

# STATE OF NEW YORK

3197--A

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

January 27, 2017

Introduced by M. of A. ORTIZ, JENNE, BARRETT, CRESPO, DenDEKKER, OTIS, SKOUFIS, MALLIOTAKIS -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. HEVESI -- read once and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

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 Assembly, 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 § 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. One regional peer support  
22 services program shall be located within the city of New York and one

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

LBD03984-03-7

1 regional peer support services program shall be located in upstate New  
2 York outside of the city of New York or Long Island. Services provided  
3 by the peer support services program shall include, but not be limited  
4 to, peer counseling for mental illness including post-traumatic stress  
5 disorder, alcohol and substance abuse counseling, information on access  
6 to services, family support services, and where applicable, specialized  
7 services for female veterans.

8 (c) The commissioner, in conjunction with the commissioner of the  
9 office of alcoholism and substance abuse services and the state director  
10 of the division of veterans' affairs shall foster programs for the  
11 training and development of persons capable of providing the services  
12 set forth in this section, including, but not limited to, a process of  
13 issuing, either directly or through contract, credentials for certified  
14 peer counselors in accordance with the following:

15 1. The office shall establish minimum qualifications for certified  
16 peer counselors in all phases of delivery of services to veterans who  
17 are suffering from any or a combination of the following: mental  
18 illness, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and/or chemical dependence that  
19 shall include, but not be limited to, completion of approved courses of  
20 study or equivalent on-the-job experience in mental health counseling  
21 and/or alcoholism and substance abuse counseling; and

22 2. The office shall establish procedures for issuing, directly or  
23 through contract, credentials to certified peer counselors who meet  
24 minimum qualifications, and shall further establish procedures to  
25 suspend, revoke, or annul such credentials for good cause.

26 § 2. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall  
27 have become a law; provided, however, that effective immediately, the  
28 addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary  
29 for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized  
30 and directed to be made and completed on or before such effective date.