

# STATE OF NEW YORK

8888--A

## IN ASSEMBLY

January 5, 2018

Introduced by M. of A. GUNTHER -- read once and referred to the Committee on Mental Health -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to telepsychiatry

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

1 Section 1. Subdivision (b) of section 7.41 of the mental hygiene law  
2 is amended by adding a new paragraph 10 to read as follows:

3 (10) Telepsychiatry. Programs which offer homebound or socially  
4 isolated geriatric patients with the use of two-way real-time interac-  
5 tive audio and video equipment access to provide and support mental  
6 health services at a distance.

7 § 2. Subdivision (c) of section 7.41 of the mental hygiene law is  
8 relettered subdivision (d) and a new subdivision (c) is added to read as  
9 follows:

10 (c) The commissioner, in consultation with the state office for the  
11 aging and the department of health, shall conduct a study to consider  
12 the incidence of geriatric social isolation, mental health consequences,  
13 and their treatment and prevention across the state. The study shall  
14 include, but not be limited to an assessment of at-risk populations, the  
15 mental health impacts of social isolation, life stages that may put a  
16 person at a higher risk of social isolation, and community supports that  
17 may be developed to help address these concerns. The study shall provide  
18 recommendations on effective identification of social isolation, includ-  
19 ing specific recommendations for health care practitioners, intervention  
20 techniques, and the development of telehealth, telemedicine, and tele-  
21 psychiatry programs to meet the needs of homebound and socially isolated  
22 geriatric patients who may be suffering from depression, mental illness,  
23 or other health consequences. The study shall also consider the develop-  
24 ment of public awareness information materials that the office may  
25 distribute to raise awareness of social isolation in older adults and  
26 the health consequences. The commissioner shall deliver the report to  
27 the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of  
28 the assembly no later than October first, two thousand nineteen.

29 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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

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