



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo joins Senate colleagues in approving legislation to make "Kendra's Law" permanent, and improve New York's assisted outpatient treatment program

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. March 29, 2018

| ISSUE: **KENDRA'S LAW, MENTAL HEALTH, HEALTH CARE, ADDABBO**

NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently voted with his Senate colleagues to pass legislation (S.516) he co-sponsors that will permanently continue a New York law that allows the courts to require seriously mental ill people to participate in mandatory assisted outpatient treatment. Known as "Kendra's Law," this program was enacted in 1999 and named after Kendra Webdale: a woman who was pushed off a New York City subway platform to her death by a severely mentally ill man not receiving psychiatric treatment.

"Studies done over the years demonstrate that seriously mentally ill people who have been mandated to receive psychiatric treatment and medication under Kendra's Law have benefitted from reduced incidences of homelessness, hospitalization, and incarceration," said Addabbo. "The program appears to have had significant success in aiding mentally ill New Yorkers who might otherwise be a danger to themselves and others, and I agree it should be made permanent."

Kendra's Law only applies to a very small population of mentally ill New Yorkers. Among other requirements, they must be determined unlikely to survive safely in their communities without supervision; have a history of non-compliance with treatment that has led to their

hospitalization, incarceration, or threats of serious violent behavior towards themselves and others; and be unlikely to participate voluntarily in treatment. Under current law, family members or health care professionals may petition the court for a Kendra's Law order. The orders run for no longer than 12 months and can be renewed if deemed necessary.

"It is important for both public safety and the health and welfare of mentally ill individuals that they receive appropriate treatment and medication to enable them to live safely in our communities," said Addabbo. "Participants in assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) have individualized treatment programs, case managers to monitor their compliance, and access to appropriate services including substance abuse counseling, therapy, and educational and vocational training. Kendra's Law helps vulnerable people who cannot immediately help themselves, and protects all of us from potentially tragic acts of violence committed by seriously mentally ill New Yorkers in need of treatment."

Addabbo noted that Kendra's Law also saves taxpayer dollars that might otherwise be directed to the hospitalization and incarceration of mentally ill residents desperately in need of psychiatric treatment. The bill Addabbo co-sponsors also makes several reforms to the existing law by expanding the number of individuals who can petition the court for an assisted outpatient treatment order, and makes changes to the process for lifting an AOT order. Right now, the existing Kendra's Law is not up for renewal until 2022.

"I hope the Assembly will consider this legislation, and make permanent an almost 20-year-old treatment program that seems to be working for the public, patients and everyone else involved," said Addabbo.

Having passed the Senate, the legislation has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Mental Health for review.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2017-S516

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- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
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- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Enhances the assisted outpatient treatment program and eliminates the expiration and repeal of Kendra's Law

January 03, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Catharine Young**

Do you support this bill?

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