

6114

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

March 16, 2015

Introduced by M. of A. ORTIZ, RUSSELL, BARRETT, SCHIMEL, CRESPO --
Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. HEVESI -- read once and referred to
the Committee on Veterans' 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 S 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. SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE
22 PEER SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO, PEER
23 COUNSELING FOR MENTAL ILLNESS INCLUDING POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER,
24 ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING, INFORMATION ON ACCESS TO

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

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1 SERVICES, FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES, AND WHERE APPLICABLE, SPECIALIZED
2 SERVICES FOR FEMALE VETERANS.

3 (C) THE COMMISSIONER, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF THE
4 OFFICE OF ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES AND THE STATE DIRECTOR
5 OF THE DIVISION OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS SHALL FOSTER PROGRAMS FOR THE
6 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONS CAPABLE OF PROVIDING THE SERVICES
7 SET FORTH IN THIS SECTION, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, A PROCESS OF
8 ISSUING, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH CONTRACT, CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFIED
9 PEER COUNSELORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING:

10 1. THE OFFICE SHALL ESTABLISH MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR CERTIFIED
11 PEER COUNSELORS IN ALL PHASES OF DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO VETERANS WHO
12 ARE SUFFERING FROM ANY OR A COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING: MENTAL
13 ILLNESS, ALCOHOL ABUSE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, AND/OR CHEMICAL DEPENDENCE THAT
14 SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO, COMPLETION OF APPROVED COURSES OF
15 STUDY OR EQUIVALENT ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING
16 AND/OR ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING; AND

17 2. THE OFFICE SHALL ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING, DIRECTLY OR
18 THROUGH CONTRACT, CREDENTIALS TO CERTIFIED PEER COUNSELORS WHO MEET
19 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS, AND SHALL FURTHER ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO
20 SUSPEND, REVOKE, OR ANNUL SUCH CREDENTIALS FOR GOOD CAUSE.

21 S 2. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
22 have become a law; provided, however, that effective immediately, the
23 addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary
24 for the implementation of this act on its effective date is authorized
25 and directed to be made and completed on or before such effective date.