STATE OF NEW YORK

6955

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 20, 2021

Introduced by Sens. SERINO, JORDAN -- 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 "First Responder Peer Support Program Act"

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

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "First Responder Peer Support Program Act".

§ 2. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new section 7.49 to read as follows:

§ 7.49 First responder peer support program.

(a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. "The program" shall mean the "first responder peer support program" established by this section.

2. "Eligible entities" shall mean an entity which submits to the commissioner an application, in a form prescribed by the commissioner, containing such information and assurances as the commissioner may require to provide initial and continued training in mental illness, including but not limited to suicide prevention, for first responder peer volunteers.

(b) The commissioner shall, subject to appropriation, establish a grant program to be known as the "first responder peer support program". The program shall provide grants, with appropriations therefor, to eligible entities for the purpose of establishing peer-to-peer mental health programs for first responders.

(c) The commissioner shall establish standards applicable to the program. Such standards shall include, but not be limited to, initial and continued training for first responder peer volunteers, administrative staffing needs, and best practices for addressing the needs of each first responder served.

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

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(d) The commissioner shall not require the recipient of any grant under this section to maintain records on first responders seeking support or report any personal identifying information directly or indirectly to the commissioner.

§ 3. This act shall take effect immediately.