

7023

I N   S E N A T E

March 8, 2010

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

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing the division of minority mental health within the office of mental health, and providing for its powers and duties

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

1     Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds that  
2     racial and ethnic minorities in America comprise a substantial and  
3     vibrant segment of the United States population. According to the 2000  
4     United States Census, minorities comprised the majority of the New York  
5     City population. Further, the legislature finds that nearly half of all  
6     New York City households speak a language other than English at home,  
7     and that the "enormous shortage of trained bilingual and bicultural  
8     counselors, therapists, psychiatrists and social workers, make it impos-  
9     sible, for many limited-English-proficient New Yorkers to obtain refer-  
10    rals and timely, appropriate mental health services" (New York State  
11    Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health report, AN EVALUATION OF  
12    THE DELIVERY OF MENTAL HYGIENE SERVICES IN NEW YORK STATE, February  
13    2005). Moreover, the legislature finds that the President's New Freedom  
14    Commission on Mental Health also found that the mental health system in  
15    the United States "has not kept pace with the diverse needs of racial  
16    and ethnic minorities. Misunderstanding and misinterpreting behaviors  
17    have led to tragic consequences, including inappropriately placing  
18    minorities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems." Consequently,  
19    the legislature finds that a division of minority mental health should  
20    be created to address the unique mental health needs of the racial and  
21    ethnic minority citizens of the state.

22    S 2. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the  
23    "minority mental health act".

24    S 3. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new article 8 to  
25    read as follows:

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

LBD06512-01-9

ARTICLE 8  
DIVISION OF MINORITY MENTAL  
HEALTH

SECTION 8.01 DECLARATION OF POLICY.

8.03 DEFINITIONS.

8.05 DIVISION OF MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH.

8.07 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES.

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S 8.01 DECLARATION OF POLICY.

THE STATE OF NEW YORK AND ITS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO CARE FOR AND TREAT ALL OF ITS CITIZENS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL DISABILITIES. TO ADDRESS THE GROWING AND SIGNIFICANT DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS, AND THE AVAILABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY COMPETENT CARE FOR ALL NEW YORKERS, A NEW DIVISION OF MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH IS CREATED. THE DIVISION SHALL FOCUS ON ASSESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS AND STRIVE TO BEST ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE CARE IS PROVIDED TO THESE INDIVIDUALS.

S 8.03 DEFINITIONS.

AS USED IN THIS ARTICLE:

(A) "COUNCIL" MEANS THE MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 8.09 OF THIS ARTICLE.

(B) "DIVISION" MEANS THE DIVISION OF MINORITY HEALTH ESTABLISHED BY SECTION 8.05 OF THIS ARTICLE.

S 8.05 DIVISION OF MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH.

THERE IS HEREBY ESTABLISHED, WITHIN THE OFFICE, A DIVISION OF MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH. THE DIVISION SHALL ASSIST THE OFFICE AND THE COMMISSIONER IN CARRYING OUT THEIR POWERS AND DUTIES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES.

S 8.07 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES.

THE DIVISION SHALL:

(A) BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES ARE CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES;

(B) SERVE AS LIAISON AND ADVOCATE FOR THE OFFICE ON MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS. THIS FUNCTION SHALL INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF STAFF SUPPORT TO THE COUNCIL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF APPROPRIATE PROGRAM LINKAGE WITH RELATED FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

(C) ASSIST PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS AND STATE AGENCIES TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE SUPPLY OF MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL BY PROMOTING MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH CLINICAL TRAINING AND CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT, AND DISSEMINATING MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH CAREER INFORMATION TO HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS; AND

(D) REVIEW THE IMPACT OF PROGRAMS, REGULATIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES ON MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESS.

S 8.09 MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL.

(A) THERE IS HEREBY ESTABLISHED, WITHIN THE DIVISION, A MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL TO CONSIST OF THE COMMISSIONER AND FOURTEEN APPOINTED MEMBERS. THE COMMISSIONER SHALL SERVE AS THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL. THE APPOINTED MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL SHALL HAVE RELEVANT EXPERIENCE RELATED TO THE PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF MINORITY SERVICES AND SHALL BE REFLECTIVE OF THE DIVERSITY OF THE STATE'S POPULATION INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE VARIOUS MINORITY POPULATIONS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. THE MEMBERS SHALL BE APPOINTED AS FOLLOWS:

1 1. FOUR MEMBERS SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR;

2 2. FOUR MEMBERS SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF THE  
3 SENATE;

4 3. FOUR MEMBERS SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY;

5 4. ONE MEMBER SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE SENATE;  
6 AND

7 5. ONE MEMBER SHALL BE APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE ASSEM-  
8 BLY.

9 (B) THE APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL SHALL EACH SERVE A TERM OF  
10 TWO YEARS, BUT SHALL CONTINUE TO SERVE IN OFFICE UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS  
11 ARE APPOINTED. ALL VACANCIES IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL SHALL BE  
12 FILLED FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF THE DATE THE VACANCY  
13 OCCURS. VACANCIES SHALL BE FILLED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE ORIGINAL  
14 APPOINTMENT.

15 (C) THE COUNCIL SHALL MEET AS FREQUENTLY AS ITS BUSINESS MAY REQUIRE,  
16 BUT IN NO CASE SHALL IT MEET LESS THAN FOUR TIMES DURING ANY CALENDAR  
17 YEAR.

18 (D) THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL SHALL RECEIVE NO COMPENSATION FOR THEIR  
19 SERVICES, BUT SHALL BE ALLOWED THEIR ACTUAL AND NECESSARY EXPENSES  
20 INCURRED IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES PURSUANT TO THIS ARTICLE.

21 (E) THE COUNCIL SHALL:

22 1. AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMISSIONER, CONSIDER ANY MATTER RELATING TO  
23 THE PROVISION AND IMPROVEMENT OF MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

24 2. CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC  
25 MINORITIES AND THE AVAILABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS DESIGNED  
26 TO MEET SUCH NEEDS. SUCH STUDY SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO, AN  
27 EXAMINATION OF: RATES OF UNDERUTILIZATION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BY  
28 SPECIFIC RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY GROUPS, THE REASONS CONTRIBUTING TO  
29 SUCH UNDERUTILIZATION PATTERNS, THE AVAILABILITY OF MENTAL HEALTH  
30 SERVICES SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF IDENTIFIED RACIAL  
31 AND ETHNIC MINORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING IDENTIFIED  
32 UNMET NEEDS AND FOR IMPROVING THE AVAILABILITY OF CULTURALLY AND  
33 LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE SERVICES. THE COUNCIL SHALL REPORT ITS FIND-  
34 INGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE COMMISSIONER, THE TEMPO-  
35 RARY PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, THE SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY AND THE CHAIR-  
36 PERSONS OF THE SENATE MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
37 COMMITTEE AND THE ASSEMBLY MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE, WITHIN EIGHTEEN  
38 MONTHS OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ARTICLE.

39 S 4. This act shall take effect on the first of April next succeeding  
40 the date on which it shall have become a law; provided that any appoint-  
41 ments, rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of  
42 this act on its effective date are authorized and directed to be  
43 completed on or before such date.