

# STATE OF NEW YORK

8219

## IN SENATE

February 2, 2022

Introduced by Sen. HARCKHAM -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to requiring an annual report for the independent substance use disorder and mental health ombudsman program

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

1 Section 1. Section 33.27 of the mental hygiene law, as added by  
2 section 1 of part FF of chapter 57 of the laws of 2018, is amended to  
3 read as follows:

4 § 33.27 Independent substance use disorder and mental health ombudsman.

5 (a) There is hereby established the office of the independent  
6 substance use disorder and mental health ombudsman program that will be  
7 operated or selected by the office of [~~alcoholism and substance abuse~~  
8 addiction services and supports], in consultation with the office of  
9 mental health for the purpose of assisting individuals with a substance  
10 use disorder and/or mental illness to ensure that they receive appropri-  
11 ate health insurance coverage.

12 (b) Such ombudsman will identify, investigate, refer and resolve  
13 complaints that are made by, or on behalf of, consumers relative to  
14 health insurance coverage and access to initial and continuing substance  
15 use disorder care and mental health care; accept, investigate, refer and  
16 help to resolve complaints that are made by treatment providers relative  
17 to health insurance coverage of and reimbursement for initial or contin-  
18 uing substance use disorder and mental health care; accept, investigate,  
19 refer and help to resolve complaints that are made by or on behalf of  
20 consumers or by providers relative to network adequacy for access to and  
21 continuing substance use disorder and mental health care. By December  
22 thirty-first annually, the ombudsman must submit an annual report summa-  
23 rizing the work of the program and make recommendations to address  
24 systemic issues identified during the previous year. Such annual report  
25 shall be submitted to the governor, the temporary president of the

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

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1 senate, the speaker of the assembly and the relevant legislative commit-  
2 tee chairs.

3 (c) Notwithstanding sections one hundred twelve and one hundred  
4 sixty-three of the state finance law and section one hundred forty-two  
5 of the economic development law, or any other inconsistent provision of  
6 law, funds available for expenditure pursuant to this section for the  
7 establishment of an ombudsman for substance use disorder and mental  
8 health insurance coverage, may be allocated and distributed by the  
9 commissioner of the office of [~~alcoholism and substance abuse~~] addiction  
10 services and supports, subject to the approval of the director of the  
11 budget, without a competitive bid or request for proposal process for  
12 the establishment of an ombudsman for substance use disorder and mental  
13 health insurance coverage. Provided, however, that such allocation or  
14 distribution must be based on objective criteria and an allocation meth-  
15 odology that is approved by the director of the budget.

16 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.