S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

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2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

April 24, 2009

Introduced by Sens. DUANE, KRUEGER, PERKINS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the public health law, the education law and the labor law, in relation to prohibiting participation in torture and improper treatment of prisoners by health care professionals

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Legislative policy and intent. This legislation is based on, and is intended to give effect to, international treaties and standards; federal, state and local law; and professional standards relating to torture, improper treatment of prisoners, and related matters. It is guided by two basic principles: (1) health care professionals shall be dedicated to providing the highest standard of health care, with compassion and respect for human dignity and rights; and (2) torture and improper treatment of prisoners are wrong and inconsistent with the practice of the health care professions. The legislature finds that the conduct prohibited by this act violates the ethical and legal obligations of licensed health care professionals. This legislation will further protect the professionalism of New York state licensed health care professionals by authorizing and obligating them to refuse to participate in torture and improper treatment of prisoners, which in turn will protect the life and health of the people of the state and those with whom New York licensed health care professionals interact. A health care professional who comes to the aid of a prisoner should not be presumed to be in violation when she or he is fulfilling the ethical principle of beneficence. In contrast, a health care professional who, for example, attends to a prisoner in order to allow torture or improper treatment to commence or continue is not acting beneficently. Such practices are inconsistent with professional ethics and standards and are violations of this legislation. The legislature is mindful that ordinarily there are limits on New York state's jurisdiction relating to conduct outside the state or under federal authority. However, it is

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

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proper for the state to regulate health care professional licensure in relation to a professional's conduct, even where the conduct occurs outside the state; certain wrongful out-of-state conduct is already grounds for professional discipline. Therefore, it is the legislature's intent that this legislation be applied to the fullest extent possible.

S 2. The public health law is amended by adding a new section 22 to read as follows:

S 22. PARTICIPATION IN TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT OF PRISONERS BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS. 1. DEFINITIONS. AS USED IN THIS SECTION, THE TERMS "TORTURE" AND "IMPROPER TREATMENT" SHALL BE INTERPRETED IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL TREATIES, PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS AS WELL AS THE DECISIONS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORRESPONDING INTERPRETING BODIES. HOWEVER, FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, IT SHALL NOT BE AN ELEMENT OF EITHER "TORTURE" OR "IMPROPER TREATMENT" THAT SUCH ACTS BE COMMITTED BY A GOVERNMENT OR NON-GOVERNMENT ACTOR, ENTITY, OR OFFICIAL; UNDER COLOR OF LAW; OR NOT UNDER COLOR OF LAW. AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT CLEARLY REQUIRES OTHERWISE, THE FOLLOWING TERMS HAVE THE FOLLOWING MEANINGS:

(A) "HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL" MEANS ANY PERSON LICENSED, REGISTERED, CERTIFIED, OR EXEMPT TO PRACTICE UNDER (I) ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES OF THE EDUCATION LAW: ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-ONE (MEDICINE), ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-ONE-B (PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS), ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-TWO (CHIROPRACTIC), ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-THREE (DENTISTRY AND DENTAL HYGIENE), ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SIX (PHYSICAL THERAPY AND PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS), ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SEVEN (PHARMACY), ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-NINE (NURSING), ONE HUNDRED FORTY (PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFERY PRACTICE ACT), ONE HUNDRED FORTY-ONE (PODIATRY), ONE HUNDRED FORTY-THREE (OPTOMETRY), ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR (OPHTHALMIC DISPENSING), ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-THREE (PSYCHOLOGY), ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOUR (SOCIAL WORK), ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIVE (MASSAGE THERAPY), ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX (OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY), ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-SEVEN (DIETETICS AND NUTRITION), ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE (SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AND AUDIOLOGISTS), ONE HUNDRED SIXTY (ACUPUNCTURE), ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-THREE (MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS), ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-FOUR (RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS AND RESPIRATORY THERAPY TECHNICIANS), ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE (CLINICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY PRACTICE ACT), OR ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX (MEDICAL PHYSICS PRACTICE), OR (II) ARTICLE THIRTY-FIVE OF THIS CHAPTER (PRACTICE OF RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY).

(B) "TORTURE" MEANS ANY INTENTIONAL ACT OR INTENTIONAL OMISSION BY WHICH SEVERE PAIN OR SUFFERING, WHETHER PHYSICAL OR MENTAL, IS INFLICTED ON A PERSON FOR SUCH PURPOSES AS OBTAINING FROM THE PERSON OR FROM A THIRD PERSON INFORMATION OR A CONFESSION, PUNISHING THE PERSON FOR AN ACT THE PERSON OR A THIRD PERSON HAS COMMITTED (INCLUDING THE HOLDING OF A BELIEF OR MEMBERSHIP IN ANY GROUP) OR IS SUSPECTED OF HAVING COMMITTED, OR INTIMIDATING OR COERCING THE PERSON OR A THIRD PERSON, OR FOR ANY REASON BASED ON DISCRIMINATION OF ANY KIND. IT DOES NOT INCLUDE PAIN OR SUFFERING ARISING ONLY FROM, INHERENT IN OR INCIDENTAL TO LAWFUL SANCTION.

(C) "IMPROPER TREATMENT" MEANS (I) CRUEL AND UNUSUAL; OR CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING, TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT AS DEFINED BY APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING INTERPRETING BODIES; OR CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT AS DEFINED IN THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION OR THE NEW YORK STATE CONSTITUTION; OR (II) ANY VIOLATION OF SUBDIVISION THREE OR FOUR OF THIS SECTION.

(D) "PRISONER" MEANS ANY PERSON WHO IS SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT, DETENTION, INCARCERATION, INTERROGATION, INTIMIDATION OR COERCION,

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SUCH ACTION IS PERFORMED OR COMMITTED BY A GOVERNMENT OR NON-GOVERNMENT ACTOR, ENTITY, OR OFFICIAL; UNDER COLOR OF LAW; OR NOT UNDER COLOR OF LAW.

(E) TO "ADVERSELY AFFECT" A PERSON'S PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OR CONDITION DOES NOT INCLUDE CAUSING ADVERSE EFFECTS THAT MAY ARISE FROM TREATMENT OR CARE WHEN THAT TREATMENT OR CARE IS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERALLY APPLICABLE LEGAL, HEALTH AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND FOR THE PURPOSES OF EVALUATING, TREATING, PROTECTING OR IMPROVING THE PERSON'S HEALTH.

2. KNOWLEDGE. IT SHALL BE AN ELEMENT OF ANY VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION THAT THE ACTOR KNEW OR REASONABLY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THE NATURE OF HIS OR HER CONDUCT. IF A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL WHO OPERATES IN A CLOSED INSTITUTION SUCH AS A JAIL OR OTHER DETENTION FACILITY, POLICE FACILITY, PRISON, OR PSYCHIATRIC OR MILITARY FACILITY, IS NOT GIVEN ACCESS BY THE INSTITUTION TO THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT HAS OCCURRED, IS OCCURRING OR WILL OCCUR, IN ORDER TO ASSESS THE NATURE OF HIS OR HER CONDUCT AS COVERED BY THIS SECTION, THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL MUST PRESUME THAT THE PRISONER FACES RISK OF TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT.

3. GENERAL OBLIGATIONS OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS. (A) EVERY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL SHALL PROVIDE EVERY PRISONER UNDER HIS OR HER PROFESSIONAL CARE WITH CARE OR TREATMENT CONSISTENT WITH GENERALLY APPLICABLE LEGAL, HEALTH AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AS THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL IS REASONABLY ABLE TO PROVIDE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING PROTECTION OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF PATIENT INFORMATION.

(B) IN ALL CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS RELATING TO A PRISONER, WHETHER FOR THERAPEUTIC OR EVALUATIVE PURPOSES, HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS SHALL EXERCISE THEIR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT INDEPENDENT OF THE INTERESTS OF A GOVERNMENT OR OTHER THIRD PARTY.

4. CERTAIN CONDUCT OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS PROHIBITED. (A) NO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL SHALL APPLY HIS OR HER KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS IN RELATION TO, ENGAGE IN ANY PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH, OR PERFORM PROFESSIONAL SERVICES IN RELATION TO ANY PRISONER WHERE THE PURPOSE IS NOT TO EVALUATE, TREAT, PROTECT, OR IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OR CONDITION OF THE PRISONER (EXCEPT AS PERMITTED BY PARAGRAPH (B) OF SUBDIVISION FIVE OF THIS SECTION).

(B) NO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL SHALL ENGAGE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, IN ANY ACT WHICH CONSTITUTES PARTICIPATION IN, COMPLICITY IN, INCITEMENT TO, ASSISTANCE IN, PLANNING OR DESIGN OF, OR ATTEMPT OR CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT OF A PRISONER. PROHIBITED FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

(I) PROVIDING MEANS OR KNOWLEDGE WITH THE INTENT TO FACILITATE THE PRACTICE OF TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT;

(II) PERMITTING HIS OR HER KNOWLEDGE OR CLINICAL FINDINGS OR TREATMENT TO BE USED IN THE PROCESS OF TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT;

(III) EXAMINING, EVALUATING, OR TREATING A PRISONER TO CERTIFY WHETHER TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT CAN BEGIN OR BE RESUMED;

(IV) BEING PRESENT WHILE TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT IS BEING ADMINISTERED;

(V) OMITTING INDICATIONS OF TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT FROM RECORDS OR REPORTS; AND

(VI) ALTERING HEALTH CARE RECORDS OR REPORTS TO HIDE, MISREPRESENT OR DESTROY EVIDENCE OF TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT.

(C) NO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL SHALL APPLY HIS OR HER KNOWLEDGE OR SKILLS OR PERFORM ANY PROFESSIONAL SERVICE IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN THE PUNISHMENT, DETENTION, OR INCARCERATION, INTERROGATION, INTIMIDATION, OR

COERCION OF A PRISONER WHEN SUCH ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED IN A MANNER THAT MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OR CONDITION OF THE PRISONER (EXCEPT AS PERMITTED BY PARAGRAPH (A) OR (B) OF SUBDIVISION FIVE OF THIS SECTION).

(D) NO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL SHALL PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERROGATION OF A PRISONER, INCLUDING BEING PRESENT IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM, ASKING OR SUGGESTING QUESTIONS, ADVISING ON THE USE OF SPECIFIC INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES, MONITORING THE INTERROGATION, OR MEDICALLY OR PSYCHOLOGICALLY EVALUATING A PERSON FOR THE PURPOSE OF IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL INTERROGATION METHODS OR STRATEGIES. HOWEVER, THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL NOT BAR A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL FROM ENGAGING IN CONDUCT UNDER PARAGRAPH (C) OF SUBDIVISION FIVE OF THIS SECTION.

5. CERTAIN CONDUCT OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS PERMITTED. A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL MAY ENGAGE IN THE FOLLOWING CONDUCT SO LONG AS IT DOES NOT VIOLATE SUBDIVISION THREE OR FOUR OF THIS SECTION, IT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OR CONDITION OF A PRISONER OR POTENTIAL SUBJECT, AND IS NOT OTHERWISE UNLAWFUL:

(A) APPROPRIATELY PARTICIPATING OR AIDING IN THE INVESTIGATION, PROSECUTION, OR DEFENSE OF A CRIMINAL, ADMINISTRATIVE OR CIVIL MATTER;

(B) PARTICIPATING IN AN ACT THAT RESTRAINS A PRISONER OR TEMPORARILY ALTERS THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL ACTIVITY OF A PRISONER, WHERE THE ACT COMPLIES WITH GENERALLY APPLICABLE LEGAL, HEALTH AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, IS NECESSARY FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH, CONDITION OR SAFETY OF THE PRISONER, OTHER PRISONERS, OR PERSONS CARING FOR, GUARDING OR CONFINING THE PRISONER;

(C) TRAINING RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES, SO LONG AS IT IS NOT PROVIDED IN SUPPORT OF SPECIFIC ONGOING OR ANTICIPATED INTERROGATIONS:

(I) RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL OR MENTAL ILLNESS OR CONDITIONS,

(II) THE POSSIBLE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFECTS OF PARTICULAR TECHNIQUES AND CONDITIONS OF INTERROGATION, OR

(III) THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE INTERROGATION STRATEGIES.

6. DUTY TO REPORT. A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL WHO HAS REASONABLE GROUNDS (NOT BASED SOLELY ON PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION) TO BELIEVE THAT TORTURE, IMPROPER TREATMENT OR OTHER CONDUCT IN VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION HAS OCCURRED, IS OCCURRING, OR WILL OCCUR SHALL, AS SOON AS IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE PHYSICAL SAFETY OF HIMSELF OR HERSELF, THE PRISONER, OR INNOCENT PARTIES, REPORT SUCH CONDUCT TO:

(A) A GOVERNMENT AGENCY THAT THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL REASONABLY BELIEVES HAS LEGAL AUTHORITY TO PUNISH OR PREVENT THE CONTINUATION OF TORTURE OR THE IMPROPER TREATMENT OF A PRISONER OR CONDUCT IN VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION AND IS REASONABLY LIKELY TO ATTEMPT TO DO SO; OR

(B) A GOVERNMENTAL OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY THAT THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL REASONABLY BELIEVES WILL NOTIFY SUCH A GOVERNMENT AGENCY OF THE TORTURE OR THE IMPROPER TREATMENT OF A PRISONER OR CONDUCT IN VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION OR TAKE OTHER ACTION TO PUBLICIZE OR PREVENT SUCH TORTURE, TREATMENT OR CONDUCT; OR

(C) IN THE CASE OF AN ALLEGED VIOLATION BY A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL LICENSED UNDER ARTICLES ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-ONE OR ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-ONE-B OF THE EDUCATION LAW, A REPORT MAY BE FILED WITH THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL CONDUCT. IN THE CASE OF AN ALLEGED VIOLATION BY ANY OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL LICENSED UNDER TITLE EIGHT OF THE EDUCATION LAW, A REPORT MAY BE FILED WITH THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE.

7. MITIGATION. THE FOLLOWING MAY BE CONSIDERED IN FULL OR PARTIAL MITIGATION OF A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION BY THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL:

(A) COMPLIANCE WITH SUBDIVISION SIX OF THIS SECTION; OR

(B) COOPERATION IN GOOD FAITH WITH AN INVESTIGATION OF A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

8. APPLICABILITY. THIS SECTION SHALL APPLY TO CONDUCT TAKING PLACE WITHIN OR OUTSIDE NEW YORK STATE, AND WITHOUT REGARD TO WHETHER THE CONDUCT IS COMMITTED BY A GOVERNMENTAL OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY, OFFICIAL, OR ACTOR OR UNDER ACTUAL OR ASSERTED COLOR OF LAW.

9. SCOPE OF PRACTICE NOT EXPANDED. THIS SECTION SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED TO EXPAND THE LAWFUL SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF ANY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL.

S 3. Section 6509 of the education law is amended by adding a new subdivision 15 to read as follows:

(15) ANY VIOLATION OF SECTION TWENTY-TWO OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH LAW (RELATING TO PARTICIPATION IN TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT OF PRISONERS BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS), SUBJECT TO MITIGATION UNDER THAT SECTION.

S 4. Section 6530 of the education law is amended by adding a new subdivision 50 to read as follows:

50. ANY VIOLATION OF SECTION TWENTY-TWO OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH LAW (RELATING TO PARTICIPATION IN TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT OF PRISONERS BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS), SUBJECT TO MITIGATION UNDER THAT SECTION.

S 5. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of subdivision 2 of section 740 of the labor law, as added by chapter 660 of the laws of 1984, are amended and a new paragraph (d) is added to read as follows:

(b) provides information to, or testifies before, any public body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into any such violation of a law, rule or regulation by such employer; [or]

(c) objects to, or refuses to participate in any such activity, policy or practice in violation of a law, rule or regulation[.]; OR

(D) REPORTS OR THREATENS TO REPORT ANY VIOLATION OF SECTION TWENTY-TWO OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH LAW (RELATING TO PARTICIPATION IN TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT OF PRISONERS BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS), SUBJECT TO MITIGATION UNDER THAT SECTION.

S 6. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subdivision 2 of section 741 of the labor law, as added by chapter 24 of the laws of 2002, are amended and a new paragraph (c) is added to read as follows:

(a) discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor, or to a public body an activity, policy or practice of the employer or agent that the employee, in good faith, reasonably believes constitutes improper quality of patient care; [or]

(b) objects to, or refuses to participate in any activity, policy or practice of the employer or agent that the employee, in good faith, reasonably believes constitutes improper quality of patient care[.]; OR

(C) REPORTS OR THREATENS TO REPORT ANY VIOLATION OF SECTION TWENTY-TWO OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH LAW (PARTICIPATION IN TORTURE OR IMPROPER TREATMENT OF PRISONERS BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS), SUBJECT TO MITIGATION UNDER THAT SECTION.

S 7. Severability. If any provision of this act, or any application of any provision of this act, is held to be invalid, that shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of any other provision of this act or any other application of any provision of this act.

S 8. This act shall take effect on the first of January next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.