

Florida Attorneys Join Forces with CCHR to Fight Mental Health Abuse

Defense attorneys from across the state met at CCHR to discuss strategies to effectively serve families and to eradicate violations of the Baker Act.

CLEARWATER, FL, USA, January 30, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR) recently hosted a continuing legal education event for defense attorneys that focused on changes to the mental health law, significant case law and successful actions for defending the rights of citizens being held under a [Baker Act](#).

The Baker Act, Florida's mental health law, allows for men, women and children to be taken into custody and held for [involuntary psychiatric examination](#) and during fiscal year 2016/2017 there were almost 200,000 Baker Acts, more than doubling from 2001/2002. [1]



Those attending the event heard from Carmen Miller, a former public defender now in private practice specializing in Baker Act cases, Justin Drach of Theole Drach Law, the president of CCHR Florida, Diane Stein and Kendra Parris of Parris Law.

CCHR, a non-profit watchdog organization dedicated to restoring dignity and human rights to the field of mental health, hosted the event as part of a campaign to protect individuals from human rights violations committed through the abusive use and misuse of the Baker Act. During the event attorneys from across the state discussed strategies to effectively serve families and to eradicate violations of the law.

“

I feel we are getting somewhere as a group and we are nailing down the exact abuse cases that are going to be used to reform the law.”

Carmen Miller, attorney

president of the Florida chapter of CCHR, Diane Stein.

“Handling the Baker Act is really a job for those who care. It isn't something that all lawyers can do and some won't do it because there are so many other ways for lawyers to make money. This isn't an easy way. But children being Baker Acted is horrendous – so we are doing something about it,” said Kendra Parris.

While the original stated intention of the Baker Act was to protect the rights of citizens sent for involuntary psychiatric examination, it has become a source of great abuse prompting CCHR

Florida in 2016 to launch a campaign for the purpose of educating Floridians on their rights under this law. Since the launch, CCHR has held hundreds of events educating tens of thousands of people on the Baker Act. Following his presentation, Justin Drach stated that he feels like the group is moving in the right direction and that events such as this one will help bring about much needed change to the mental health law. To learn more about the Baker Act or to reserve a seat at the next Baker Act Defense Attorney Symposium & Summit please call 727-442-8820 or visit www.cchrflorida.org.

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR's mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: "Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the 'free world' tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of 'mental health,'" he wrote in March 1969. For more information visit www.cchrflorida.org.

Sources:

[1] Baker Act Annual Report
<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/samh/publications/The%20Baker%20Act%20-%20FL%20MH%20Act%20-%20FY%2016-17%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Released%20June%202018.pdf>

Diane Stein
Citizens Commission on Human Rights of Florida
+1 (727) 422-8820
[email us here](#)
Visit us on social media:
[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[LinkedIn](#)



CCHR Florida hosted the Baker Act Defense Attorney Symposium & Summit



The Citizens Commission on Human Rights is a non-profit mental health watchdog dedicated to the eradication of abuses committed under the guise of mental health.

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