

STATE OF NEW YORK

8434

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

May 16, 2025

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 establishing the rural suicide prevention council; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

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 7.49 to read as follows:

3 § 7.49 Rural suicide prevention council.

4 (a) There shall be established by the office, a council on rural
5 suicide prevention. Members of the council shall include the commission-
6 er or the commissioner's designee, the commissioner of health or the
7 commissioner's designee, and the commissioner of agriculture and markets
8 or the commissioner's designee. There shall be twelve additional members
9 of the council including four members appointed by the governor; three
10 members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly; three members
11 shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate; one member
12 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assembly; and one
13 member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate.

14 (b) The commissioner shall designate the chair from appointed council
15 members. Vacancies in the membership of such council shall be filled by
16 the appropriate appointing authority.

17 (c) The membership of the council may include, but not be limited to,
18 representatives of the state conference of local mental hygiene direc-
19 tors; mental health professionals and practitioners with experience in
20 the delivery of mental health treatment or suicide prevention services
21 in rural areas; persons with expertise in research of public health
22 issues in rural areas; any group, association, or university with exper-
23 tise in financial or economic analysis, business planning, and providing
24 supports for farmers and other individuals residing in a rural area;

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

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1 certified peers; rural community members with lived experience who have
2 been or are currently receiving mental health services or supports; and
3 others whose professional expertise includes rural affairs related to
4 the duties of the council. For the purposes of this section the term
5 rural areas shall have the same meaning as it is defined in section four
6 hundred eighty-one of the executive law.

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

8 (1) identifying barriers to mental health and substance use treatment
9 and prevention services, as well as the causes and conditions related to
10 death by suicide or suicide attempts in rural parts of the state;

11 (2) determine if there is sufficient capacity for peer supports and
12 mental health crisis services;

13 (3) assess the use of the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline in rural
14 areas of the state and identify strategies to increase utilization;

15 (4) identifying vulnerable populations in rural areas and the preva-
16 lence of suicide among such populations including, but not limited to,
17 farmers and agricultural workers;

18 (5) identifying policies, practices, resources, services, and poten-
19 tial legislation that aim to reduce death by suicide and suicide
20 attempts and acknowledge the demographic and cultural differences in
21 rural communities;

22 (6) offering recommendations on policies and procedures to improve the
23 coordination of services and resources among agencies involved in the
24 delivery of mental health, substance use, or suicide prevention
25 services; and

26 (7) making recommendations on funding initiatives to increase access
27 to mental health, substance use, and suicide prevention services in
28 rural areas and facilitate the use of innovative intervention strategies
29 specific to individuals residing in rural areas.

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

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

36 The council shall provide a preliminary report to the governor and the
37 legislature of its findings, conclusions, recommendations and activities
38 already undertaken by the council, not later than nine months after the
39 effective date of this section, and a final report of its findings,
40 conclusions, recommendations and activities already undertaken by the
41 council, not later than eighteen months after the effective date of this
42 section and shall submit with its reports legislative proposals as it
43 deems necessary to implement its recommendations.

44 § 2. This act shall take effect on the sixtieth day after it shall
45 have become a law and shall expire 2 years after such effective date
46 when upon such date the provisions of this act shall be deemed repealed.