



ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT

HB 887-Naishtat-authorizes a judge to order extended outpatient commitment mental health services if the proposed patient has received court-ordered inpatient mental health services for a total of at least 60 days during the preceding year or court-ordered temporary outpatient mental health services during the preceding 60 days.

Current Status: Passed House, sent to Senate

Recommendation: Contact you State Senator in favor of HB 887.

HB 1233-Menendez and SB 1198-Van de Putte--authorizes a court to issue an order authorizing the administration of one or more classes of psychoactive medications to a patient who is under court order to receive outpatient mental health services if the patient has been either released on bail after being found incompetent to stand trial or is in custody awaiting trial on a criminal proceeding and is ordered to receive outpatient mental health services.

Current Status: HB 1233 was reported favorably from House Public Health and is on the Local Consent and Resolution Calendar for May 5.

SB 1198 was referred to Senate Criminal Justice Committee.

Recommendation: Contact your State Representative in favor of HB 1233. Contact Sen. Carona in favor of SB 1198.

HB 1647-Menendez and SB 1477-Uresti- authorizes a judge to order a proposed patient to receive court-ordered extended outpatient mental health services if the jury, or the judge if the right to a jury is waived, finds from clear and convincing evidence that the proposed patient has received court-ordered inpatient mental health services for a total of at least 60 days during the preceding 24 months or court-ordered out-patient mental health services during the preceding 60 days. The change proposed by this bill provides a more efficient and effective extended outpatient commitment process and returns the law to its original statutory intent by ensuring that the frequent involuntary mental health services consumers are afforded the opportunity for extended outpatient mental health services. Currently the 60 days must be consecutive and within the past year.

HB 1647 is pending in House Public Health Committee.

SB 1477 has passed the Senate and now is in House Public Health also.

Contact State Rep. Jodie Laubenberg to express your support for HB 1647 and SB 1477.

For over a year, Mental Health America of Greater Dallas studied this issue, consulting a wide range of community stakeholders. While this proposal may have its critics, those critics fail to take into account the experience of states that have enacted similar legislation in recent years.

They also fail to take into account the experience of individuals who have received court-ordered treatment.

For example, a five-year study of Kendra’s Law in the State of New York looked at the cases of 2,745 individuals with mental illness and found that in the three years before treatment was court-ordered,

- 97% of patients had been hospitalized,
- 30% had been arrested,
- 23% had been incarcerated
- 19% had been homeless.

These individuals experienced tremendous improvement in all of the above measures:

- 77% decrease in hospitalizations,
- 83% decrease in arrests,
- 87% decrease in incarcerations,
- 74% decrease in homelessness.

In addition, their experience showed:

- 23% decrease in problems with self-care and community living,
- 44 % decrease in harmful behaviors including suicide attempts, drug abuse, property damage.
- 47% decrease in physical harm to others.

All of these individuals have histories of very serious and persistent mental illnesses that are extremely difficult to treat.

Their experience also showed the following before-and-after comparisons:

Engagement in Services	Before court-ordered treatment	After court-ordered treatment
Case Management	53%	100%
Medication Management	66%	88%
Substance Abuse Treatment	24%	40%
Days Hospitalized in a 6-month period	50 days	13 days

The critics also fail mention the satisfaction rates of recipients of court-ordered treatment:

- 75% said court-ordered treatment helped them to re-gain control over their lives,
- 81% said court-ordered treatment helped them to get and stay well,
- 90% said court ordered treatment made them more likely to keep appointments and take medication,
- 87% said they were confident in their case manager’s ability to help them
- 88% said they and their case manager agreed on what is important for them to work on.

The above numbers are stunning and compelling. They indicate enormously better uses of resources than endless cycles of hospitalization and incarceration. Most importantly, they reflect improved well-being and life satisfaction for those receiving court-ordered treatment.

For more information, please contact Janie Metzinger, Public Policy Director, Mental Health America of Greater Dallas at (214) 871-2420, Ext. 114 or JMetzinger@mhadallas.org