STATE OF NEW YORK

5406

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 21, 2025

Introduced by Sens. HARCKHAM, GALLIVAN, LANZA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Disabilities

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to requiring all state and private agencies with mandatory reporters of incidents involving vulnerable people to retrain all staff on reporting to a 9-1-1 operator and the county district attorney's office

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

Section 1. Section 491 of the social services law, as added by section 1 of part B of chapter 501 of the laws of 2012, paragraph (d) of subdivision 1 as added by chapter 391 of the laws of 2023, subdivision 4 as amended by chapter 126 of the laws of 2014 and subdivision 5 as added by chapter 422 of the laws of 2017, is amended to read as follows:

§ 491. Duty to report incidents. 1. (a) Mandated reporters shall report allegations of reportable incidents to **a 9-1-1 operator, the county district attorney's office and** the vulnerable persons' central register as established by section four hundred ninety-two of this article and in accordance with the requirements set forth therein.

(b) Allegations of reportable incidents shall be reported immediately to **a 9-1-1 operator, the county district attorney's office and** the vulnerable persons' central register upon discovery. For purposes of this article, "discovery" occurs when the mandated reporter witnesses a suspected reportable incident or when another person, including the vulnerable person, comes before the mandated reporter in the mandated reporter's professional or official capacity and provides the mandated reporter with reasonable cause to suspect that the vulnerable person has been subjected to a reportable incident. A report to the register shall include the name, title and contact information of every person known to the mandated reporter to have the same information as the mandated reporter concerning the reportable incident. [~~Nothing in this subdivi-~~

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

LBD01854-01-5

~~sion shall be construed to prohibit a mandated reporter from contacting or reporting to law enforcement or emergency services before or after reporting to the vulnerable persons' central register.~~]

(c) The substance or content of any psychological, psychiatric, therapeutic, clinical or medical reports, evaluations or like materials or information pertaining to the treatment of a patient or client of a mandatory reporter who reports a reportable incident of such patient or client pursuant to this article, must be provided by such mandatory reporter upon request of the justice center for the protection of people with special needs if such records are essential for a full investigation of such allegation, notwithstanding any applicable privilege which would otherwise bar the disclosure of such materials and records pursuant to article forty-five of the civil practice law and rules or other provision of law except applicable federal law governing the disclosure of patient and related medical records.

(d) Every mandated reporter is required to make a report to the register as outlined in paragraph (b) of this subdivision unless (i) the reporter has actual knowledge that the reportable incident has been reported to the register; and (ii) that the reporter has been named as a person with knowledge of the incident in such prior report.

2. Any person or official required to report allegations of reportable incidents pursuant to this section may take or cause to be taken color photographs of visible trauma and the face of the vulnerable person named in the report and upon the consent of a person authorized to consent to medical care for the vulnerable person, shall, if medically indicated, cause to be performed a radiological examination of the vulnerable person. Any photographs or radiological examinations taken shall be provided to the justice center for use only for the purposes of an investigation of a reportable incident.

3. (a) Any human services professional required by this article to report a case of suspected abuse or neglect to **a 9-1-1 operator, the county district attorney's office and** the vulnerable persons' central register who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a class [~~A misdemeanor~~] **E felony**.

(b) A mandated reporter who knowingly and willfully fails to report a case of suspected abuse or neglect to **a 9-1-1 operator, the county district attorney's office and** the vulnerable persons' central register may be subject to termination, subject to any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Any person or official required by this article to report a case of suspected abuse or neglect to **a 9-1-1 operator, the county district attorney's office and** the vulnerable persons' central register who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure.

4. A medical or other public or private institution, state agency, school, facility or provider agency or its vendors or contractors shall not take any retaliatory personnel action, as such term is defined in paragraph (e) of subdivision one of section seven hundred forty of the labor law, against an employee or agent or vendor or contractor because such employee or agent or vendor or contractor believes that [~~he or she~~] **such person** has reasonable cause to suspect that a vulnerable person has been subjected to a reportable incident and that employee or agent or vendor or contractor therefore makes a report in accordance with this section and/or cooperated with the investigation of a reportable incident. A court of competent jurisdiction may grant injunctive relief to any person determined to have been subjected to such retaliation.

5. State oversight agencies shall ensure that all facilities or provider agencies operated, licensed, or certified by such state oversight agencies have policies and procedures in place to identify and report possible crimes against a service recipient by a custodian. State oversight agencies shall provide guidance to facilities or provider agencies operated, licensed, or certified by such state oversight agencies that do not already have policies and procedures for the identification and reporting of possible crimes.

6. All state and private agencies with mandatory reporters shall retrain all staff on reporting to a 9-1-1 operator and the county district attorney's office and all state and private websites, training manuals, informational brochures or pamphlets directing reporting shall state that such instances be reported to a 9-1-1 operator and the county district attorney's office. All former posters and wallet cards and any other information directing reporting of crimes and emergencies to the justice center shall be removed and replaced by 9-1-1 reporting posters, wallet cards and all other sources that shall be located conspicuously in a timely manner.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.