

STATE OF NEW YORK

3475

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 29, 2021

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to the protection of mental health practitioners

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 9.42 to read as follows:

3 § 9.42 Efforts by mental health practitioners to reduce or eliminate
4 risks of harm.

5 (a) For purposes of this section, the term "mental health practition-
6 er" shall include any New York state licensed mental health practition-
7 er, including physicians, psychologists, registered psychiatric nurses
8 and nurse practitioners, and licensed clinical social workers.

9 (b) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, when a person to
10 whom a mental health practitioner is currently providing treatment
11 directly communicates a threat of serious, imminent harm to self or
12 against a readily identifiable person or persons, and the threat
13 includes both a serious intent to act and the ability to carry out the
14 threat, the mental health practitioner may make timely and reasonable
15 efforts to reduce or eliminate the risk of harm. For purposes of this
16 section, reasonable efforts may include, but are not limited to: modify-
17 ing aspects of the treatment in order to reduce or eliminate the risk of
18 harm; initiating procedures for hospitalization; notifying the intended
19 victim or victims; or notifying law enforcement officials.

20 (c) Whenever a mental health practitioner is required to make timely
21 and reasonable efforts pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section, he
22 or she shall also comply with the provisions of section 9.46 of this
23 article.

24 (d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a mental
25 health practitioner to take any action which, in the exercise of reason-

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

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1 able professional judgment, would endanger such mental health practi-
2 tioner or increase the danger to a potential victim or victims.

3 (e) The decision of a mental health practitioner to disclose or not to
4 disclose the patient's or client's confidential treatment information to
5 others in accordance with this section, when made reasonably and in good
6 faith, shall not be the basis for any civil or criminal liability of
7 such mental health practitioner, including liability pursuant to unpro-
8 fessional conduct as described in the rules of the board of regents of
9 New York state, part 29.

10 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.