

STATE OF NEW YORK

6210

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

February 27, 2017

Introduced by M. of A. THIELE, MURRAY, PALUMBO, GALEF -- read once and referred to the Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to the creation of a sober living task force

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 19.04 to read as follows:

3 § 19.04 Sober living task force.

4 1. Definitions. As used in this section:

5 "Sober living residence" shall mean any residence located in New York
6 state where the owner or operator of such residence holds the residence
7 out to the public as an alcohol and drug free living environment for
8 persons recovering from a chemical dependency, where no formal treatment
9 services are provided on-site.

10 2. The sober living task force is hereby created, which pursuant to
11 the provisions of this section, shall establish best practice guidelines
12 for sober living residences that illustrate the most appropriate and
13 effective environment for persons recovering from a chemical dependency.

14 3. The task force shall study and utilize reliable evidence and infor-
15 mation collected from organizations and programs both in New York state
16 and throughout the country to:

17 (a) Document the number of sober homes operating in the state;

18 (b) Issue recommendations and guidelines establishing best practices
19 for sober living residences in order to provide an alcohol and drug free
20 sober living environment, with a focus on least restrictive means of
21 benefiting the person in recovery;

22 (c) Study and issue findings regarding health and safety concerns
23 related to the occupancy and operation of sober living residences for
24 the person in recovery;

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

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1 (d) Study and issue findings regarding the impacts of occupancy and
2 operation of sober living residences on neighborhoods and surrounding
3 areas;

4 (e) Issue recommendations on the feasibility of licensing, regulating,
5 registering or certifying sober living residences in New York state; and

6 (f) Issue recommendations for any other program or policy initiative
7 that the task force deems relevant.

8 4. (a) The members of the task force shall include the commissioner or
9 his or her designee; the commissioner of the office of mental health or
10 his or her designee; the commissioner of the office of temporary and
11 disability assistance or his or her designee; the commissioner of the
12 office of homes and community renewal or his or her designee; two
13 members appointed by the temporary president of the senate; two members
14 appointed by the speaker of the assembly; and two members appointed by
15 the governor. The commissioner shall be designated the chairperson of
16 such task force and shall select a vice-chairperson and a secretary from
17 the designees appointed by the legislature or the governor;

18 (b) The members of the task force shall receive no compensation for
19 their services but shall be reimbursed for expenses actually and neces-
20 sarily incurred in the performance of their duties;

21 (c) No civil action shall be brought in any court against any member
22 of the sober living task force for any act or omission necessary to the
23 discharge of his or her duties as a member of the task force, except as
24 provided herein. Such member may be liable for damages in any such
25 action if he or she failed to act in good faith and exercise reasonable
26 care. Any information obtained by a member of the task force while
27 carrying out his or her duties as prescribed in subdivision three of
28 this section shall only be utilized in their capacity as a member of the
29 task force.

30 5. No later than one year after the effective date of this section,
31 the task force shall provide a report containing the results of the
32 study, including evidence used as a basis in making such report, and its
33 recommendations, if any, together with drafts of legislation necessary
34 to carry out its recommendations by filing said report, documentation,
35 and draft legislation, with the governor, the temporary president of the
36 senate, the minority leader of the senate, the speaker of the assembly,
37 and the minority leader of the assembly. The task force shall also make
38 the report, documentation, and draft legislation public by posting a
39 copy on the website maintained by the office.

40 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.