

Support letter for HB 214

Testimony to House Judiciary Committee

3/29/2014

Mr. Chair, Committee members, My name is Dorrance Collins. I volunteer as a mental health patient advocate.

Congress passed public law 830 July 28th, 1956 granting the territory of Alaska authority over its mental health laws.

In the 1950's, psychiatric patients basically only had whatever rights that each psychiatric facility wanted to give to them.

The current psychiatric patient grievance procedure law AS47.30.847 in its construction is a throwback to the 1950's. Each psychiatric facility chooses the grievance procedure, due process, appeal process rights for their psychiatric patients. (Including choosing the impartial body that hears a patient's complaint.)

HB 214 needs to be passed to provide fair, uniform grievance procedure rules for all psychiatric patients in Alaska.

Thank you,

Mental Health Advocates, Dorrance Collins, 3240 Penland Pkwy, Space 35,
Anchorage, AK. 99508 (907) 929-0532

Dorrance Collins

Reference Information:

2013—DHSS in an email stated each psychiatric facility will develop its own patient grievance procedure which is approved by the certification organization that the facility hires.—There are approximately 27,000 individuals who receive some form of psychiatric treatment each year.

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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January 3, 2008

Ms. Faith Meyers and Mr. Dorrance Collins
3240 Penland Pkwy, Sp. 35
Anchorage, AK 99508

Dear Ms. Meyers and Mr. Collins:

A number of staff internal and external to the Department of Health and Social Services has reviewed your request for information. Providence Hospital does not have to conform to AS 47.30.847.

Providence Hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission and CMS and must meet specific standards relative to the resolution of a patient grievance.

Additional information on the accreditation standards for hospitals may be found at the respective websites for the Joint Commission and CMS located at www.JointCommission.org and <http://www.cms.hhs.gov>.

Sincerely,

Wilee H. Hogan for
Karleen K. Jackson
Karleen K. Jackson, Ph.D.
Commissioner

cc: Bill Hogan, Deputy Commissioner
Bill Streur, Deputy Commissioner
Melissa Stone, Director, Division of Behavioral Health
Ron Adler, CEO, Alaska Psychiatric Hospital

Current grievance law also may not cover units in hospitals that do civil commitments/forced evaluations.