

STATE OF NEW YORK

4649

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 23, 2017

Introduced by Sen. SANDERS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Judiciary

AN ACT to amend the civil practice law and rules, in relation to establishing that domestic violence advocates may not disclose any communication made by a client to the advocate except in certain circumstances

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

1 Section 1. Section 4510 of the civil practice law and rules, as added
2 by chapter 432 of the laws of 1993 and subdivision (d) as amended by
3 section 49 of part A-1 of chapter 56 of the laws of 2010, is amended to
4 read as follows:

5 § 4510. Rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate. (a)
6 Definitions. When used in this section, the following terms shall have
7 the following meanings:

8 1. "Rape crisis program" means any office, institution or center which
9 has been approved pursuant to subdivision fifteen of section two hundred
10 six of the public health law, offering counseling and assistance to
11 clients concerning sexual offenses, sexual abuses or incest.

12 2. "Rape crisis counselor" means any person who has been certified by
13 an approved rape crisis program as having satisfied the training stand-
14 ards specified in subdivision fifteen of section two hundred six of the
15 public health law, and who, regardless of compensation, is acting under
16 the direction and supervision of an approved rape crisis program.

17 3. "Client" means (i) any person who is seeking or receiving the
18 services of a rape crisis counselor for the purpose of securing coun-
19 seling or assistance concerning any sexual offenses, sexual abuse,
20 incest or attempts to commit sexual offenses, sexual abuse, or incest,
21 as defined in the penal law; or

22 (ii) any person who is seeking or receiving assistance from a domestic
23 violence advocate for the purpose of securing services concerning any

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

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1 acts of domestic violence or any other abuse, human trafficking, or
2 stalking, as defined in the penal law, whether or not the victim seeks
3 or receives services within the criminal justice system.

4 4. "Domestic violence program" means any office, institution, center
5 or provider offering services to victims of domestic violence or any
6 other abuse, human trafficking, or stalking including, but not limited
7 to, shelter, counseling, a crisis line, emergency and follow-up inter-
8 vention, information, referral services, and medical, legal, and social
9 services advocacy.

10 5. "Domestic violence advocate" means an employee or volunteer of a
11 domestic violence program. "Domestic violence advocate" shall not
12 include a person employed by, or under the direct supervision of, a law
13 enforcement agency, the department of law, or any governmental agency or
14 department while such employee or volunteer is performing duties on
15 behalf of or acting in the course of employment of such governmental
16 agency or department.

17 (b) Confidential information privileged. A rape crisis counselor or
18 domestic violence advocate shall not be required to disclose a communi-
19 cation made by his or her client to him or her, or advice given thereon,
20 in the course of his or her services nor shall any clerk, stenographer
21 or other person working for the same program as the rape crisis counse-
22 lor or domestic violence advocate or for the rape crisis counselor or
23 domestic violence advocate be allowed to disclose any such communication
24 or advice given thereon nor shall any records made in the course of the
25 services given to the client or recording of any communications made by
26 or to a client be required to be disclosed, nor shall the client be
27 compelled to disclose such communication or records, except:

28 1. that a rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate may
29 disclose such otherwise confidential communication to the extent author-
30 ized by the client;

31 2. that a rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate shall
32 not be required to treat as confidential a communication by a client
33 which reveals the intent to commit a crime or harmful act;

34 3. in a case in which the client waives the privilege by instituting
35 charges against the rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate
36 or the rape crisis program or domestic violence program and such action
37 or proceeding involves confidential communications between the client
38 and the rape crisis counselor or domestic violence advocate.

39 (c) Who may waive the privilege. The privilege may only be waived by
40 the client, the personal representative of a deceased client, or, in the
41 case of a client who has been adjudicated incompetent or for whom a
42 conservator has been appointed, the committee or conservator.

43 (d) Limitation on waiver. A client who, for the purposes of obtaining
44 compensation under article twenty-two of the executive law or insurance
45 benefits, authorizes the disclosure of any privileged communication to
46 an employee of the office of victim services or an insurance represen-
47 tative shall not be deemed to have waived the privilege created by this
48 section.

49 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.