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LAWS OF NEW YORK, 2020

CHAPTER 295

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing the frontline workers trauma informed care advisory council

Became a law November 27, 2020, with the approval of the Governor.

Passed by a majority vote, three-fifths being present.

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

Section 1. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new section 7.48 to read as follows:

Section 7.48 Frontline workers trauma informed care advisory council.

(a) The commissioner shall establish the frontline workers trauma informed care advisory council within the office. The council shall consist of, at a minimum, the commissioner or his or her designee; the commissioner of the department of health or his or her designee; the commissioner of aging or his or her designee; the commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities or his or her designee; the commissioner of the office for addiction services and supports or his or her designee; the commissioner of the department of corrections and community supervision; the commissioner of the office of children and family services or his or her designee; the commissioner of the department of labor or his or her designee; a representative of the state conference of local mental hygiene service directors as created under article forty-one of this chapter; and twenty-one additional members of which seven shall be appointed by the governor, six shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly, six shall appointed by the temporary president of the senate, and one each shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assembly and the senate. Each appointed member shall be a representative of one of the following: (1) behavioral health advocacy organizations; (2) health care provider organizations; (3) employee organizations representing nurses, doctors, and other frontline workers; (4) human service providers, including but not limited to a human service provider as defined pursuant to subdivision four of section four hundred sixty-four-b of the social services law; (5) law enforcement agencies; (6) individuals who have expertise in fields of discipline related to trauma informed care; and any other group, association, organization, or individual deemed appropriate by the commissioner. For purposes of this section, frontline workers shall include, but shall not be limited to, healthcare workers, first responders, direct care workers, public safety workers, transportation workers, food service workers and others who have been exposed to trauma associated with the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, pandemic while in the line of duty.

(b) Council members shall receive no compensation for their services as members of the council, but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The members of the council shall choose one member of the council to be a chairperson and one member to be co-chairperson.

(c) The council shall be established within thirty days of the effective date of this section.

(d) The council shall:

(1) Identify evidence-based tools to track the impact of COVID-19 associated collective trauma and the needs of frontline workers;

(2) Identify or develop training opportunities for organizations that employ frontline workers on how to support the mental health and wellness of their impacted employees;

(3) Identify evidenced-based trauma-informed support resources and learning opportunities for frontline workers;

(4) Identify or develop a mechanism to inform and refer impacted frontline workers experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 to behavioral health services and supports;

(5) Consult with any organization, government entity, agency, or person that the council determines may be able to provide information and expertise on the development and implementation of trauma informed care for frontline workers; and

(6) Submit a report to the governor, the speaker of the assembly, and the temporary president of the senate by December first, two thousand twenty on the duties described in this section, including recommendations to effectively implement any initiative identified or developed by the workgroup and included in its report.

(e) To the extent federal funds are available, grants shall be made available to entities that employ frontline workers or other organizations with relevant experience, for the sole purpose of providing support and implementing strategies or initiatives identified by the frontline workers trauma informed care workgroup for their workforce.

Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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