

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2008 SESSION

CHAPTER 784

An Act to amend and reenact § 37.2-808 of the Code of Virginia, relating to extension of time of emergency custody orders.

[H 583]

Approved April 2, 2008

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 37.2-808 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 37.2-808. Emergency custody; issuance and execution of order.

A. Any magistrate may issue, upon the sworn petition of any responsible person or upon his own motion, an emergency custody order when he has probable cause to believe that any person within his judicial district (i) has mental illness, (ii) presents an imminent danger to himself or others as a result of mental illness or is so seriously mentally ill as to be substantially unable to care for himself, (iii) is in need of hospitalization or treatment, and (iv) is unwilling to volunteer or incapable of volunteering for hospitalization or treatment.

B. Any person for whom an emergency custody order is issued shall be taken into custody and transported to a convenient location to be evaluated to assess the need for hospitalization or treatment. The evaluation shall be made by a person designated by the community services board or behavioral health authority who is skilled in the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness and who has completed a certification program approved by the Department.

C. The magistrate issuing an emergency custody order shall specify the primary law-enforcement agency and jurisdiction to execute the emergency custody order and provide transportation. Transportation under this section shall include transportation to a medical facility as may be necessary to obtain emergency medical evaluation or treatment that shall be conducted immediately in accordance with state and federal law. Transportation under this section shall include transportation to a medical facility for a medical evaluation if a physician at the hospital in which the person subject to the emergency custody order may be detained requires a medical evaluation prior to admission.

D. The magistrate shall order the primary law-enforcement agency from the jurisdiction served by the community services board or behavioral health authority that designated the person to perform the evaluation required in subsection B to execute the order and provide transportation. If the community services board or behavioral health authority serves more than one jurisdiction, the magistrate shall designate the primary law-enforcement agency from the particular jurisdiction within the community services board's or behavioral health authority's service area where the person who is the subject of the emergency custody order was taken into custody or, if the person has not yet been taken into custody, the primary law-enforcement agency from the jurisdiction where the person is presently located to execute the order and provide transportation.

E. A 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 emergency custody order pursuant to this section.

F. A law-enforcement officer who, based upon his observation or the reliable reports of others, has probable cause to believe that a person meets the criteria for emergency custody as stated in this section may take that person into custody and transport that person to an appropriate location to assess the need for hospitalization or treatment without prior authorization. Such evaluation shall be conducted immediately.

G. 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 section.

H. The person shall remain in custody until a temporary detention order is issued, ~~or until the person is released, but in no event shall the period of custody exceed four hours or until the emergency custody order expires.~~ *An emergency custody order shall be valid for a period not to exceed four hours from the time of execution. However, upon a finding by a magistrate that good cause exists to grant an extension, an emergency custody order may be renewed one time for a second period not to exceed two hours. Good cause for an extension includes the need for additional time to allow (i) the community services board or behavioral health authority to identify a suitable facility in which the person can be temporarily detained pursuant to § 37.2-809 or (ii) a medical evaluation of the person to be completed if necessary. Any family member as defined in § 37.2-100, employee or designee of the local community services board as defined in § 37.2-809, physician treating the person, or law-enforcement officer may request the two-hour extension period.*

I. If an emergency custody order 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 magistrate thereof.