

# STATE OF NEW YORK

9332

## IN ASSEMBLY

February 23, 2022

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

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to providing mental telehealth services to children, adolescents, and young adults

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

1 Section 1. Legislative findings and intent. The Legislature affirms  
2 the finding of the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Protecting Youth  
3 Mental Health that the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered young  
4 peoples' experiences at home, at school, and in the community and has  
5 exacerbated the unprecedented stresses young people face. The Legisla-  
6 ture also finds that there exists an obligation to act to assist our  
7 children and their families in this moment of need. The Legislature  
8 intends, then, to provide actionable solutions for young people and  
9 their families in support of the mental health of children, adolescents,  
10 and young adults.

11 § 2. Section 5.05 of the mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new  
12 subdivision (f) to read as follows:

13 (f) The commissioners of the office of mental health and the office of  
14 addiction services and supports shall establish a youth mental tele-  
15 health services program to facilitate access to mental health services,  
16 including substance use disorder services, for youth to respond to iden-  
17 tified mental health needs, including those needs that may have resulted  
18 from the COVID-19 pandemic, and for youth or families that may not have  
19 access to mental health professionals in-person. Such program shall  
20 provide up to five mental telehealth services annually at no cost to the  
21 individual, for acute crisis response, mental health assessment, or  
22 initiation of care to reduce barriers and facilitate engagement in long-  
23 term care.

24 As soon as practicable, but no later than August first, two thousand  
25 twenty-two, the offices shall enter into an agreement with a vendor to  
26 create, or use an existing, website or web-based application, as a  
27 portal available to youth and providers to facilitate the program. Such  
28 vendor shall be determined through a competitive bidding process.

29 § 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after  
30 it shall have become a law.

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

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