

8248

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

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Introduced by M. of A. P. RIVERA -- read once and referred to the
Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disa-
bilities

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing a
program of tiered eligibility for services offered by the office of
mental retardation and developmental disabilities for persons with
learning disabilities and other complex neurological impairments

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 41.58 to read as follows:
3 S 41.58 TIERED SERVICES ELIGIBILITY.
4 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE. THE LEGISLATURE HEREBY FINDS THAT
5 INDIVIDUALS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND OTHER COMPLEX NEUROLOGICAL
6 IMPAIRMENTS ARE OFTEN NOT PROVIDED ESSENTIAL SUPPORT AND HABILITATIVE
7 SERVICES DUE TO THE LACK OF ESTABLISHED OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND
8 DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES' ELIGIBILITY PROTOCOLS. THIS INCLUDES INDI-
9 VIDUALS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES, HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM SPECTRUM
10 DISORDERS, SUCH AS ASPERGER'S SYNDROME, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER COMPLEX
11 NEUROLOGICALLY BASED COGNITIVE DISABILITIES. UNFORTUNATELY, THESE INDI-
12 VIDUALS ARE THEN LEFT TO NAVIGATE THEIR LIVES AND THE CHALLENGES OF
13 THEIR DISABILITIES WITH MINIMAL OR NO ASSISTANCE. AS A RESULT, SUCH
14 INDIVIDUALS OFTEN LEAD LIVES OF GREAT DIFFICULTY AND VULNERABILITY THAT
15 MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO, EXTENDED PERIODS OF INCARCERATION,
16 LIFELONG DEPENDENCE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, AND VICTIMI-
17 ZATION, COUPLED WITH MANY OTHER NEGATIVE AND COSTLY OUTCOMES. IN
18 RESPONSE TO THIS GROWING PROBLEM, THE LEGISLATURE HEREBY DIRECTS THE
19 COMMISSIONER OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES TO
20 DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM OF TIERED ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE OF
21 MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES' SERVICES FOR PERSONS
22 WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND OTHER COMPLEX NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS.

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

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1 THIS TIERED SERVICE-DELIVERY MODEL WOULD ALLOW SERVICES TO BE TARGETED
2 AND BASED ON AN INDIVIDUAL'S SPECIFIC NEEDS, WHICH FOR SOME MAY BE MORE
3 INTENSIVE AND FOR OTHERS RELATIVELY MINIMAL. THIS MODEL WILL ALSO FACIL-
4 ITATE RAPID RESPONSE TO ADDRESSING PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY INDIVIDUALS
5 IN CRISIS. PROVIDING SERVICES THAT ARE TRULY NEEDED WILL BE MORE COST
6 EFFECTIVE AND A MORE SENSIBLE OPTION THAN THE CURRENT ELIGIBILITY PROC-
7 ESS UTILIZED BY THE OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISA-
8 BILITIES.

9 2. WHEN USED IN THIS ARTICLE, UNLESS OTHERWISE EXPRESSLY STATED OR
10 UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

11 (A) "LEARNING DISABILITY" MEANS A DISORDER IN ONE OR MORE OF THE BASIC
12 PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES INVOLVED IN UNDERSTANDING OR IN USING SPOKEN OR
13 WRITTEN LANGUAGE, WHICH MAY MANIFEST ITSELF IN AN IMPERFECT ABILITY TO
14 LISTEN, THINK, SPEAK, READ, WRITE, SPELL OR TO DO MATHEMATICAL CALCU-
15 LATIONS. THIS INCLUDES SUCH CONDITIONS AS PERCEPTUAL DISABILITIES, MINI-
16 MAL BRAIN DYSFUNCTION, DYSLEXIA, DYSGRAPHIA, DYSCALCULIA, DYSPRAXIA, AND
17 DEVELOPMENTAL APHASIA;

18 (B) "COMPLEX NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT" MEANS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER,
19 SUCH AS ASPERGER'S SYNDROME, OR OTHER COGNITIVE DISABILITIES OF A SIMI-
20 LAR NATURE AND RESULTING IN SIMILAR NEEDS BY AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS;

21 (C) "INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATION" MEANS A SERVICE WHOSE PRIMARY FUNC-
22 TION IS TO CONNECT PERSONS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND/OR OTHER
23 COMPLEX NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS TO APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS.
24 INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATION COORDINATES ALL SERVICES FOR A PERSON WITH
25 A LEARNING DISABILITY OR OTHER COMPLEX NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENT INCLUD-
26 ING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, PARENTING CLASSES,
27 SUPPORT GROUPS, RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, VOCATIONAL SERVICES, AND EDUCA-
28 TIONAL TRANSITIONAL PLANNING AND ALL BASIC NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL. THE
29 SERVICES OF THE INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATOR ARE TIME LIMITED AND
30 ORIENTED TO SHORT TERM CRISIS INTERVENTION.

31 3. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY INCONSISTENT PROVISIONS OF THIS CHAPTER OR ANY
32 OTHER STATE LAW, THE COMMISSIONER OF THE OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION
33 AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SHALL ESTABLISH A PROGRAM OF TIERED
34 ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES OFFERED BY THE OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND
35 DEVELOPMENT DISABILITIES FOR PERSONS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND
36 OTHER COMPLEX NEUROLOGICAL IMPAIRMENTS. SUCH PROGRAM SHALL CONTAIN THE
37 FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

38 (A) WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL PRESENTS TO A SERVICE PROVIDER SEEKING SUPPORT
39 SERVICES, THE SERVICE PROVIDER SHALL DETERMINE IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS
40 PRESENTING WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY OR OTHER COMPLEX NEUROLOGICAL
41 IMPAIRMENT. IF THE SERVICE PROVIDER DETERMINES THAT THE INDIVIDUAL IS A
42 PERSON WITH AN APPARENT LEARNING DISABILITY OR OTHER COMPLEX NEUROLOGI-
43 CAL IMPAIRMENT, AND THAT SUCH INDIVIDUAL REQUIRES IMMEDIATE SERVICE IN
44 ORDER TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE INDIVIDUAL'S HEALTH AND SAFETY, OR THAT
45 THE INDIVIDUAL OTHERWISE FACES A CRISIS SITUATION THAT CAN BE HELPED BY
46 SERVICE AND ASSISTANCE, THE SERVICE PROVIDER MAY IMPLEMENT THE TIERED
47 SERVICES ELIGIBILITY PROGRAM;

48 (B) TIER ONE OF THE TIERED SERVICES ELIGIBILITY PROGRAM WILL CONSIST
49 OF THE IMMEDIATE PROVISION OF INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATION. THIS
50 PROVISION OF SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED FOR UP TO SIX MONTHS IN DURATION.
51 THE SERVICE MAY END ANYTIME PRIOR TO THE END OF THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD IF
52 THE INDIVIDUAL AND SERVICE PROVIDER AGREE THAT NO FURTHER SERVICE OR
53 INTERVENTION IS REQUIRED. IF THE INDIVIDUAL AND SERVICE PROVIDER AGREE
54 AT THE END OF THE SIX MONTH PERIOD THAT THE NEED FOR SERVICES PERSISTS
55 AND MORE INTERVENTION IS REQUIRED, THE INDIVIDUAL WILL MOVE INTO TIER
56 TWO;

(C) TIER TWO OF THE TIERED SERVICES ELIGIBILITY PROGRAM WILL BE PROVIDED FOR UP TO AN ADDITIONAL SIX-MONTH PERIOD AND PROVIDE:

(1) CONTINUATION AND INTENSIFICATION OF THE INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATOR'S EFFORTS TO STABILIZE THE INDIVIDUAL'S CRISIS SITUATION;

(2) A PROCESS POTENTIALLY LEADING TO FULL ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES' SERVICES. AS PART OF THIS PROCESS, THE INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATOR WILL CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR LEVELS, CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY LEARN AND PUT INTO PRACTICE NEW ADAPTIVE SKILLS, AND GENERALLY PREPARE THE INDIVIDUAL FOR THE ELIGIBILITY PROCESS;

(D) IF DURING TIER TWO, THE INDIVIDUAL LEARNS NEW SKILLS AND THE CRISIS SUBSIDIES, THE INDIVIDUAL AND SERVICE PROVIDER CAN AGREE THAT SERVICES BE TERMINATED PRIOR TO THE CONCLUSION OF THIS TIER; AND

(E) IF THE INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATOR AND INDIVIDUAL AGREE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL WOULD BENEFIT FROM ON-GOING SERVICE AND SUPPORT, THE INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATOR WILL ASSIST THE INDIVIDUAL IN APPLYING TO THE OFFICE OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FOR A FULL ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION.

4. THE COMMISSIONER OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SHALL, IN CONSULTATION WITH EXPERIENCED SERVICE PROVIDERS, DEVELOP A REIMBURSEMENT METHODOLOGY FOR INTENSIVE SERVICE NAVIGATION AS DESCRIBED HEREIN. SUCH REIMBURSEMENT SHALL COVER THE SERVICE PROVIDER'S REASONABLE COSTS FOR PROVIDING THIS SERVICE AND BE PAID TO THE SERVICE PROVIDERS AS PART OF THE USUAL AND CUSTOMARY COST REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS.

5. IN DEVELOPING THIS PROGRAM, THE COMMISSIONER OF MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SHALL CONSULT WITH A STATEWIDE ASSOCIATION SPECIFICALLY REPRESENTING INDIVIDUALS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND RELATED SERVICES PROVIDERS.

S 2. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law; provided however, that the commissioner of mental retardation and developmental disabilities is authorized to promulgate any and all rules and regulations and take any other measures necessary to implement this act on its effective date on or before such effective date.