

# STATE OF NEW YORK

4423

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

February 4, 2021

Introduced by Sens. PARKER, GALLIVAN, SEPULVEDA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing a peer support program for veterans

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 7.42 to read as follows:

3 § 7.42 Peer support program for veterans.

4 (a) For the purpose of this section the term "peer support services"  
5 shall mean any service designated by the office used in the treatment  
6 and recovery of mental illness, alcohol abuse, substance abuse, and/or  
7 chemical dependence that is delivered by a certified peer counselor or a  
8 veteran recognized pursuant to the provisions of this section; and the  
9 term "certified or recognized veteran peer counselor" shall mean an  
10 individual who has served in the active military or naval service of the  
11 United States and has been released from such service otherwise than by  
12 dishonorable discharge as documented by his or her discharge papers or  
13 who has been furloughed to the reserve components of the armed forces of  
14 the United States who has training, credentials or experience recognized  
15 by the office.

16 (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the  
17 commissioner, in conjunction with the commissioner of addiction services  
18 and supports, and the state director of the division of veterans'  
19 affairs shall develop and establish regional or county based peer  
20 support services programs for women veterans. Services provided by the  
21 recognized or certified woman veteran peer support services program  
22 shall include, but not be limited to, peer counseling techniques for  
23 mental illness including post-traumatic stress disorder, alcohol and

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

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1 substance abuse counseling, family support services, domestic violence,  
2 mental health, child care, physical health and legal issues.

3 (c) The commissioner, in conjunction with the commissioner of the  
4 office of addiction services and supports and the state director of the  
5 division of veterans' affairs shall foster programs for the training and  
6 development of persons capable of providing the services set forth in  
7 this section, including, but not limited to, a process of issuing,  
8 either directly or through contract, credentials for recognized or  
9 certified veteran peer counselors in accordance with the following:

10 1. The office shall establish minimum qualifications for recognized or  
11 certified veteran peer counselors in all phases of delivery of services  
12 to veterans who are evaluated and certified or recognized by the office  
13 on factors including, but not be limited to, completion of approved  
14 courses of study or equivalent on-the-job experience in mental health  
15 counseling and/or alcoholism and substance abuse counseling or other  
16 credentials established or recognized by the office; and

17 2. The office shall establish procedures for issuing, directly or  
18 through contract, credentials to certified peer counselors who meet  
19 minimum qualifications, and shall further establish procedures to  
20 suspend, revoke, or annul such credentials for good cause.

21 § 2. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a  
22 law. Effective immediately the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any  
23 rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its  
24 effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such  
25 date.