STATE OF NEW YORK

6954

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 20, 2021

Introduced by Sens. SERINO, ORTT -- 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 telepsychiatry

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

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

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

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

(c) The commissioner, in consultation with the state office for the aging and the department of health, shall conduct a study to consider the incidence of geriatric social isolation, mental health consequences, and their treatment and prevention across the state. The study shall include, but not be limited to an assessment of at-risk populations, the mental health impacts of social isolation, life stages that may put a person at a higher risk of social isolation, and community supports that may be developed to help address these concerns. The study shall provide recommendations on effective identification of social isolation, including specific recommendations for health care practitioners, intervention techniques, and the development of telehealth, telemedicine, and telepsychiatry programs to meet the needs of homebound and socially isolated geriatric patients who may be suffering from depression, mental illness, or other health consequences. The study shall also consider the development of public awareness information materials that the office may distribute to raise awareness of social isolation in older adults and the health consequences. The commissioner shall deliver the report to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly no later than October first, two thousand twenty-two.

§ 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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

LBD07977-01-1