties. The mental hygiene legal service may require from the  
45 officers or employees of such facility or place any information deemed  
46 necessary for the purpose of carrying out the service's functions,  
47 powers and duties. Information, books, records or data which are confi-  
48 dential and any limitations on the release thereof imposed by law upon  
49 the party furnishing the information, books, records or data shall apply  
50 to the service. Provided, however, whenever federal regulations  
51 restrict, or as a condition of federal aid require that a facility  
52 restrict the release of information contained in the clinical record of  
53 a patient or client, or restrict disclosure of the identity of a patient  
54 or access to that patient, to a greater extent than is allowed under  
55 this section, the provisions of such federal law or federal regulation  
56 shall be controlling;

1    [~~e~~] (f) To initiate and take any legal action deemed necessary to  
2 safeguard the right of any patient [~~or~~], resident or youth to protection  
3 from abuse or mistreatment, which may include investigation into any  
4 such allegations of abuse or mistreatment of any such patient or resi-  
5 dent; and

6    [~~f~~] (g) To provide legal services and assistance in accordance with  
7 article ten of this chapter.

8    § 3. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 508-a to  
9 read as follows:

10    § 508-a. Legal services and assistance to youth. In addition to any  
11 law guardian, court appointed counsel or private counsel a youth may  
12 have, the mental hygiene legal service in each judicial department of  
13 the state, established pursuant to article forty-seven of the mental  
14 hygiene law, shall provide legal services and assistance to youth and  
15 their family relating to the retention, care and treatment of such youth  
16 when such youth is ordered by the court into the custody of the office  
17 of children and family services and placed or committed to a state oper-  
18 ated juvenile detention center.

19    § 4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall  
20 have become a law; provided, however, that the amendments to subdivision  
21 (c) of section 47.03 of the mental hygiene law made by section two of  
22 this act shall not affect the expiration and reversion of such subdivi-  
23 sion and shall be deemed to expire therewith. Effective immediately, the  
24 addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary  
25 for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized  
26 and directed to be made and completed on or before such effective date.