# STATE OF NEW YORK

7552--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

# IN ASSEMBLY

May 25, 2023

Introduced by M. of A. BURDICK, EACHUS, SHIMSKY, BEEPHAN, BENDETT, MCGOWAN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Mental Health -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

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 7.51 to read as follows:

**§ 7.51 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 or county first responder peer program 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, helping individuals gain a better understanding about the effects of trauma, repetitive exposure, signs and symptoms of trauma, triggers of a traumatic event, coping mechanisms, suicide prevention, as well as available tools, resources, and local mental health services for first responder peer volunteers, volunteer and paid individuals who are trained to respond to emergency situations and provide immediate assistance and care to those in need. This would include individuals who work as firefighters, police officers, 9-1-1 operators, emergency dispatchers and emergency medical services personnel.**

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

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(b) The commissioner, in consultation with the commissioner of the department of health, the office of fire prevention and control, the municipal police training council, and the superintendent of state police, shall, subject to appropriation, establish a statewide 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, including, but not limited to, a warm handoff to mental health services for individuals identified as being in duress.

(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, a first responder's employer, or a first responder's organization.

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