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 Assembly, do enact as follows:

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

§ 7.48 Rural suicide prevention council.

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

1. two members shall be appointed by the commissioner;

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

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

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

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

6. one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assembly; and

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

(b) The commissioner shall designate the chair of the council from among such twelve members. Vacancies in the membership of such council shall be filled by the appropriate appointing authority. The membership of the council may include, but not be limited to, representatives of the state conference of local mental hygiene directors, psychiatric and psychological practitioners, substance use and mental health professionals with experience in the delivery of treatment and prevention services in rural areas, persons with expertise in public health issues, any group, association, or university with expertise in financial or 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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and other individuals residing in rural areas, and others whose professional expertise includes rural affairs related to the duties of the council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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