

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## HOUSE BILL

No. 2102 Session of  
1993

INTRODUCED BY CESSAR, ITKIN, PETRONE, PISTELLA, STABACK, McCALL,  
ROONEY, FAJT, LAUB, LEH, SATHER, MILLER, TRELLO, KING,  
MIHALICH, LAUGHLIN, BELFANTI, FARMER, THOMAS, TRICH, PRESTON,  
DERMODY, MERRY, KASUNIC AND CIVERA, OCTOBER 6, 1993

AS RE-REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, OCTOBER 3, 1994

## AN ACT

1 Establishing ~~a self help clearinghouse~~ THE SELF-HELP <—  
2 CLEARINGHOUSE within the Department of Public Welfare; and  
3 adding to the powers and duties of the Department of Public  
4 Welfare.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 ~~Section 1. Creation of clearinghouse.~~ <—

8 ~~The Self Help Clearinghouse of the Commonwealth is hereby~~  
9 ~~created. It shall function within and under the supervision of~~  
10 ~~the Department of Public Welfare.~~

11 ~~Section 2. Duties of Department of Public Welfare.~~

12 ~~The Department of Public Welfare shall have the following~~  
13 ~~powers and duties:~~

14 ~~(1) To prepare guidelines for the operation of the Self~~  
15 ~~Help Clearinghouse.~~

16 ~~(2) To solicit proposals from nonprofit organizations~~  
17 ~~interested in participating in a Statewide Self Help~~

~~Clearinghouse, review the proposals and approve and fund within the limits of moneys allocated to the department the proposal which best meets the objectives of the clearinghouse.~~

~~Section 3. Self help group development.~~

~~The Self Help Clearinghouse shall provide assistance to develop self help groups throughout this Commonwealth by providing technical aid to communities which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:~~

~~(1) Consultation.~~

~~(2) Training.~~

~~(3) Technical advice.~~

~~(4) Publishing and distributing a Statewide directory of self help groups.~~

~~(5) Collecting and making available self help information and resource material.~~

~~Section 4. Effective date.~~

~~This act shall take effect in 60 days.~~

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

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THIS ACT SHALL BE KNOWN AND MAY BE CITED AS THE SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE ACT.

SECTION 2. PURPOSE.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES AS FOLLOWS:

(1) THAT A NEED EXISTS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO SELF-HELP GROUPS FOR EVERY CITIZEN OF THIS COMMONWEALTH WHO IS FACING AN OVERWHELMING PROBLEM, ISOLATED AND ALONE. THIS ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED THROUGH A SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE.

(2) SELF-HELP GROUPS PROVIDE MUTUAL SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES SHARING A COMMON PROBLEM, SITUATION, CHARACTERISTIC OR CONDITION, INCLUDING ABUSE, ADDICTION,

BEREAVEMENT, DISABILITIES, HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH/MENTAL  
RETARDATION, PARENTING AND LIFE SITUATIONS.

(3) SELF-HELP GROUPS ARE OFTEN HIDDEN AND NOT AVAILABLE  
TO INDIVIDUALS IN NEED OR PROFESSIONALS TRYING TO ASSIST.

(4) SELF-HELP GROUPS FOSTER INNOVATIVE AND COST-  
EFFECTIVE HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES IN THIS COMMONWEALTH  
WHICH WILL REDUCE THE NEED TO UTILIZE THE TREATMENT SYSTEM  
AND DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

(5) THERE IS INCREASING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT SELF-  
HELP GROUPS CAN DRAMATICALLY REDUCE HOSPITAL STAYS, REDUCE  
EMOTIONAL TRAUMA AND GENERALLY INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE.

#### SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND PHRASES WHEN USED IN THIS ACT SHALL  
HAVE THE MEANINGS GIVEN TO THEM IN THIS SECTION UNLESS THE  
CONTEXT CLEARLY INDICATES OTHERWISE:

"CLEARINGHOUSE." THE SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE CREATED UNDER  
SECTION 4.

"DEPARTMENT." THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH.

#### SECTION 4. CREATION OF CLEARINGHOUSE.

THE SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE IS HEREBY CREATED. IT SHALL  
FUNCTION UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT.

#### SECTION 5. DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT.

THE DEPARTMENT SHALL HAVE THE POWER AND ITS DUTY SHALL BE TO  
ESTABLISH THE CLEARINGHOUSE AND PREPARE GUIDELINES FOR THE  
OPERATION OF THE CLEARINGHOUSE.

#### SECTION 6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLEARINGHOUSE.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLEARINGHOUSE MAY INCLUDE ANY OF THE  
FOLLOWING:

(1) COLLECTING, ORGANIZING, MAINTAINING AND

1 DISSEMINATING SELF-HELP GROUP INFORMATION THROUGH A  
2 COMPUTERIZED RESOURCE SYSTEM.

3 (2) PROVIDING IMMEDIATE AND DIRECT RESPONSES TO BOTH  
4 CITIZEN AND PROFESSIONAL INQUIRIES ABOUT SELF-HELP GROUPS  
5 THROUGH A TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE SERVICE.

6 (3) PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTING MANUALS, NEWSLETTERS,  
7 DIRECTORIES AND OTHER MATERIALS ON SELF-HELP ACTIVITIES IN  
8 THIS COMMONWEALTH.

9 (4) ASSISTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF LOCAL  
10 SELF-HELP GROUPS WITHIN THIS COMMONWEALTH BY PROVIDING  
11 TECHNICAL AID TO COMMUNITIES WHICH MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT  
12 LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

13 (I) CONSULTATION.

14 (II) TRAINING.

15 (III) TECHNICAL ADVICE.

16 SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.

17 THIS ACT SHALL TAKE EFFECT JULY 1, 1995.