STATE OF NEW YORK

3981--A

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 31, 2017

Introduced by Sens. SAVINO, CARLUCCI, ORTT, RITCHIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health -- reported favorably from said committee and committed to the Committee on Finance -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to making care and services provided by licensed mental health practitioners eligible for coverage under the Medicaid program

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

Section 1. Legislative intent. Whereas Medicaid covers mental health services in New York state to psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers, Medicaid does not recognize New York state licensed mental health practitioners as providers within the Medicaid program. Mental health practitioners are often the only mental health providers in urban underserved minority communities. A critical result of this lack of providers is that minority communities bear a disproportionate number of burdens of mental health disabilities and inadequately treated mental health disorders. Excluding mental health practitioners from treating Medicaid beneficiaries with untreated mental illness puts such beneficiaries disproportionately at risk for engagement with the criminal justice system. This puts individuals, families and communities at risk of harm. Approximately 26 percent of adults experience a diagnosable behavioral health disorder each year, and researchers have reported 20 percent of adolescents display psychological problems. Behavioral health disorders, ranging from inattention to violence are often a result of those psychological problems.

Mental health practitioners are valuable providers of mental health services in New York state. Unfortunately Medicaid does not recognize their important contribution to the present health care delivery system.

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

LBD01543-05-7

§ 2. Subdivision 2 of section 365-a of the social services law is amended by adding a new paragraph (ff) to read as follows:

(ff) care and services provided by mental health practitioners licensed pursuant to article one hundred sixty-three of the education law.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the ninety-first day after it shall have become a law.