

Baker Act Abuse Prompts CCHR to Call for Greater Protection of Children

The CCHR is asking lawmakers to change how the mental health law is applied to children to protect them from unjust involuntary psychiatric examinations.

CLEARWATER, FL, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Allowing for a person of any age to be taken into custody and transported to a psychiatric facility for examination, the mental health law in Florida, commonly called a [Baker Act](#), saw more than 32,000 [involuntary psychiatric examinations](#) initiated on children in Florida during 2017, according to the most recent report released by the Baker Act Reporting Center. Some of these children are very young, including those between the ages of 2 and 5 years old. [1]



The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater.

The Florida chapter of the international mental health watchdog, the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR), is concerned over the large number of individuals being sent annually for involuntary psychiatric examinations in light of the fact that it is known that a percentage of these Baker Acts are illegal due to a failure to meet the criteria for taking a person into custody. There were over 199,000 involuntary psychiatric examinations of all age groups initiated in Florida during 2017.

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The manner in which the Baker Act is being initiated when dealing with children is a gross violation of human rights.”

Diane Stein, President CCHR Florida

In order to take a person into custody under a Baker Act there are three criteria that must be legally met yet it is common knowledge that this is not always done and it was disclosed during a meeting of the Baker Act Task Force in

2017 that 30 percent of the Baker Acts initiated on children in Pinellas County did not meet the criteria. This alarming fact is one reason CCHR believes the Baker Act needs to be reformed so that parents and guardians are brought into the process before a child is put through the trauma of a Baker Act. [2]

In the example of minors, parents and legal guardians are being left out of the process only finding out that their child has been Baker Acted after initiation and usually after the child has been transported by law enforcement to a psychiatric facility. CCHR believes that this is a rights violation, a belief that is shared by Sheriffs, Police Chiefs and even School Districts across Florida.

“It is abhorrent that any child can be taken into custody under the Baker Act without parental

involvement in the process," stated Diane Stein, President CCHR Florida. "But when you are talking about children young as 2 to 5 you are now talking about a gross violation of human rights."

Over the past several years, CCHR has been working to educate those granted the power to initiate a Baker Act involving a child on why a parent or guardian should be brought into the process before initiation resulting in county and city level policy changes that requires parents to be contacted prior to initiating a Baker Act.

However, greater protection of children is needed according to CCHR prompting the organization to ask Florida lawmakers to change how the mental health law is applied to children and teens to help prevent unjust involuntary psychiatric examinations.

Those interested in learning more about CCHR's campaign to protect children from abusive Baker Acting are encouraged to call 800-782-2878.

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 Reporting Center

<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>

[2] CHILDREN'S BAKER ACT TASK FORCE, MINUTES for FIRST MEETING 7.20.17

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/samh/mentalhealth/task-force-examination-minors/docs/20170720/20170720-minutes.pdf>



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.



Who Speaks for the Child?

INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT OF MINORS

Parents or legal guardians should be given the opportunity to take full responsibility for their child, as stated in the Baker Act criteria, for the purpose of obtaining consent for a voluntary examination **prior** to Baker Acting.

The Baker Act Criteria clearly allows for a person to be assisted through the help of willing family members or friends or the provision of other services **instead** of being Baker Acted.

It's the parent's right to be a voice for their child. This is **NOT** being done. The parent finds out **AFTER** their child has been Baker Acted.

Protect Children's Rights and Ensure Parental Involvement

Citizens Commission On Human Rights
Call 800.782.2878, for more information
www.cchrflorida.org



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