

# U.S. States Still Electroshock 0–5-year-olds—CCHR Calls for ECT Ban in Light of New Statistics

*Forced to obtain ECT statistics through FOIA, CCHR finds states electroshocking those 0–5 and up to age 12. UN defines ECT without consent as an act of torture*

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, January 25, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Statistics on electroshock treatment usage in the U.S. for 2019 reveals at least four of 27 states reporting ECT use under Medicaid, to children five years of age or younger. The Citizens Commission on Human Rights International, a mental health industry watchdog, condemns the practice of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), which sends up to 460 volts of electricity through the brain to treat mental health issues, saying that its use is cruel and brutal. Non-consensual ECT constitutes torture, according to United Nations bodies such as its Committee Against Torture. In 2013, it recommended “an absolute ban on all forced and non-consensual use” of electroshock. The World Health Organization made similar recommendations in June 2021.[1]



Forced to obtain electroshock statistics through FOIA, CCHR finds states electroshocking those 0–5 and up to age 12. UN defines ECT without consent as an act of torture—yet this increasingly occurs throughout the U.S.

In order to obtain accurate statistics on ECT use, CCHR had to file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests state-by-state. Some states do not collect the information, despite the potential for the practice to cause severe memory loss, cognitive damage, heart attacks, brain damage and death. The FDA estimates that 100,000 Americans receive ECT each year, although this appears to be based on estimated statistics from 1995.

In response to CCHR’s FOIA requests, 27 states responded on ECT usage under Medicaid between 2015 and 2020. Of these, 15 (56%) had increases in the number of people receiving ECT,

while 12 states (44%) reported decreases.

The four states that report still giving electroshock in the 0-5 age bracket in 2019 (Georgia, Massachusetts, Mississippi and Utah) should immediately prohibit this, CCHR says.

Since 2015, CCHR has sent ECT usage statistics and expert studies to every state legislator in the country and included updates on expert reports.

A promising outcome is that there was a 60% decline in the number of states (from 10 to 4) reporting this age group being shocked since approximately 2016. To their credit, Florida and Pennsylvania stopped reporting ECT statistics for 0-5 year old children in 2016; Washington state in 2017; Indiana, in 2018, and Illinois and Kentucky in 2019.

Six of the 27 states still show ECT given to those aged 6-12 years old, with Florida having the highest usage reported as fewer than 30 for each of the years 2017-2020. Massachusetts followed, reporting fewer than 11 in 2020.

In 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cleared the marketing of ECT devices to teens aged 13 and older, despite there being no clinical trials to support safety and efficacy for use of ECT devices in any age group. As FDA does not have the power to regulate medicine or psychiatry, it means psychiatrists can electroshock any child without oversight.

CCHR helped obtain the first ban on ECT for minors in California in 1976. Three more U.S. states followed, and West Australia also banned it for those 14 and younger, with criminal penalties if administered. The Texas ban is up to age 16.

Seventeen states report ECT for the 13-17 years age group, although about four reported no ECT use to them since 2019 (Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky and Nebraska), while Georgia and Vermont have reported usage in 2018, and Kansas in 2016. This is a positive response to the national and international calls to eliminate coercive psychiatric treatments such as ECT.

In Texas, one of the states where ECT is banned on minors up to age 15, the number of 16-17-year-olds receiving it decreased by nearly half—from seventeen in 2017 to nine in 2020. But these are nine too many.

CCHR says those states with a general decline in ECT use are going in the right direction of eliminating the practice entirely. These include Mississippi with a 23% decrease, New Hampshire (20%) and Indiana (20%).

However, the most appalling finding is the states registering massive increases in the use of ECT: Michigan (415%), Oklahoma (413%), South Dakota (320%), and Rhode Island (151%).

Texas tops the states with the highest number of patients shocked in 2020 at 2,645, although the

statistics include all hospitals delivering ECT, not just those limited to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Electroshock is contentious because there are no clinical trials that have proven the safety and efficacy of its devices. This is because FDA grandfathered the device in in 1976 as it had been in use since 1938, when an Italian psychiatrist discovered it being used to calm pigs before they were slaughtered.[2]

After 84 years, psychiatrists still admit they don't know how ECT "works," yet they administer it, well aware that it cannot cure—but it can cause serious damage.

In May of 2018, the UN Human Rights Council's report on "Consultation on Human Rights and Mental Health," said enforced ECT (or any other psychiatric practice) can "amount to torture and ill-treatment" and laws allowing this should be repealed.[3]

On June 10th, 2021, the World Health Organization released a damning guideline which said that people who are subjected to forced electroshock report feelings of dehumanization, disempowerment and being disrespected.[4]

Jan Eastgate, president of CCHR International, says: "Electroshock is administering medical blunt force trauma. It should be banned." Craig Newnes, a UK clinical psychologist and author of A Critical A-Z of Electroshock, and interviewed in CCHR's documentary, [Therapy or Torture: The Truth about Electroshock](#), says, "The biggest mystery of all is why on Earth people think that putting bolts of electricity through people's heads is a good idea." [5]

Sign [CCHR's petition here to support total ban on all ECT](#).

[Read the full article here](#).

[1] Jan Eastgate, "World Health Organization New Guidelines Are Vital To End Coercive Psychiatric Practices & Abuse," CCHR International, <https://www.cchrint.org/2021/06/11/world-health-organization-new-guidelines-are-vital-to-end-coercive-psychiatric-practices-abuse/>, citing: "Guidance on Community Mental Health Services: Promoting Person-Centered and Rights-Based Approaches," World Health Organization, 10 June 2021, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240025707> (to download report)

[2] "Documented Facts & Statistics About Modern Electroshock (ECT)," CCHR International, <https://www.cchrint.org/electroshock/>, citing: "Origins of ECT," Convulsive Therapy, Vol. 4., No. 1., 1988, p. 7, [http://www.academia.edu/10921818/The\\_Origins\\_of\\_Electroconvulsive\\_Therapy\\_ECT](http://www.academia.edu/10921818/The_Origins_of_Electroconvulsive_Therapy_ECT)

[3] "Mental health and human rights Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Council Thirty-ninth session, 1-28 Sept. 2018, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MentalHealth/A\\_HRC\\_39\\_36\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MentalHealth/A_HRC_39_36_EN.pdf)

[4] Op. cit., World Health Organization, 10 June 2021, p. 8

[5] Therapy or Torture: The Truth About Electroshock, CCHR documentary, 2018,  
<https://www.cchr.org/ban-ect/watch/therapy-or-torture-the-truth-about-electroshock.html>

Amber Rauscher

Citizens Commission on Human Rights

+1 323-467-4242

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/561433995>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2022 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.