

CHAPTER 129

[Senate Bill No. 2444]

ALCOHOLISM TREATMENT—INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT—PETITION—
VENUE

AN ACT Relating to involuntary commitment of alcoholics; and amending section 14, chapter 122, Laws of 1972 ex. sess. as amended by section 2, chapter 175, Laws of 1974 ex. sess. and RCW 70.96A.140.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

Section 1. Section 14, chapter 122, Laws of 1972 ex. sess. as amended by section 2, chapter 175, Laws of 1974 ex. sess. and RCW 70.96A.140 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) When the person in charge of a treatment facility, or his designee, receives information alleging that a person is incapacitated as a result of alcoholism, the person in charge, or his designee, after investigation and evaluation of the specific facts alleged and of the reliability and credibility of the information, may file a petition for commitment of such person with the superior court or district court. The petition shall allege that the person is an alcoholic who is incapacitated by alcohol, or that the person has twice before in the preceding twelve months been admitted for the voluntary treatment for alcoholism pursuant to RCW 70.96A.110 and is in need of a more sustained treatment program, or that the person is an alcoholic who has threatened, attempted, or inflicted physical harm on another and is likely to inflict physical harm on another unless committed. A refusal to undergo treatment does not constitute evidence of lack of judgment as to the need for treatment. The petition shall be accompanied by a certificate of a licensed physician who has examined the person within two days before submission of the petition, unless the person whose commitment is sought has refused to submit to a medical examination, in which case the fact of refusal shall be alleged in the petition. The certificate shall set forth the physician's findings in support of the allegations of the petition. A physician employed by the petitioning facility or the department is not eligible to be the certifying physician.

(2) Upon filing the petition, the court shall fix a date for a hearing no less than five and no more than ten days after the date the petition was filed unless the person petitioned against is presently being detained by the facility, pursuant to RCW 70.96A.120, as now or hereafter amended, in which case the hearing shall be held within forty-eight hours of the filing of the petition: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That the above specified forty-eight hours shall be computed by including Saturdays but excluding Sundays and holidays: PROVIDED FURTHER, That, the court may, upon motion of the person whose commitment is sought, or upon motion of petitioner with written permission of the person whose commitment is sought, or his counsel and, upon good cause shown, extend the date for the hearing. A copy of the petition and of the notice of the hearing, including the date fixed by the court, shall be served by the treatment facility on the person whose commitment is sought, his next of kin, a parent or his legal guardian if he is a minor, and any other person the court believes advisable. A copy of the petition and certificate shall be delivered to each person notified.

(3) At the hearing the court shall hear all relevant testimony, including, if possible, the testimony of at least one licensed physician who has examined the person whose commitment is sought. The person shall be present unless the court believes that his presence is likely to be injurious to him; in this event the court may deem it appropriate to appoint a guardian ad litem to represent him throughout the proceeding. If deemed advisable, the court may examine the person out of courtroom. If the person has refused to be examined by a licensed physician, he shall be given an opportunity to be examined by a court appointed licensed physician. If he refuses and there is sufficient evidence to believe that the allegations of the petition are true, or if the court believes that more medical evidence is necessary, the court may make a temporary order committing him to the department for a period of not more than five days for purposes of a diagnostic examination.

(4) If after hearing all relevant evidence, including the results of any diagnostic examination, the court finds that grounds for involuntary commitment have been established by clear, cogent, and convincing proof, it shall make an order of commitment to an approved treatment facility. It shall not order commitment of a person unless it determines that an approved treatment facility is able to provide adequate and appropriate treatment for him and the treatment is likely to be beneficial.

(5) A person committed under this section shall remain in the facility for treatment for a period of thirty days unless sooner discharged. At the end of the thirty day period, he shall be discharged automatically unless the facility, before expiration of the period, files a petition for his recommitment upon the grounds set forth in subsection (1) of this section for a further period of ninety days unless sooner discharged. If a person has been committed because he is an alcoholic likely to inflict physical harm on another, the facility shall apply for recommitment if after examination it is determined that the likelihood still exists.

(6) A person recommitted under subsection (5) of this section who has not been discharged by the facility before the end of the ninety day period shall be discharged at the expiration of that period unless the facility, before expiration of the period, obtains a court order on the grounds set forth in subsection (1) of this section for recommitment for a further period not to exceed ninety days. If a person has been committed because he is an alcoholic likely to inflict physical harm on another, the facility shall apply for recommitment if after examination it is determined that the likelihood still exists. Only two recommitment orders under subsections (5) and (6) of this section are permitted.

(7) Upon the filing of a petition for recommitment under subsections (5) or (6) of this section, the court shall fix a date for hearing no less than five and no more than ten days after the date the petition was filed: PROVIDED, That, the court may, upon motion of the person whose commitment is sought and upon good cause shown, extend the date for the hearing. A copy of the petition and of the notice of hearing, including the date fixed by the court, shall be served by the treatment facility on the person whose commitment is sought, his next of kin, the original petitioner under subsection (1) of this section if different from the petitioner for recommitment, one of his parents or his legal guardian if he is a minor, and his attorney and any other person the court believes advisable. At the hearing the court shall proceed as provided in subsection (3) of this section.

(8) The facility shall provide for adequate and appropriate treatment of a person committed to its custody. A person committed under this section may be transferred from one approved public treatment facility to another if transfer is medically advisable.

(9) A person committed to the custody of a facility for treatment shall be discharged at any time before the end of the period for which he has been committed and he shall be discharged by order of the court if either of the following conditions are met:

(a) In case of an alcoholic committed on the grounds of likelihood of infliction of physical harm upon another, that he is no longer an alcoholic or the likelihood no longer exists; or further treatment will not be likely to bring about significant improvement in the person's condition, or treatment is no longer adequate or appropriate.

(b) In case of an alcoholic committed on the grounds of the need of treatment and incapacity, that the incapacity no longer exists.

(10) The court shall inform the person whose commitment or recommitment is sought of his right to contest the application, be represented by counsel at every stage of any proceedings relating to his commitment and recommitment, and have counsel appointed by the court or provided by the court, if he wants the assistance of counsel and is unable to obtain counsel. If the court believes that the person needs the assistance of counsel, the court shall require, by appointment if necessary, counsel for him regardless of his wishes. The person shall, if he is financially able, bear the costs of such legal service; otherwise such legal service shall be at public expense. The person whose commitment or recommitment is sought shall be informed of his right to be examined by a licensed physician of his choice. If the person is unable to obtain a licensed physician and requests examination by a physician, the court shall employ a licensed physician.

(11) A person committed under this chapter may at any time seek to be discharged from commitment by writ of habeas corpus in a court of competent jurisdiction.

(12) The venue for proceedings under this section is the ((place)) county in which person to be committed resides or is present.

Passed the Senate April 22, 1977.

Passed the House May 20, 1977.

Approved by the Governor June 1, 1977.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State June 1, 1977.

CHAPTER 130

[Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2485]

STATE HIGHWAYS—FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

AN ACT Relating to public highways; adding a new section to chapter 47.05 RCW; repealing section 2, chapter 173, Laws of 1963, section 2, chapter 39, Laws of 1969 ex. sess. and RCW 47.05.020; and providing effective dates.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. There is added to chapter 47.05 RCW a new section to read as follows: