

CHAPTER 2022-41

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1844

An act relating to mental health and substance abuse; amending s. 394.4625, F.S.; revising provisions relating to the voluntary admission of minors to a facility for examination and treatment; requiring that a minor's assent to voluntary care be verified through a clinical review; amending s. 394.463, F.S.; requiring law enforcement officers transporting individuals for involuntary treatment to take certain actions; creating s. 397.341, F.S.; requiring law enforcement officers transporting individuals for certain treatment to take certain actions; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) and subsection (4) of section 394.4625, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

394.4625 Voluntary admissions.—

(1) AUTHORITY TO RECEIVE PATIENTS.—

(a) A facility may receive for observation, diagnosis, or treatment any person 18 years of age or older who applies making application by express and informed consent for admission or any person age 17 or younger whose parent or legal guardian applies under for admission whom such application is made by his or her guardian. If found to show evidence of mental illness, to be competent to provide express and informed consent, and to be suitable for treatment, such person 18 years of age or older may be admitted to the facility. A person age 17 or younger under may be admitted only after a clinical review hearing to verify the voluntariness of the minor's assent consent.

(4) TRANSFER TO VOLUNTARY STATUS.—An involuntary patient who applies to be transferred to voluntary status shall be transferred to voluntary status immediately, unless the patient has been charged with a crime, or has been involuntarily placed for treatment by a court pursuant to s. 394.467 and continues to meet the criteria for involuntary placement. When transfer to voluntary status occurs, notice shall be given as provided in s. 394.4599, and if the patient is a minor, the minor's assent to voluntary care must be verified as provided in paragraph (1)(a).

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 394.463, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

394.463 Involuntary examination.—

(2) INVOLUNTARY EXAMINATION.—

(a) An involuntary examination may be initiated by any one of the following means:

1. A circuit or county court may enter an ex parte order stating that a person appears to meet the criteria for involuntary examination and specifying the findings on which that conclusion is based. The ex parte order for involuntary examination must be based on written or oral sworn testimony that includes specific facts that support the findings. If other less restrictive means are not available, such as voluntary appearance for outpatient evaluation, a law enforcement officer, or other designated agent of the court, shall take the person into custody and deliver him or her to an appropriate, or the nearest, facility within the designated receiving system pursuant to s. 394.462 for involuntary examination. The order of the court shall be made a part of the patient's clinical record. A fee may not be charged for the filing of an order under this subsection. A facility accepting the patient based on this order must send a copy of the order to the department within 5 working days. The order may be submitted electronically through existing data systems, if available. The order shall be valid only until the person is delivered to the facility or for the period specified in the order itself, whichever comes first. If a time limit is not specified in the order, the order is valid for 7 days after the date that the order was signed.

2. A law enforcement officer shall take a person who appears to meet the criteria for involuntary examination into custody and deliver the person or have him or her delivered to an appropriate, or the nearest, facility within the designated receiving system pursuant to s. 394.462 for examination. A law enforcement officer transporting a person pursuant to this subparagraph shall restrain the person in the least restrictive manner available and appropriate under the circumstances. The officer shall execute a written report detailing the circumstances under which the person was taken into custody, which must be made a part of the patient's clinical record. Any facility accepting the patient based on this report must send a copy of the report to the department within 5 working days.

3. A physician, a physician assistant, a clinical psychologist, a psychiatric nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse registered under s. 464.0123, a mental health counselor, a marriage and family therapist, or a clinical social worker may execute a certificate stating that he or she has examined a person within the preceding 48 hours and finds that the person appears to meet the criteria for involuntary examination and stating the observations upon which that conclusion is based. If other less restrictive means, such as voluntary appearance for outpatient evaluation, are not available, a law enforcement officer shall take into custody the person named in the certificate and deliver him or her to the appropriate, or nearest, facility within the designated receiving system pursuant to s. 394.462 for involuntary examination. The law enforcement officer shall execute a written report detailing the circumstances under which the person was taken into custody. The report and certificate shall be made a part of the patient's clinical record. Any facility accepting the patient based on this certificate must send a copy of the certificate to the department within 5

working days. The document may be submitted electronically through existing data systems, if applicable.

When sending the order, report, or certificate to the department, a facility shall, at a minimum, provide information about which action was taken regarding the patient under paragraph (g), which information shall also be made a part of the patient’s clinical record.

Section 3. Section 397.341, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

397.341 Transportation of individuals by law enforcement officers.—A law enforcement officer transporting an individual pursuant to this chapter shall restrain that individual in the least restrictive manner available and appropriate under the circumstances.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.

Approved by the Governor April 6, 2022.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 6, 2022.