

CCHR Warns: Baker Acts May Result in Fatal Consequences for Senior Citizens

Called Transfer Trauma, the mortality rate for seniors that are transferred is 2-4 times higher than those that are not subjected to this type of stress.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The mental health law in Florida, commonly called the [Baker Act](#), allows for the involuntary psychiatric examination of any individual no matter their age. Under the Baker Act, a senior citizen can be sent against their will, and without consulting the family or guardian, for an examination and the receiving facility is then legally allowed to hold the senior for up to 72 hours. According to the Annual Report on the Baker Act, released in 2020, there were 15,457 Baker Acts involving individuals 65 years of age and older. [1]



CCHR Florida is raising awareness of the abuse suffered by the elderly under the mental health law especially the unnecessary and potentially harmful involuntary psychiatric examination of seniors, a process called Baker Acting.

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Diane Stein, President CCHR Florida

Alarmed by the number of seniors being taken into custody and the fact that there has been an almost 63% increase in the number of elder Baker Acts over the past 10 years, the Florida chapter of the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR), launched a campaign to not only educate elders and their caregivers on their rights but to also reform the mental health law. [2]

“We have received hundreds of calls involving the Baker Acting of seniors and in many cases the person did not meet the criteria for involuntary examination but instead

was suffering from an untreated medical condition,” said Diane Stein, President of the Florida

chapter of CCHR. "This should never happen. Especially when Transfer Trauma is a known risk."

Transfer trauma, also known as relocation stress syndrome, has been studied since the 1960s and according to controlled studies the mortality rate for elderly that are transferred is 2-4 times higher than those that are not subjected to this type of stress. All too often this known adverse effect is not taken into consideration when Baker Acting the elderly. [3]

CCHR feels that the dramatic increase in elder Baker Acts over the years is indicative of abuse. Pointing to the fact that [Baker Act abuse](#) of the elderly was investigated over 25 years ago and not much has changed, CCHR is asking Florida lawmakers to make changes to the mental law to better protect seniors.

More than two decades ago the Florida Legislature and the Florida Supreme Court investigated the abusive use of the Baker Act involving the elderly, with the Florida Supreme Court recommending that the statutes be amended "to expressly permit the use of less-restrictive alternatives to involuntary in-patient examinations" and expressing concern that "because in-patient treatment is extremely profitable mental health facilities and professionals sometimes abuse the voluntary admission process." [4]

Looking for effective action to be taken in 2022, Diane Stein stressed that "it is well past the time for the Florida Legislature to once again address the abusive Baker Acting of our elders." For more information on the protection of elder rights under the mental health law, 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



More than 15,000 of Florida's elderly, including those with dementia, were sent for involuntary psychiatric examinations in 2018/2019.



The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater.

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 Report

https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/documents/ba_usf_annual_report_2018_2019.pdf

[2] Ibid.

[3] Review of the Effects of Relocation on the Elderly

http://www.heu.org/sites/default/files/uploads/research_reports/HEU_Literature_Review_Sept23_2002.pdf

[4] Florida Supreme Court – Baker Act Summary

<https://www.floridasupremecourt.org/ontent/download/242846/file/BakerSummary.pdf>

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The Florida Supreme Court published a summary on the use of involuntary and examination, called a Baker Act, which revealed that, "the involuntary placement process is also vulnerable to abuse, and that abuse is often linked to financial gain.



CCHR Florida Host the Baker Act Defense Attorney Symposium & Summit

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