

CCHR Hosts Continuing Education Course on the Florida Mental Health Law

The virtual course for mental health professionals is designed to help them identify the basic human rights impacted by the law and its unintended consequences.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The mental health law in Florida, known as the [Baker Act](#), allows for individuals of all ages, including children, to be taken into custody and sent for an involuntary psychiatric examination. Unfortunately, the law is often misunderstood and misused prompting the Florida chapter of the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR) to begin offering a continuing education course to help prevent abuse.



Tampa Bay area attorney and former Assistant Public Defender of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, Carmen Miller, Esq., was the featured speaker at the seminar on mental health rights.

The most recent report from the Baker Act Reporting Center reveals that there were more than 200,000 involuntary psychiatric examinations in Florida and that over 36,000 of these initiations involved children with over 4,000 involving children age 10 and younger. [1]

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*Diane Stein, President CCHR
Florida*

The Baker Acting of children has been a recurring topic in Florida resulting in attempts to get to the bottom of why so many children are being taken into custody under a law that was never intended to be applied to minors. Once such attempt was the 2017 Children’s Baker Act Task Force which reported that a significant number of children sent for an involuntary psychiatric examination did not meet

the criteria to be taken into custody. [2]

“CCHR has been reporting on the unjust Baker Acting of kids for years but many suggested effective actions for putting an end to this abuse have fallen on deaf ears, including the simple solution of bringing a parent into the process before a children is taken into custody under a Baker Act,” stated the president of CCHR Florida Diane Stein.

In 2015 CCHR launched a campaign to end the abusive use of this law. As part of this campaign CCHR engages in numerous public information activities designed for professionals as well as the general public. These activities include seminars and workshops delivered virtually and at the headquarters in downtown Clearwater, Florida. [2]

Already approved to host continuing education through the Florida Bar on the [Baker Act for attorneys](#), the move to become a provider through the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy and Mental Health Counseling was a logical next step.

The most recent course was delivered by attorney Carmen Miller, a former assistant public defender in the Thirteenth Circuit in Tampa, with an extensive background in dealing with Baker Acts. Those in attendance learned the context and intentions of the Baker Act as well as the basic human rights impacted by the Baker Act and its unintended consequences.

"The Baker Act is misunderstood and thus can easily be abused and misused," said Ms. Miller. "By providing seminars, I hope to help educate people on the proper way to utilize this tenuous legislation."

While the complimentary continuing education courses are designed for attorneys and licensed mental health professionals CCHR also hosts free seminars on wide variety of subjects delivered



CCHR hosts continuing education through the Florida Bar on the Baker Act for attorneys.



The next continuing education course on the Baker Act for attorneys is a virtual presentation scheduled for December.

by attorneys, doctors and other professionals that are open to the general public. To learn 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.

Sources:

[1] Baker Act Reporting Center
https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/documents/ba_usf_annual_report_2017_2018.pdf

[2] CHILDREN'S BAKER ACT TASK FORCE, MINUTES for FIRST MEETING 7.20.17
<https://myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/involuntary-examination-minors/docs/20170720/20170720-minutes.pdf>

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The Florida chapter of CCHR is a non-profit mental health watchdog dedicated to the protection of children.

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