

Special Report December 2013

Grievance Procedure Laws for Psychiatric Patients and Others with Disabilities

Massachusetts: Eight page Grievance Law outlining appeal processes, who investigates complaints, state required to keep statistics of patient complaints, due process rules, appeal process rules to state, etc.

Georgia: Fourteen page Grievance Law calls for Independent Body creating grievance rules, due process, appeal process, investigating complaints, keeping statistics of complaints, making them available to the general public, etc.

Maine: Important portions of the patient grievance law is controlled by court settlement of a lawsuit—"Bates VS the state of Maine." Lawsuit helped create a 96 page book outlining patient rights, thirteen pages devoted to the grievance procedure, appeal process, due process, etc.

Alaska: Grievance Procedure Law (AS47.30.847) for psychiatric patients, three paragraphs, about 100 words. Psychiatric institutions' staffs create the patient grievance appeal process/due process rules. Law may not cover all psychiatric patients in units according to the Department of Health and Social Services. No appeal process to state agencies by patients in the grievance law.

Alaska needs to revise, update and improve their grievance procedure law for psychiatric patients; add or require an appeal process/ due process rules in the law and requirement for keeping statistics of patients' complaints, cover all psychiatric patients, etc.

Rep. Pete Higgins of Fairbanks will introduce a Bill in January to improve the grievance procedure law for psychiatric patients (Work Draft 28-LSO869/A). Call or email your support.

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