

Involuntary Hospitalization

An involuntary hospitalization is a court order that orders a person to be hospitalized in an inpatient psychiatric facility. There are laws that regulate who and under what conditions a person can be committed to a hospital. In Colorado, an involuntary commitment may also be referred to as an M-1, or a 27 – 10. In order for a person to be involuntarily hospitalized, he or she must meet the Colorado Revised Statute, Article 10, Title 27 Care and Treatment of Mentally Ill definition of mentally ill. The statute defines someone as mentally ill if:

The person has a substantial disorder of cognitive, volitional or emotional processes that grossly impairs judgment or capacity to recognize reality or control behavior.

M-1 or Mental Health Hold

The actual Mental Health Hold (M-1) may be invoked when a person appears to be mentally ill and because of the mental illness, the person appears to be

- An imminent danger to him or herself
- An imminent danger to others
- Gravely disabled.

In order to be classified as gravely disabled; a person has to meet one of the following two criteria:

1. The person is in danger of serious physical harm due to his (or her) inability or failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care or lacks judgment in management or resources or social relations to the extent that his health or safety is significantly endangered and lacks the capacity to understand this.
2. His (or her) care and support by family members or other similar relationships is going to be terminated and the following conditions are present:
 - The person has chronic schizophrenia, affective, delusional or other disorder with psychotic features.
 - The person has been hospitalized in an inpatient setting at least two times in 36 months with periods of at least 30 days between admissions.
 - The person is exhibiting a deteriorating course of symptoms behavior substantially similar to those preceding hospitalization
 - The person is not receiving treatment essential to her health or safety.

Remember that the prospect of a psychiatric hospitalization can be very traumatic for the entire family. Having the answers to some of these questions can help.

- Are there any less restrictive therapies that can provide the same result?
- What is the expected outcome of hospitalization?
- How much will this cost? Will my insurance cover it? What out-of-pocket expenses will I be responsible for?
- How will I be included in the treatment?
- (If a child) How will my child's education continue while he's in the hospital?
- What recreational or social opportunities will be available?
- What are the visiting policies?
- How will I (my child) be transitioned out of the hospital back home?
- Can special dietary problems be accommodated?