

## VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

*An Act to amend and reenact § 37.1-134.21 of the Code of Virginia, relating to judicial authorization of treatment and detention of certain persons.*

[S 1017]

Approved

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 37.1-134.21 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 37.1-134.21. Judicial authorization of treatment and detention of certain persons.

A. An appropriate circuit court, or judge as defined in § 37.1-1, may authorize *treatment for a mental or physical disorder* on behalf of an adult person, in accordance with this section, ~~the provision, withholding or withdrawal of a specific treatment or course of treatment for a mental or physical disorder,~~ if it finds upon clear and convincing evidence that (i) the person is either incapable of making an informed decision on his own behalf or is incapable of communicating such a decision due to a physical or mental disorder and (ii) the proposed ~~action~~ *treatment* is in the best interest of the person.

B. For purposes of this section:

"Disorder" includes any physical or mental disorder or impairment, whether caused by injury, disease, genetics, or other cause.

"Incapable of making an informed decision" means unable to understand the nature, extent or probable consequences of a proposed treatment, or unable to make a rational evaluation of the risks and benefits of the proposed treatment as compared with the risks and benefits of alternatives to ~~that the~~ treatment. Persons with dysphasia or other communication disorders who are mentally competent and able to communicate shall not be considered incapable of giving informed consent.

*"Treatment" includes the provision, withholding, or withdrawal of a specific treatment or course of treatment upon a showing that the requirements of subsection H have been met.*

C. Any person may request authorization of ~~the provision, withholding or withdrawal of a specific treatment, or course of treatment,~~ for an adult person by filing a petition in the circuit court, or with a judge as defined in § 37.1-1, of the county or city in which the ~~allegedly incapable person for whom treatment is sought~~ resides or is located, or in the county or city in which the proposed place of treatment is located. Upon filing such a petition, the petitioner or the court shall deliver or send a certified copy of the petition to the person ~~who is the subject of such petition for whom treatment is sought~~ and, if the identity and whereabouts of the person's next of kin are known, to the next of kin.

D. As soon as reasonably possible after the filing of the petition, the court shall appoint an attorney to represent the interests of the ~~allegedly incapable person for whom treatment is sought~~ at the hearing. However, such appointment shall not be required in the event that the person, or another interested person on behalf of the person, elects to retain private counsel at his own expense to represent the interests of the person at the hearing. If the ~~allegedly incapable person for whom treatment is sought~~ is indigent, his counsel shall be paid by the Commonwealth as provided in § 37.1-89 from funds appropriated to reimburse expenses incurred in the involuntary mental commitment process. However, this provision shall not be construed to prohibit the direct payment of an ~~attorney's~~ *attorneys'* fee either by the patient or by an interested person on his behalf, which fee shall be subject to the review and approval of the court.

E. Following the appointment of an attorney pursuant to subsection D ~~above~~, the court shall schedule an expedited hearing of the matter. The court shall notify the person ~~who is the subject of the petition for whom treatment is sought~~, his next of kin, if known, the petitioner, and their respective counsel of the date and time for the hearing. In scheduling such a hearing, the court shall take into account the type and severity of the alleged physical or mental disorder, as well as the need to provide the person's attorney with sufficient time to adequately prepare his client's case.

F. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections C and E ~~above~~ regarding delivery or service of the petition and notice of the hearing to the next of kin of any person ~~who is the subject of such petition for whom consent to treatment is sought~~, if such person is a patient in any hospital *as defined in § 32.1-123 or a resident in any facility operated by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and such person has no known guardian or legally authorized representative* at the time the petition is filed, the court, in its discretion, may dispense with the requirement of any notice to the next of kin. *If treatment is necessary to prevent imminent or irreversible harm, the court in its discretion may dispense with the requirement of providing notice.* This subsection shall not, however, be construed to interfere with any decision made pursuant to the Health

58 Care Decisions Act (§ 54.1-2981 et seq.).

59 G. Evidence presented at the hearing may be submitted by affidavit in the absence of objection by  
60 the person ~~who is the subject of the petition for whom treatment is sought~~, the petitioner, either of their  
61 respective counsel, or by any other interested party. Prior to the hearing, the attorney shall investigate  
62 the risks and benefits of the treatment decision for which authorization is sought and of alternatives to  
63 the proposed decision. The attorney shall make a reasonable effort to inform the person of this  
64 information and to ascertain the person's religious beliefs and basic values and the views and preferences  
65 of the person's next of kin. A health care provider shall disclose or make available to the attorney, upon  
66 request, any information, records, and reports concerning the person that the attorney determines  
67 necessary to perform his duties under this section.

68 H. Prior to authorizing ~~the provision, withholding or withdrawal~~ of treatment pursuant to this section,  
69 the court shall find:

70 1. That there is no legally authorized ~~person representative~~ available to give consent;

71 2. That the person ~~who is the subject of the petition for whom treatment is sought~~ is incapable either  
72 of making an informed decision regarding a ~~specific treatment or course of treatment~~ or is physically or  
73 mentally incapable of communicating such a decision;

74 3. That the person who is the subject of the petition is unlikely to become capable of making an  
75 informed decision or of communicating an informed decision within the time required for decision; and

76 4. That the proposed ~~course of treatment~~ is in the best interest of the patient *and is medically and*  
77 *ethically appropriate with respect to (i) the medical diagnosis and prognosis and (ii) any other*  
78 *information provided by the attending physician of the person for whom treatment is sought.* However,  
79 the court shall not authorize a proposed ~~course of treatment~~ *which that* is proven by a preponderance of  
80 the evidence to be contrary to the person's religious beliefs or basic values unless such treatment is  
81 necessary to prevent death or a serious irreversible condition. The court shall take into consideration the  
82 right of the person to rely on nonmedical, remedial treatment in the practice of religion in lieu of  
83 medical treatment.

84 I. The court may not authorize the following under this section:

85 1. Nontherapeutic sterilization, abortion, or psychosurgery.

86 2. Admission to a mental retardation facility or a psychiatric hospital, as defined in § 37.1-1.  
87 However, the court may issue an order under this section authorizing ~~the provision, withholding or~~  
88 ~~withdrawal of a specific treatment or course of treatment~~ of a person whose admission to such facility  
89 has been or is simultaneously being authorized under §§ 37.1-65, 37.1-65.1, 37.1-65.2, 37.1-65.3, or  
90 §—37.1-67.1, or of a person who is subject to an order of involuntary commitment previously or  
91 simultaneously issued under § 37.1-67.3 or Article 1.1 (§ 37.1-70.1 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of this title.

92 3. Administration of antipsychotic medication for a period to exceed 180 days or electroconvulsive  
93 therapy for a period to exceed 60 days pursuant to any petition filed under this section. The court may  
94 authorize electroconvulsive therapy only if it is demonstrated by clear and convincing evidence, which  
95 shall include the testimony of a licensed psychiatrist, that all other reasonable forms of treatment have  
96 been considered and that electroconvulsive therapy is the most effective treatment for the person. Even  
97 if the court has authorized administration of antipsychotic medication or electroconvulsive therapy  
98 hereunder, these treatments may be administered over the person's objection only if he is subject to an  
99 order of involuntary commitment, including outpatient involuntary commitment, previously or  
100 simultaneously issued under § 37.1-67.3 or Article 1.1 (§ 37.1-70.1 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of this title, or  
101 the provisions of Chapter 11 (§ 19.2-167 et seq.) or Chapter 11.1 (§ 19.2-182.2 et seq.) of Title 19.2.

102 4. Restraint or transportation of the person, unless it finds upon clear and convincing evidence that  
103 restraint or transportation is necessary to the ~~provision~~ *administration* of an authorized treatment for a  
104 physical disorder.

105 J. Any order authorizing ~~the provision, withholding or withdrawal~~ of treatment pursuant to subsection  
106 A shall describe any treatment ~~or course of treatment~~ authorized and may authorize generally such  
107 related examinations, tests, or services as the court may determine to be reasonably related to the  
108 treatment authorized. *Treatment authorized by such order may include palliative care as defined in*  
109 *§ 32.1-162.1, if appropriate.* The order shall require the treating physician to review and document the  
110 appropriateness of the continued administration of antipsychotic medications not less frequently than  
111 every 30 days. Such order shall require the treating physician or other service provider to report to the  
112 court and the person's attorney any change in the person's condition resulting in probable restoration or  
113 development of the person's capacity to make and to communicate an informed decision prior to  
114 completion of any authorized ~~course of treatment~~ and related services. The order may further require the  
115 treating physician or other service provider to report to the court and the person's attorney any change in  
116 circumstances regarding any authorized ~~course of treatment~~ or related services ~~or the withholding or~~  
117 ~~withdrawal of treatment or services~~ which may indicate that such authorization is no longer in the  
118 person's best interests. Upon receipt of such report, or upon the petition of any interested party, the court

may enter such order withdrawing or modifying its prior authorization as it deems appropriate. Any petition or order under this section may be orally presented or entered, provided a written order shall be subsequently executed.

K. Any order hereunder of a judge, or of a judge or magistrate under subsection N, may be appealed de novo within 10 days to the circuit court for the jurisdiction where the order was entered, and any such order of a circuit court hereunder, either originally or on appeal, may be appealed within 10 days to the Court of Appeals.

L. Any licensed health professional or licensed hospital ~~providing, withholding or withdrawing administering treatment, or providing~~ testing or detention pursuant to the court's or magistrate's authorization as provided in this section shall have no liability arising out of a claim to the extent such claim is based on lack of consent to such ~~course of treatment, testing or detention or the withholding or withdrawal of such treatment, testing or detention.~~ Any such professional or hospital ~~providing, withholding or withdrawing administering~~ treatment with the consent of the person receiving or being offered treatment shall have no liability arising out of a claim to the extent it is based on lack of capacity to consent if a court or a magistrate has denied a petition hereunder to authorize such treatment, and such denial was based on an affirmative finding that the person was capable of making and communicating an informed decision regarding the proposed ~~provision, withholding or withdrawal of treatment.~~

M. Based upon the opinion of a licensed physician that an adult person is incapable of making an informed decision as a result of a physical injury or illness and that the medical standard of care indicates that testing, observation and treatment are necessary to prevent imminent and irreversible harm, a magistrate may issue, for good cause shown, an emergency custody order for such adult person to be taken into custody and transported to a hospital emergency room for such testing, observation or treatment.

Prior to issuance of an emergency custody order pursuant to this subsection, the magistrate shall ascertain that there is no legally authorized person available to give consent to necessary treatment for the adult person and that the adult person (i) is incapable of making an informed decision regarding obtaining necessary treatment, (ii) has refused transport to obtain such necessary treatment, (iii) has indicated an intention to resist such transport, and (iv) is unlikely to become capable of making an informed decision regarding obtaining necessary treatment within the time required for such decision.

An opinion by the licensed physician that an adult person is incapable of making an informed decision as a result of physical injury or illness shall only be rendered after such licensed physician has communicated electronically or personally with the emergency medical services personnel on the scene and has attempted to communicate electronically or personally with the adult person to obtain information and medical data concerning the cause of the adult person's incapacity, has attempted to obtain consent from the adult person and has failed to obtain such consent.

If there is a change in the person's condition, the emergency medical services personnel shall contact the licensed physician. If at any time the licensed physician determines that a person subject to an order under this subsection has become capable of making and communicating an informed decision, such physician shall rely on the person's decision on whether to consent to further observation, testing or treatment.

Upon reaching the emergency room, the person shall be evaluated by a licensed physician. If the physician determines that the person meets the requirements of subsection N, the physician may apply for a temporary detention order pursuant to that subsection. If the physician determines that the person does not meet the requirements of subsection N, the person shall be released from custody immediately. The person shall remain in custody until this evaluation is performed, but in no event shall the period of custody under this subsection exceed four hours.

The law-enforcement officer may lawfully go to or be sent beyond the territorial limits of the county, city or town in which he serves to any point in the Commonwealth for the purpose of executing an order for emergency custody pursuant to this subsection. Nothing herein shall preclude a law-enforcement officer from obtaining emergency medical treatment or further medical evaluation at any time for a person in his custody as provided in this subsection.

If an order of emergency custody is not executed within four hours of its issuance, the order shall be void and shall be returned unexecuted to the office of the clerk of the issuing court or, if such office is not open, to any judge or magistrate thereof.

N. Upon the advice of a licensed physician who has attempted to obtain consent and upon a finding of probable cause to believe that an adult person within the court's or a magistrate's jurisdiction is incapable of making an informed decision regarding treatment of a physical or mental disorder, or is incapable of communicating such a decision due to a physical or mental disorder, and that the medical standard of care calls for testing, observation or treatment of the disorder within the next 24 hours to prevent death, disability, or a serious irreversible condition, the court or, if the court is unavailable, a

180 magistrate may issue an order authorizing temporary detention of the person by a hospital emergency  
181 room or other appropriate facility and authorizing such testing, observation or treatment. The detention  
182 may not be for a period exceeding 24 hours unless extended by the court as part of an order authorizing  
183 treatment under subsection A. If before completion of authorized testing, observation or treatment, the  
184 physician determines that a person subject to an order under this subsection has become capable of  
185 making and communicating an informed decision, the physician shall rely on the person's decision on  
186 whether to consent to further observation, testing or treatment. If before issuance of an order under this  
187 subsection or during its period of effectiveness, the physician learns of an objection by a member of the  
188 person's immediate family to the testing, observation or treatment, he shall so notify the court or  
189 magistrate, who shall consider the objection in determining whether to issue, modify or terminate the  
190 order.

191 O. The provisions of § 37.1-89 relating to payment by the Commonwealth shall not apply to the cost  
192 of detention, testing or treatment under this section.

193 P. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to affect the right to use, and the authority conferred by,  
194 any other applicable statutory or regulatory procedure relating to consent, or to diminish any common  
195 law authority of a physician or other treatment provider to ~~provide, withhold or withdraw services~~  
196 *administer treatment* to a person unable to give or to communicate informed consent to those actions,  
197 with or without the consent of the person's relative, including but not limited to common law or other  
198 authority to provide treatment in an emergency situation; nor shall anything in this section be construed  
199 to affect the law defining the conditions under which consent shall be obtained for ~~medical~~  
200 *administering* treatment, or the nature of the consent required.

201 Q. Judicial authorization *for treatment* pursuant to this section ~~for providing, withholding or~~  
202 ~~withdrawing treatment~~ need not be obtained for a person for whom consent or authorization has been  
203 granted or issued or may be obtained in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 (§ 54.1-2981 et  
204 seq.) of Chapter 29 of Title 54.1 or other applicable statutes or common law of ~~this~~ *the* Commonwealth.