

1                                   **INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT AMENDMENTS**

2                                                           2013 GENERAL SESSION

3                                                           STATE OF UTAH

4                                                           **Chief Sponsor: Todd Weiler**

5                                                           House Sponsor: V. Lowry Snow

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7 **LONG TITLE**

8 **General Description:**

9                   This bill modifies Title 62A, Chapter 15, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Act, by  
10 amending procedures for involuntary commitment.

11 **Highlighted Provisions:**

12                   This bill:

- 13                   ▶ requires an applicant for an involuntary commitment order to consult with the
- 14 appropriate local mental health authority before the court may issue a judicial order
- 15 if the local mental health authority appears at the commitment hearing;
- 16                   ▶ states that notice of involuntary commitment proceedings shall be sent to the local
- 17 mental health authority or its designee; and
- 18                   ▶ makes technical changes.

19 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

20                   None

21 **Other Special Clauses:**

22                   None

23 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

24 AMENDS:

25                   **62A-15-631**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2012, Chapter 248

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27 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

28                   Section 1. Section **62A-15-631** is amended to read:

29                   **62A-15-631. Involuntary commitment under court order -- Examination --**

30 **Hearing -- Power of court -- Findings required -- Costs.**

31 (1) Proceedings for involuntary commitment of an individual who is 18 years of age or  
32 older may be commenced by filing a written application with the district court of the county in  
33 which the proposed patient resides or is found, by a responsible person who has reason to know  
34 of the condition or circumstances of the proposed patient which lead to the belief that the  
35 individual has a mental illness and should be involuntarily committed. That application shall  
36 be accompanied by:

37 (a) a certificate of a licensed physician or a designated examiner stating that within a  
38 seven-day period immediately preceding the certification the physician or designated examiner  
39 has examined the individual, and that the physician or designated examiner is of the opinion  
40 that the individual is mentally ill and should be involuntarily committed; or

41 (b) a written statement by the applicant that:

42 (i) the individual has been requested to, but has refused to, submit to an examination of  
43 mental condition by a licensed physician or designated examiner;

44 (ii) is sworn to under oath; and

45 (iii) states the facts upon which the application is based.

46 (2) ~~Before~~ (a) Subject to Subsection (2)(b), before issuing a judicial order, the court  
47 may require the applicant to consult with the appropriate local mental health authority, ~~or~~ and  
48 may direct a mental health professional from that local mental health authority to interview the  
49 applicant and the proposed patient to determine the existing facts and report them to the court.

50 (b) The consultation described in Subsection (2)(a):

51 (i) may take place at or before the hearing; and

52 (ii) is required if the local mental health authority appears at the hearing.

53 (3) If the court finds from the application, from any other statements under oath, or  
54 from any reports from a mental health professional that there is a reasonable basis to believe  
55 that the proposed patient has a mental illness ~~which~~ that poses a substantial danger, as  
56 defined in Section 62A-15-602, to self or others requiring involuntary commitment pending  
57 examination and hearing; or, if the proposed patient has refused to submit to an interview with

58 a mental health professional as directed by the court or to go to a treatment facility voluntarily,  
59 the court may issue an order, directed to a mental health officer or peace officer, to  
60 immediately place the proposed patient in the custody of a local mental health authority or in a  
61 temporary emergency facility as provided in Section 62A-15-634 to be detained for the purpose  
62 of examination. Within 24 hours of the issuance of the order for examination, a local mental  
63 health authority or its designee shall report to the court, orally or in writing, whether the patient  
64 is, in the opinion of the examiners, mentally ill, whether the patient has agreed to become a  
65 voluntary patient under Section 62A-15-625, and whether treatment programs are available and  
66 acceptable without court proceedings. Based on that information, the court may, without  
67 taking any further action, terminate the proceedings and dismiss the application. In any event,  
68 if the examiner reports orally, the examiner shall immediately send the report in writing to the  
69 clerk of the court.

70 (4) Notice of commencement of proceedings for involuntary commitment, setting forth  
71 the allegations of the application and any reported facts, together with a copy of any official  
72 order of detention, shall be provided by the court to a proposed patient before, or upon,  
73 placement in the custody of a local mental health authority or, with respect to any individual  
74 presently in the custody of a local mental health authority whose status is being changed from  
75 voluntary to involuntary, upon the filing of an application for that purpose with the court. A  
76 copy of that order of detention shall be maintained at the place of detention.

77 (5) Notice of commencement of those proceedings shall be provided by the court as  
78 soon as practicable to the applicant, any legal guardian, any immediate adult family members,  
79 legal counsel for the parties involved, the local mental health authority or its designee, and any  
80 other persons whom the proposed patient or the court shall designate. That notice shall advise  
81 those persons that a hearing may be held within the time provided by law. If the patient has  
82 refused to permit release of information necessary for provisions of notice under this  
83 subsection, the extent of notice shall be determined by the court.

84 (6) Proceedings for commitment of an individual under the age of 18 years to the  
85 division may be commenced by filing a written application with the juvenile court in

86 accordance with the provisions of Part 7, Commitment of Persons Under Age 18 to Division of  
87 Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

88 (7) The district court may, in its discretion, transfer the case to any other district court  
89 within this state, provided that the transfer will not be adverse to the interest of the proposed  
90 patient.

91 (8) (a) Within 24 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, of the  
92 issuance of a judicial order, or after commitment of a proposed patient to a local mental health  
93 authority under court order for detention or examination, the court shall appoint two designated  
94 examiners to examine the proposed patient. If requested by the proposed patient's counsel, the  
95 court shall appoint, as one of the examiners, a reasonably available qualified person designated  
96 by counsel. The examinations, to be conducted separately, shall be held at the home of the  
97 proposed patient, a hospital or other medical facility, or at any other suitable place that is not  
98 likely to have a harmful effect on the patient's health.

99 (b) The examiner shall inform the patient if not represented by an attorney that, if  
100 desired, the patient does not have to say anything, the nature and reasons for the examination,  
101 that it was ordered by the court, that any information volunteered could form part of the basis  
102 for ~~[his or her]~~ the patient's involuntary commitment, and that findings resulting from the  
103 examination will be made available to the court.

104 (c) A time shall be set for a hearing to be held within 10 calendar days of the  
105 appointment of the designated examiners, unless those examiners or a local mental health  
106 authority or its designee informs the court prior to that hearing date that the patient is not  
107 mentally ill, that the patient has agreed to become a voluntary patient under Section  
108 62A-15-625, or that treatment programs are available and acceptable without court  
109 proceedings, in which event the court may, without taking any further action, terminate the  
110 proceedings and dismiss the application.

111 (9) (a) Before the hearing, an opportunity to be represented by counsel shall be  
112 afforded to every proposed patient, and if neither the patient nor others provide counsel, the  
113 court shall appoint counsel and allow counsel sufficient time to consult with the patient before

114 the hearing. In the case of an indigent patient, the payment of reasonable attorney fees for  
115 counsel, as determined by the court, shall be made by the county in which the patient resides or  
116 was found.

117 (b) The proposed patient, the applicant, and all other persons to whom notice is  
118 required to be given shall be afforded an opportunity to appear at the hearing, to testify, and to  
119 present and cross-examine witnesses. The court may, in its discretion, receive the testimony of  
120 any other person. The court may allow a waiver of the patient's right to appear only for good  
121 cause shown, and that cause shall be made a matter of court record.

122 (c) The court is authorized to exclude all persons not necessary for the conduct of the  
123 proceedings and may, upon motion of counsel, require the testimony of each examiner to be  
124 given out of the presence of any other examiners.

125 (d) The hearing shall be conducted in as informal a manner as may be consistent with  
126 orderly procedure, and in a physical setting that is not likely to have a harmful effect on the  
127 mental health of the proposed patient.

128 (e) The court shall consider all relevant historical and material information [~~which~~] that  
129 is offered, subject to the rules of evidence, including reliable hearsay under Rule 1102, Utah  
130 Rules of Evidence.

131 (f) (i) A local mental health authority or its designee, or the physician in charge of the  
132 patient's care shall, at the time of the hearing, provide the court with the following information:

- 133 (A) the detention order;
- 134 (B) admission notes;
- 135 (C) the diagnosis;
- 136 (D) any doctors' orders;
- 137 (E) progress notes;
- 138 (F) nursing notes; and
- 139 (G) medication records pertaining to the current commitment.

140 (ii) That information shall also be supplied to the patient's counsel at the time of the  
141 hearing, and at any time prior to the hearing upon request.

142           (10) The court shall order commitment of an individual who is 18 years of age or older  
143 to a local mental health authority if, upon completion of the hearing and consideration of the  
144 information presented in accordance with Subsection (9)(e), the court finds by clear and  
145 convincing evidence that:

146           (a) the proposed patient has a mental illness;

147           (b) because of the proposed patient's mental illness the proposed patient poses a  
148 substantial danger, as defined in Section 62A-15-602, to self or others, which may include the  
149 inability to provide the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter, if allowed to  
150 remain at liberty;

151           (c) the patient lacks the ability to engage in a rational decision-making process  
152 regarding the acceptance of mental treatment as demonstrated by evidence of inability to weigh  
153 the possible risks of accepting or rejecting treatment;

154           (d) there is no appropriate less-restrictive alternative to a court order of commitment;  
155 and

156           (e) the local mental health authority can provide the individual with treatment that is  
157 adequate and appropriate to the individual's conditions and needs. In the absence of the  
158 required findings of the court after the hearing, the court shall forthwith dismiss the  
159 proceedings.

160           (11) (a) The order of commitment shall designate the period for which the individual  
161 shall be treated. When the individual is not under an order of commitment at the time of the  
162 hearing, that period may not exceed six months without benefit of a review hearing. Upon  
163 such a review hearing, to be commenced prior to the expiration of the previous order, an order  
164 for commitment may be for an indeterminate period, if the court finds by clear and convincing  
165 evidence that the required conditions in Subsection (10) will last for an indeterminate period.

166           (b) The court shall maintain a current list of all patients under its order of commitment.  
167 That list shall be reviewed to determine those patients who have been under an order of  
168 commitment for the designated period. At least two weeks prior to the expiration of the  
169 designated period of any order of commitment still in effect, the court that entered the original

170 order shall inform the appropriate local mental health authority or its designee. The local  
171 mental health authority or its designee shall immediately reexamine the reasons upon which the  
172 order of commitment was based. If the local mental health authority or its designee determines  
173 that the conditions justifying that commitment no longer exist, it shall discharge the patient  
174 from involuntary commitment and immediately report that to the court. Otherwise, the court  
175 shall immediately appoint two designated examiners and proceed under Subsections (8)  
176 through (10).

177 (c) The local mental health authority or its designee responsible for the care of a patient  
178 under an order of commitment for an indeterminate period, shall at six-month intervals  
179 reexamine the reasons upon which the order of indeterminate commitment was based. If the  
180 local mental health authority or its designee determines that the conditions justifying that  
181 commitment no longer exist, that local mental health authority or its designee shall discharge  
182 the patient from its custody and immediately report the discharge to the court. If the local  
183 mental health authority or its designee determines that the conditions justifying that  
184 commitment continue to exist, the local mental health authority or its designee shall send a  
185 written report of those findings to the court. The patient and ~~his~~ the patient's counsel of  
186 record shall be notified in writing that the involuntary commitment will be continued, the  
187 reasons for that decision, and that the patient has the right to a review hearing by making a  
188 request to the court. Upon receiving the request, the court shall immediately appoint two  
189 designated examiners and proceed under Subsections (8) through (10).

190 (12) In the event that the designated examiners are unable, because a proposed patient  
191 refuses to submit to an examination, to complete that examination on the first attempt, the  
192 court shall fix a reasonable compensation to be paid to those designated examiners for their  
193 services.

194 (13) Any person committed as a result of an original hearing or a person's legally  
195 designated representative who is aggrieved by the findings, conclusions, and order of the court  
196 entered in the original hearing has the right to a new hearing upon a petition filed with the court  
197 within 30 days of the entry of the court order. The petition must allege error or mistake in the

198 findings, in which case the court shall appoint three impartial designated examiners previously  
199 unrelated to the case to conduct an additional examination of the patient. The new hearing  
200 shall, in all other respects, be conducted in the manner otherwise permitted.

201           (14) Costs of all proceedings under this section shall be paid by the county in which the  
202 proposed patient resides or is found.