
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO ASSISTED COMMUNITY TREATMENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the assisted
2 community treatment program (ACT) established in 2013 provides
3 individuals with severe mental illness who are unlikely to live
4 safely in the community without available supervision with the
5 necessary medical treatment and medication when it is in the
6 individual's best interest. The legislature further finds that
7 although ACT presents these individuals with an opportunity to
8 receive on-going treatment in the least restrictive setting and
9 serves as a vital alternative to repeat emergency interventions
10 as their primary course of treatment, many mentally ill
11 individuals fail to participate in the program to partake of
12 such benefits.

13 The legislature finds that existing law does not require a
14 guardian ad litem to be appointed to represent the individual
15 with severe mental illness during ACT or in the case of an
16 application for emergency examination and hospitalization (MH-1)
17 proceedings initiated by a police officer. The legislature



1 further finds that the mandatory appointment of a guardian ad
2 litem will improve the ACT and MH-1 processes by providing an
3 advocate for the concerned individuals needs and interest.

4 The purpose of this Act is to require the court to appoint,
5 at the time an ACT petition or MH-1 application is filed, a
6 guardian ad litem to represent the best interests of the
7 individual who is subject to the petition throughout the
8 pendency of the judicial proceedings.

9 SECTION 2. Chapter 334, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended as follows:

11 1. By adding a new section to Part IV to be appropriately
12 designated and to read:

13 "§334- Appointment of guardian ad litem. (a) A law
14 enforcement officer, licensed physician, advanced practice
15 registered nurse, psychologist, attorney, member of the clergy,
16 health or social service professional, or any state or county
17 employee in the course of employment, shall petition a court
18 with jurisdiction for the appointment of a guardian ad litem to
19 represent the interests of the subject throughout the pendency
20 of the application and any related proceedings."



1 2. By adding a new section to Part VIII to be
2 appropriately designated and to read:

3 "§334- Appointment of guardian ad litem. (a) The
4 family court, upon receipt of a petition filed under this part,
5 shall appoint a guardian ad litem to represent the best
6 interests of the subject throughout the pendency of the
7 proceedings."

8 SECTION 3. Section 334-59, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

10 "(d) Emergency hospitalization. If the psychiatrist or
11 advanced practice registered nurse with prescriptive authority
12 and who holds an accredited national certification in an
13 advanced practice registered nurse psychiatric specialization
14 who performs the emergency examination has reason to believe
15 that the patient is:

16 (1) Mentally ill or suffering from substance abuse;

17 (2) Imminently dangerous to self or others; and

18 (3) In need of care or treatment, or both;

19 the psychiatrist or advanced practice registered nurse with
20 prescriptive authority and who holds an accredited national
21 certification in an advanced practice registered nurse



1 psychiatric specialization shall direct that the patient be
2 hospitalized on an emergency basis or cause the patient to be
3 transferred to another psychiatric facility for emergency
4 hospitalization, or both. The patient shall have the right
5 immediately upon admission to telephone the patient's guardian
6 or a family member including a reciprocal beneficiary, or an
7 adult friend and an attorney. If the patient declines to
8 exercise that right, the staff of the facility shall inform the
9 adult patient of the right to waive notification to the family,
10 including a reciprocal beneficiary, and shall make reasonable
11 efforts to ensure that the patient's guardian or family,
12 including a reciprocal beneficiary, is notified of the emergency
13 admission but the patient's family, including a reciprocal
14 beneficiary, need not be notified if the patient is an adult and
15 requests that there be no notification[-], then a guardian ad
16 litem shall be appointed by the family court for the period of
17 the emergency hospitalization. The patient shall be allowed to
18 confer with an attorney in private."

19 SECTION 4. Section 334-125, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended by amending subsections (a) and (b) to read as follows:

21 "(a) Notice of the hearing shall be:



- 1 (1) Served personally on the subject of the petition
2 pursuant to family court rules;
- 3 (2) Served personally or by certified or registered mail,
4 return receipt requested, deliverable to the addressee
5 only, to as many as are known to the petitioner of the
6 subject's spouse or reciprocal beneficiary, legal
7 parents, adult children, and legal guardian, if one
8 has been appointed. If the subject of the petition
9 has no living spouse or reciprocal beneficiary, legal
10 parent, adult children, or legal guardian, or if none
11 can be found, notice of the hearing shall be served on
12 at least one of the subject's closest adult relatives,
13 if any can be found;
- 14 (3) Served on the [~~public defender,~~] guardian ad litem
15 appointed for the subject of the petition;
- 16 (4) Served on the attorney for the subject of the
17 petition, [~~or other court appointed attorney as]~~ if
18 applicable; and
- 19 [+4+] (5) Given to other persons as the court may
20 designate.
- 21 (b) The notice shall include the following:



1 (1) The date, time, place of hearing, a clear statement of
2 the purpose of the proceedings and possible
3 consequences to the subject, and a statement of the
4 legal standard upon which assisted community treatment
5 is being considered;

6 (2) A copy of the petition;

7 (3) Notice that the subject of the petition has been
8 assigned a guardian ad litem to represent the best
9 interests of the subject throughout the proceeding;

10 (4) The name and contact information of the guardian ad
11 litem appointed for the subject of the petition; and

12 [~~3~~] (5) Notice that the subject of the petition is
13 entitled to the assistance of an attorney, and that
14 [the public defender has been notified of these
15 proceedings; and

16 ~~(4) Notice that if the subject does not want to be~~
17 ~~represented by the public defender,]~~ the subject may
18 contact [~~the subject's~~] their own attorney."

19 SECTION 5. Section 334-126, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended to read as follows:



1 "§334-126 Hearing on petition. (a) The court shall
2 adjourn or continue a hearing for failure to timely notify a
3 person entitled to be notified unless the court determines that
4 the interests of justice require that the hearing continue
5 without adjournment or continuance.

6 (b) The time and form of the procedure incident to hearing
7 the issues in the petition shall be provided by family court
8 rule and consistent with this part.

9 (c) Hearings may be held at any convenient place within
10 the circuit. The subject of the petition, any interested party,
11 or the family court upon its own motion may request a hearing in
12 another court because of inconvenience to the parties,
13 witnesses, or the family court or because of the subject's
14 physical or mental condition.

15 (d) The hearing shall be closed to the public, unless the
16 subject of the petition requests otherwise. Individuals
17 entitled to notice are entitled to be present in the courtroom
18 for the hearing and to receive a copy of the hearing transcript
19 or recording, unless the court determines that the interests of
20 justice require otherwise.



1 (e) The subject of the petition [~~shall~~] is not required to
2 be present at the hearing[~~. However, if~~]; provided that the
3 subject has been served with the petition and [~~does not appear~~
4 ~~at the hearing, the court may appoint a~~] the appointed guardian
5 ad litem is present to represent the best interests of the
6 subject through the proceedings.

7 ~~(f) Notwithstanding chapter 802 to the contrary, the~~
8 ~~public defender or other court appointed counsel shall represent~~
9 ~~the subject upon filing of the petition. A copy of the petition~~
10 ~~shall be served upon the public defender by the petitioner. The~~
11 ~~public defender or the court appointed counsel may withdraw upon~~
12 ~~a showing that the subject is not indigent. If the subject does~~
13 ~~not desire representation, the court may discharge the attorney~~
14 ~~after finding that the subject understands the proceedings and~~
15 ~~the relief prayed for in the petition. Nothing in this~~
16 ~~subsection shall be construed to:~~

17 ~~(1) Require the subject of the petition to accept legal~~
18 ~~representation by the public defender or other court-~~
19 ~~appointed counsel; or~~



1 ~~(2)~~ Prevent the subject of the petition from obtaining
2 their own legal counsel to represent them in any
3 proceeding.

4 ~~(g)~~ (f) If the subject of the petition is represented by
5 ~~[an]~~ their own attorney, the attorney shall be allowed adequate
6 time for investigation of the matters at issue and for
7 preparation, and shall be permitted to present the evidence that
8 the attorney believes necessary for a proper disposition of the
9 proceeding.

10 ~~[(h)]~~ (g) No subject of the petition shall be ordered to
11 receive assisted community treatment unless at least one
12 psychiatrist or advanced practice registered nurse with
13 prescriptive authority and who holds an accredited national
14 certification in an advanced practice registered nurse
15 psychiatric specialization testifies in person at the hearing
16 who has personally assessed the subject, within a reasonable
17 time before the filing of the petition up to the time when the
18 psychiatrist or advanced practice registered nurse with
19 prescriptive authority and who holds an accredited national
20 certification in an advanced practice registered nurse
21 psychiatric specialization provides oral testimony at court.



1 The testimony of the psychiatrist or advanced practice
2 registered nurse with prescriptive authority and who holds an
3 accredited national certification in an advanced practice
4 registered nurse psychiatric specialization shall state the
5 facts which support the allegation that the subject meets all
6 the criteria for assisted community treatment, provide a written
7 treatment plan, which shall include non-mental health treatment
8 if appropriate, provide the rationale for the recommended
9 treatment, and identify the designated mental health program
10 responsible for the coordination of care.

11 If the recommended assisted community treatment includes
12 medication, the testimony of the psychiatrist or advanced
13 practice registered nurse with prescriptive authority and who
14 holds an accredited national certification in an advanced
15 practice registered nurse psychiatric specialization shall
16 describe the types or classes of medication [~~which~~] that should
17 be authorized, and describe the physical and mental beneficial
18 and detrimental effects of such medication.

19 ~~(i)~~ (h) The subject of the petition may secure a
20 psychiatric examination and present the findings as evidence at
21 the hearing. The subject shall be entitled to a psychiatric



1 examination at a community mental health center if the subject
2 so desires, and if an examination has not already been conducted
3 at a community mental health center [~~which~~] that will lead to
4 psychiatric testimony at the hearing."

5 SECTION 6. Section 334-127, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
6 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

7 "(b) If after hearing all relevant evidence, including the
8 results of any diagnostic examination ordered by the family
9 court, the family court finds that the criteria for assisted
10 community treatment under section 334-121(1) have been met
11 beyond a reasonable doubt and that the criteria under section
12 334-121(2) to 334-121(4) have been met by clear and convincing
13 evidence, the family court shall order the subject to obtain
14 assisted community treatment for a period of no more than one
15 year. The written treatment plan submitted pursuant to section
16 [~~334-126(h)~~] 334-126(g) shall be attached to the order and made
17 a part of the order.

18 If the family court finds by clear and convincing evidence
19 that the beneficial mental and physical effects of recommended
20 medication outweigh the detrimental mental and physical effects,
21 if any, the order may authorize types or classes of medication



1 to be included in treatment at the discretion of the treating
2 psychiatrist or advanced practice registered nurse with
3 prescriptive authority and who holds an accredited national
4 certification in an advanced practice registered nurse
5 psychiatric specialization.

6 The court order shall also state who should receive notice
7 of intent to discharge early in the event that the treating
8 psychiatrist or advanced practice registered nurse with
9 prescriptive authority and who holds an accredited national
10 certification in an advanced practice registered nurse
11 psychiatric specialization determines, prior to the end of the
12 court ordered period of treatment, that the subject should be
13 discharged early from assisted community treatment.

14 Notice of the order shall be provided to those persons
15 entitled to notice pursuant to section 334-125."

16 SECTION 7. Section 334-129, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

18 "(a) A treating psychiatrist or advanced practice
19 registered nurse with prescriptive authority and who holds an
20 accredited national certification in an advanced practice
21 registered nurse psychiatric specialization may prescribe or



1 administer to the subject of the order reasonable and
 2 appropriate medication or medications, if specifically
 3 authorized by the court order, and treatment that is consistent
 4 with accepted medical standards and the family court order,
 5 including the written treatment plan submitted pursuant to
 6 section [~~334-126(h).~~] 334-126(g)."

7 SECTION 8. Section 334-133, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
 8 amended to read as follows:

9 "§334-133 **Petition for additional period [†]of[†]**
 10 **treatment; hearing.** (a) Prior to the expiration of the period
 11 of assisted community treatment ordered by the family court, any
 12 interested party may file a petition with the family court for
 13 an order of continued assisted community treatment. The
 14 petition shall be filed, a guardian ad litem be appointed, and
 15 notice be provided in the same manner as under sections 334-123
 16 and 334-125.

17 (b) The family court shall appoint a guardian ad litem,
 18 hold a hearing on the petition, and make its decision in the
 19 same manner as provided under sections 334-123 to 334-127. The
 20 family court may order the continued assisted community
 21 treatment for not more than one year after the date of the



1 hearing pursuant to this section if the court finds that the
2 criteria for assisted community treatment continue to exist and
3 are likely to continue beyond one hundred eighty days.

4 (c) Nothing in this section shall preclude the subject's
5 stipulation to the continuance [+]of[+] an existing court order.
6 This section shall be in addition to the provisions on the
7 objection to discharge."

8 SECTION 9. Section 334-134, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
9 amended to read as follows:

10 **"§334-134 Hearing for discharge.** Any person may petition
11 the family court for the discharge of an order of assisted
12 community treatment during the period of assisted community
13 treatment after sixty days from the most recent hearing
14 involving the subject of the order. The petition shall be
15 filed, guardian ad litem appointed, notice given, hearing held,
16 and order made in the same manner as provided for the original
17 petition alleging that the subject of the order met the criteria
18 for assisted community treatment."

19 SECTION 10. Section 802-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:



1 " (b) ~~[Except as provided in section 334-126(f), the]~~ The
2 appearance of the public defender in all judicial proceedings
3 shall be subject to court approval."

4 SECTION 11. Section 802-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
5 amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

6 " (a) ~~[Except as provided in section 334-126(f), when]~~ When
7 it shall appear to a judge that a person requesting the
8 appointment of counsel satisfies the requirements of this
9 chapter, the judge shall appoint counsel to represent the person
10 at all stages of the proceedings, including appeal, if any. If
11 conflicting interests exist, or if the interests of justice
12 require, the court may appoint private counsel, who shall
13 receive reasonable compensation for necessary expenses,
14 including travel, the amount of which shall be determined by the
15 court, and reasonable fees pursuant to subsection (b). All
16 expenses and fees shall be ordered by the court. Duly ordered
17 payment shall be made upon vouchers approved by the director of
18 finance and warrants drawn by the comptroller."

19 SECTION 12. This Act does not affect rights and duties
20 that matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that
21 were begun before its effective date.



1 SECTION 13. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 14. This Act shall take effect on May 1, 2029.



Report Title:

Mental Health; Assisted Community Treatment; Petition; Guardian Ad Litem; Appointment; Notice; Hearing

Description:

Mandates appointment of a guardian ad litem to represent the best interest of a mentally ill individual in assistant community treatment proceedings and regarding an MH-1 application. Eliminates the need for the office of the public offender to participate in the proceedings. Effective 5/1/2029. (SD1)

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