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Chairman, Assembly Subcommittee on Workplace Safety
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Workplace injuries, particularly workplace assaults, often require psychological treatment in order to rehabilitate workers and enable them to return to work. The Workers' Compensation Law reforms passed in 1996 were intended to ensure the full rehabilitation of workers injured in the workplace by covering psychological treatment for incidents of a traumatic nature.

However, as it stands today, the law does not utilize the full scope of available qualified mental health professionals. This shortage means workers face substantial obstacles in getting the treatment they need to recover.

The Assembly Subcommittee on Workplace Safety plans to re-introduce a bill to amend the Workers' Compensation Law to authorize the care and treatment of injured employees by licensed clinical social workers. Their valuable expertise will give victims of workplace violence better access to psychotherapeutic care. This change would have an immense impact in making psychological treatment more available, particularly in several counties in New York State where, according to the State Education Department website, licensed clinical social workers outnumber psychologists by at least eight to one. In some counties the availability of service providers would potentially increase by up to 400%, profoundly expanding the pool of accessible mental health providers.

The inclusion of clinical social workers in workers' compensation programs are already a reality for many federal employees, the dependents of military personnel stationed in New York, and the many citizens of our state whose medial expenses are covered by managed behavioral and group health insurance plans. This change would not result in increased costs to the care providers or recipients; it will improve services for workers who suffered job-related injuries. It

will enhance the process of rehabilitation and return workers more quickly to gainful employment.