

STATE OF NEW YORK

4916

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 14, 2025

Introduced by Sen. SCARCELLA-SPANTON -- read twice and ordered printed,
and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to the development of
comprehensive autism assessment centers

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

1 Section 1. Subdivision 1 of section 2801 of the public health law, as
2 amended by section 2 of part E of chapter 57 of the laws of 2023, is
3 amended to read as follows:
4 1. "Hospital" means a facility or institution engaged principally in
5 providing services by or under the supervision of a physician or, in the
6 case of a dental clinic or dental dispensary, of a dentist, or, in the
7 case of a midwifery birth center, of a midwife, for the prevention,
8 diagnosis or treatment of human disease, pain, injury, deformity or
9 physical condition, including, but not limited to, a general hospital,
10 public health center, diagnostic center, treatment center, a rural emer-
11 gency hospital under 42 USC 1395x(kkk), or successor provisions, dental
12 clinic, dental dispensary, rehabilitation center other than a facility
13 used solely for vocational rehabilitation, nursing home, tuberculosis
14 hospital, chronic disease hospital, maternity hospital, midwifery birth
15 center, lying-in-asylum, out-patient department, out-patient lodge,
16 dispensary, comprehensive autism assessment center, and a laboratory or
17 central service facility serving one or more such institutions, but the
18 term hospital shall not include an institution, sanitarium or other
19 facility engaged principally in providing services for the prevention,
20 diagnosis or treatment of mental disability and which is subject to the
21 powers of visitation, examination, inspection and investigation of the
22 department of mental hygiene except for those distinct parts of such a
23 facility which provide hospital service. The provisions of this article
24 shall not apply to a facility or institution engaged principally in
25 providing services by or under the supervision of the bona fide members

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

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1 and adherents of a recognized religious organization whose teachings
2 include reliance on spiritual means through prayer alone for healing in
3 the practice of the religion of such organization and where services are
4 provided in accordance with those teachings. No provision of this arti-
5 cle or any other provision of law shall be construed to: (a) limit the
6 volume of mental health, substance use disorder services or develop-
7 mental disability services that can be provided by a provider of primary
8 care services licensed under this article and authorized to provide
9 integrated services in accordance with regulations issued by the commis-
10 sioner in consultation with the commissioner of the office of mental
11 health, the commissioner of the office of [~~alcoholism and substance~~
12 ~~abuse services~~] addiction services and supports and the commissioner of
13 the office for people with developmental disabilities, including regu-
14 lations issued pursuant to subdivision seven of section three hundred
15 sixty-five-1 of the social services law or part L of chapter fifty-six
16 of the laws of two thousand twelve; (b) require a provider licensed
17 pursuant to article thirty-one of the mental hygiene law or certified
18 pursuant to article sixteen or article thirty-two of the mental hygiene
19 law to obtain an operating certificate from the department if such
20 provider has been authorized to provide integrated services in accord-
21 ance with regulations issued by the commissioner in consultation with
22 the commissioner of the office of mental health, the commissioner of the
23 office of [~~alcoholism and substance abuse services~~] addiction services
24 and supports and the commissioner of the office for people with develop-
25 mental disabilities, including regulations issued pursuant to subdivi-
26 sion seven of section three hundred sixty-five-1 of the social services
27 law or part L of chapter fifty-six of the laws of two thousand twelve.

28 § 2. Section 2801 of the public health law is amended by adding a new
29 subdivision 15 to read as follows:

30 15. "Comprehensive autism assessment center" means a comprehensive
31 autism assessment center under section twenty-eight hundred thirty-two
32 of this article.

33 § 3. The public health law is amended by adding a new section 2832 to
34 read as follows:

35 § 2832. Comprehensive autism assessment centers. 1. Definitions. For
36 the purposes of this section, unless the context clearly requires other-
37 wise:

38 (a) "Autism spectrum disorder" means any of a group of neurodevelop-
39 mental disorders including: autism; pervasive developmental disorder -
40 not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS); Rett's syndrome; Asperger's disorder;
41 and childhood disintegrative disorder. Autism spectrum disorders may
42 include characteristics such as language disturbance, social disturb-
43 ance, and restrictive and repetitive patterns of play with a rigid
44 adherence to sameness. Additional co-occurring impairments in those
45 severely affected may include sensory problems such as auditory hyper-
46 sensitivity, temperature regulation issues, seizure disorders, abnormal
47 pain threshold, gastrointestinal problems, and psychiatric conditions
48 such as obsessive compulsive disorder, depression and anxiety.

49 (b) "Comprehensive autism assessment center" or "center" means a
50 center designated by the commissioner under this section.

51 2. Comprehensive autism assessment centers established. (a) The
52 commissioner shall facilitate the development and establishment of, and
53 designate, four comprehensive centers for the assessment of children
54 primarily between the ages of five and eighteen diagnosed with autism
55 spectrum disorders and development of appropriate short-term inter-
56 ventions and individual treatment plans which are designed to manage and

1 improve functioning. The commissioner shall establish procedures and
2 criteria for the designation of such centers consistent with this
3 section.

4 (b) The centers shall utilize an array of disciplines which may
5 include but not be limited to: physical, medical and psychiatric; neuro-
6 behavioral; nutrition; gastroenterology; motor and fitness; sleep analy-
7 sis; communication and social; and psycho-educational. Services provided
8 by the centers may include but not be limited to the following compo-
9 nents:

10 (i) Intensive assessment services, including integrated, interdis-
11 ciplinary analysis of a resident's functional characteristics and disabil-
12 ities. Utilizing a comprehensive framework such as international classi-
13 fication of functioning disability and health-children and youth
14 (ICF-CY)(World Health Organization 2007), centers shall comprehensively
15 assess the range of functioning and development of children with autism
16 spectrum disorders including but not limited to: communication; sociali-
17 zation; general, behavioral, neurological, psychiatric, body and medical
18 functioning; child-environmental interactions; activity limitations; and
19 participation restrictions.

20 (ii) Development of appropriate short-term interventions and individ-
21 ual treatment plans which are designed to manage and improve functioning
22 for the children assessed by the center.

23 (iii) Residential services that provide short-term residential support
24 for children admitted to the center who require a short stay for the
25 period in which the assessment is conducted. These services are intended
26 to provide support for the assessment activities and are not to be long-
27 term nor are they to be provided in a general hospital or nursing home
28 as defined in this article nor in the capacity of permanent housing.

29 (iv) Educational services approved by the state education department.
30 Such education services provided shall be consistent with the child's
31 home school district's curriculum and the educational needs of the
32 child, and appropriate to the child's short-term stay in the center. The
33 center shall consult with the child's home school district to develop an
34 appropriate educational plan.

35 (v) Medical clinical services. Each center shall have the capacity
36 on-site or readily accessible to provide for the resident's medical and
37 clinical needs. These services shall be available to provide medical
38 services to address general, chronic and ongoing medical conditions.

39 3. Grants for development of comprehensive autism assessment centers.
40 Within amounts appropriated, the commissioner shall provide funding,
41 pursuant to a request for proposals, to aid in the development of
42 comprehensive autism assessment centers.

43 4. Reporting/research requirements. (a) Each recipient of funding
44 pursuant to this section shall provide the following information and
45 such other information as the department may reasonably require with
46 respect to the center and to the department, annually as required by the
47 department:

48 (i) The annual number of children receiving services pursuant to this
49 section;

50 (ii) The average length of stay of those children who receive services
51 at the center; and

52 (iii) The type of programs and interventions that children received.

53 (b) The department shall annually compile such reports on the centers'
54 activities and findings and annually report on the centers to the gover-
55 nor and legislature.

1 (c) The commissioner shall assist in and encourage the development of
2 research collaborations between the centers and relevant state agency
3 facilities, colleges and universities and, where appropriate, private
4 research entities.

5 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately.