

# STATE OF NEW YORK

7977

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

## IN ASSEMBLY

June 4, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. BLANKENBUSH -- read once and referred to the  
Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to creating the  
rural suicide prevention council

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

1 Section 1. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new section  
2 7.48 to read as follows:

3 § 7.48 Rural suicide prevention council.

4 (a) There shall be established by the office, a council on rural  
5 suicide prevention, to consist of twelve members:

6 1. two members shall be appointed by the commissioner;

7 2. two members shall be appointed by the commissioner of health;

8 3. two members shall be appointed by the commissioner of agriculture  
9 and markets;

10 4. two members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly;

11 5. two members shall be appointed by the temporary president of the  
12 senate;

13 6. one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assem-  
14 bly; and

15 7. one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate.

16 (b) The commissioner shall designate the chair of the council from  
17 among such twelve members. Vacancies in the membership of such council  
18 shall be filled by the appropriate appointing authority. The membership  
19 of the council may include, but not be limited to, representatives of  
20 the state conference of local mental hygiene directors, psychiatric and  
21 psychological practitioners, substance use and mental health profes-  
22 sionals with experience in the delivery of treatment and prevention  
23 services in rural areas, persons with expertise in public health issues,  
24 any group, association, or university with expertise in financial or  
25 economic analysis, business planning, and providing supports for farmers

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

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1 and other individuals residing in rural areas, and others whose profes-  
2 sional expertise includes rural affairs related to the duties of the  
3 council.

4 (c) The council shall focus its efforts and work on "rural areas" as  
5 such term is defined in section four hundred eighty-one of the executive  
6 law.

7 (d) Duties of the council shall include, but not be limited to:

8 1. examining the causes and conditions related to rural suicides or  
9 suicide attempts and the prevalence of suicide among certain professions  
10 including, but not limited to, farmers and agricultural workers;

11 2. identifying policies, practices, resources, services, and potential  
12 legislation that may result in the reduction of rural suicide and rural  
13 suicide attempts;

14 3. offering recommendations on policies and procedures to improve the  
15 coordination of services and resources among agencies involved in the  
16 delivery of mental health, substance use, or suicide prevention  
17 services; and

18 4. making recommendations on funding initiatives to increase access to  
19 mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention services in rural  
20 areas and facilitate the use of innovative intervention strategies  
21 specific to individuals residing in rural areas.

22 (e) The rural suicide prevention council shall meet not less than two  
23 times annually, or as deemed necessary by the chair of the council or  
24 the commissioner.

25 (f) The members of the rural suicide prevention council shall receive  
26 no compensation for their services, but shall be allowed their actual  
27 and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

28 (g) The council shall prepare and submit a report no later than Janu-  
29 ary first, two thousand twenty-three, and biennially thereafter, to the  
30 governor and the legislature that recommends policies, legislation, and  
31 funding needed to implement any of the findings in the council's report.

32 § 2. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall  
33 have become a law.