

CCHR's Baker Act Continuing Education Courses Help Protect Citizens from Abuse

The virtual courses note the basic human rights impacted by the Baker Act, areas of abuse and the unintended consequences.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Florida chapter of the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR) began hosting [continuing education](#) courses for attorneys in 2018 in response to the alarming number of people taken into custody each year under the [Baker Act](#).

Florida's mental health law, known as the Baker Act, allows for individuals of all ages to be taken into custody for an involuntary psychiatric examination.

According to the most recent report there were over 210,000 Baker Acts initiated during 2018/2019 and more than 37,000 were on children. [1]

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*Diane Stein, President CCHR
Florida*

Over the past several years, the abusive use of the Baker Act, especially when dealing with children, has repeatedly been reported in the media. Headlines such as “6-year-old Florida girl “traumatized” after being involuntarily sent to mental health facility” and “Florida’s flawed Baker Act rips thousands of kids from school” are all too frequent and tell the stories of children and families that have suffered Baker Act abuse. [2,3]

Spurred into action by these stories and thousands of calls received from victims of Baker Act abuse, CCHR, a mental

health watchdog, decided to begin offering continuing education on the law. After first receiving



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approval 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 courses are now held virtually allowing attorneys and mental health professionals from across the state to attend.

Designed to educate those in attendance on the context and intentions of the mental health law as well as the basic human rights impacted by the Baker Act and its unintended consequences, the course for mental health professionals is 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.

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Both events are complimentary and are regularly held throughout the year.

To learn more or to reserve a seat for the next virtual course, please call 727-442-8820.

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



Speakers included attorneys Dennis L. Webb of Fort Meyers, Justin Drach of Theole Drach Law, Kendra Parris of Parris Law and the president of the Florida chapter of CCHR, Diane Stein.



Attorney 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.

information visit www.cchrflorida.org

Sources:

[1] Baker Act Reporting Center
https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/documents/ba_usf_annual_report_2018_2019.pdf

[2] WUSF Health News Florida
COMMITTED
<https://wfsu.org/committed/>

[3] Baker Act Abuse – Media Stories
<https://www.cchrflorida.org/baker-act-abuse/>

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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 headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater.

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