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Source

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Chapter No.

66

AN ACT

Relating to treatment for alcoholism or drug abuse.

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

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1

Approved by the Governor: June 18, 1996

Actual Effective Date: September 16, 1996

AN ACT

1 Relating to treatment for alcoholism or drug abuse.

2

3 * Section 1. AS 47.37.170(b) is amended to read:

4 (b) A person who appears to be incapacitated by alcohol or drugs in a public
5 place shall be taken into protective custody by a peace officer or a member of the
6 emergency service patrol and immediately brought to an approved public treatment
7 facility, an approved private treatment facility, or another appropriate health facility
8 or service for emergency medical treatment. If no treatment facility or emergency
9 medical service is available, a person who appears to be incapacitated by alcohol or
10 drugs in a public place shall be taken to a state or municipal detention facility in the
11 area [,] if that appears necessary for the protection of the person's health or safety.

12 * Sec. 2. AS 47.37.170(d) is amended to read:

13 (d) A person who, after medical examination at an approved private
14 treatment facility, or another appropriate health facility or service for emergency
15 medical treatment, is found to be incapacitated by alcohol or drugs at the time of

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1 admission or to have become incapacitated by alcohol or drugs at any time after
2 admission, may not be detained at a facility after the person is no longer incapacitated
3 by alcohol or drugs. A person may not be detained at a facility if the person remains
4 incapacitated by alcohol for more than 48 hours after admission as a patient [,
5 UNLESS THE PERSON IS COMMITTED UNDER AS 47.37.180]. A person may
6 consent to remain in the facility as long as the physician in charge considers it
7 appropriate.

8 * Sec. 3. AS 47.37.170(f) is amended to read:

9 (f) If a patient is admitted to an approved public treatment facility, family or
10 next of kin shall be promptly notified. If an adult patient who is not incapacitated by
11 alcohol or drugs requests that there be no notification of next of kin, the request shall
12 be granted.

13 * Sec. 4. AS 47.37.170(g) is amended to read:

14 (g) A person may not bring an action for damages based on the decision under
15 this section to take or not to take an intoxicated person or a person incapacitated by
16 alcohol or drugs into protective custody, unless the action is for damages caused by
17 gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

18 * Sec. 5. AS 47.37.170(i) is amended to read:

19 (i) A person taken to a detention facility under (a) or (b) of this section may
20 be detained only (1) until a treatment facility or emergency medical service is made
21 available, [OR] (2) until the person is no longer intoxicated or incapacitated by alcohol
22 or drugs, or (3) for a maximum period of 12 hours, whichever occurs first. A
23 detaining officer or a detention facility official may release a person who is detained
24 under (a) or (b) of this section at any time to the custody of a responsible adult. A
25 peace officer or a member of the emergency service patrol, in detaining a person under
26 (a) or (b) of this section and in taking the person to a treatment facility, an emergency
27 medical service, or a detention facility, is taking the person into protective custody and
28 the officer or patrol member shall make reasonable efforts to provide for and protect
29 the health and safety of the detainee. In taking a person into protective custody under
30 (a) and (b) of this section, a detaining officer, a member of the emergency service
31 patrol, or a detention facility official may take reasonable steps for self-protection,

1 including a full protective search of the person of a detainee. Protective custody under
2 (a) and (b) of this section does not constitute an arrest and no entry or other record
3 may be made to indicate that the person detained has been arrested or charged with a
4 crime, except that a confidential record may be made that [WHICH] is necessary for
5 the administrative purposes of the facility to which the person has been taken or that
6 [WHICH] is necessary for statistical purposes where the person's name may not be
7 disclosed.

8 * Sec. 6. AS 47.37.180(a) is amended to read:

9 (a) An intoxicated person who (1) has threatened, attempted to inflict, or
10 inflicted physical harm on another or is likely to inflict physical harm on another
11 unless committed, or (2) is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs, may be committed to an
12 approved public treatment facility for emergency treatment. A refusal to undergo
13 treatment does not constitute evidence of lack of judgment as to the need for treatment.

14 * Sec. 7. AS 47.37.180 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

15 (g) The administrator of an approved public treatment facility may accept an
16 application for commitment under this section from a health facility and may authorize
17 the health facility to hold the person who is the subject of the commitment petition at
18 the health facility as long as medically necessary, before transferring the person to the
19 approved public treatment facility. An administrator who accepts an application for
20 commitment from a health facility shall comply with the provisions of (c) - (f) of this
21 section if the person being committed is held for longer than 48 hours from the time
22 the administrator accepts the application for commitment under this subsection. A
23 person committed under this subsection shall be transported from the health facility to
24 the approved public treatment facility as soon as the person is discharged from the
25 health facility. If the person being committed under this subsection is physically
26 present at the health facility at the time an application for extension of detention is
27 filed under (c) of this section or is physically present at the health facility when a
28 petition for involuntary commitment is filed under (e) of this section, the administrator
29 accepting the application for commitment under this subsection shall inform the court
30 of where the person being committed is being held and when the person being
31 committed is expected to be capable of being transferred to the approved public

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1 treatment facility.

2 * Sec. 8. AS 47.37.190(a) is amended to read:

3 (a) A [AFTER A HEARING INITIATED BY PETITION OF A] spouse or
4 guardian, a relative, the certifying physician, or the administrator in charge of an
5 approved public treatment facility may petition the court for a 30-day involuntary
6 commitment order [, A PERSON MAY BE COMMITTED TO THE CUSTODY OF
7 A PRIVATE OR PUBLIC FACILITY BY THE SUPERIOR COURT]. The petition
8 must allege that the person is an alcoholic or drug abuser who [HABITUALLY
9 LACKS SELF-CONTROL IN USING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND THAT THE
10 PERSON] (1) has threatened, attempted to inflict, or inflicted physical harm on another
11 and that unless committed is likely to inflict physical harm on another; or (2) is
12 incapacitated by alcohol or drugs. A refusal to undergo treatment does not constitute
13 evidence of lack of judgment as to the need for treatment. The petition must be
14 accompanied by a certificate of a licensed physician who has examined the person within
15 two days before submission of the petition, unless the person whose commitment is
16 sought has refused to submit to a medical examination, in which case the fact of refusal
17 must be alleged in the petition. The certificate must set out the physician's findings in
18 support of the allegations of the petition.

19 * Sec. 9. AS 47.37.190(b) is amended to read:

20 (b) After the petition is filed, the court shall fix a date for a hearing no later than
21 10 days after the date the petition was filed. A copy of the petition and of the notice of
22 the hearing, including the date fixed by the court, shall be served on

23 (1) the petitioner;

24 (2) the person whose commitment is sought or the person's guardian,

25 if any;

26 (3) the attorney representing [NEXT OF KIN OF] the person whose
27 commitment is sought;

28 (4) the administrator in charge of the approved public or private
29 treatment facility in which the committed person has been committed for emergency
30 care; and

31 (5) any other person the court considers appropriate. [A COPY OF THE

1 PETITION AND CERTIFICATE SHALL BE DELIVERED TO EACH PERSON
2 NOTIFIED.]

3 * Sec. 10. AS 47.37.190(c) is repealed and reenacted to read:

4 (c) A person who is the subject of a petition filed under this section does not
5 have the right to a jury.

6 * Sec. 11. AS 47.37.200 is repealed and reenacted to read:

7 Sec. 47.37.200. HEARING ON PETITION FOR INVOLUNTARY
8 COMMITMENT. (a) At the hearing for a 30-day commitment required under
9 AS 47.37.190(b), the court shall hear all relevant testimony, including, if possible, the
10 testimony of at least one licensed physician who has examined the person whose
11 commitment is sought. The person whose commitment is sought shall be present unless
12 the court believes that being present is likely to be injurious to the person, in which case
13 the court may conduct the hearing telephonically. The court may examine the person in
14 open court, or, if advisable, examine the person out of court. If the person has refused
15 to be examined by a licensed physician, the person shall be given an opportunity to
16 request examination by a court-appointed licensed physician. If the person fails to
17 request a medical examination and there is sufficient evidence to believe that the
18 allegations of the petition are true, or, if the court believes that more medical evidence
19 is necessary, the court may issue a temporary order committing the person to a private
20 or public facility for a period of not more than five days for purposes of a diagnostic
21 examination.

22 (b) If after hearing all relevant evidence, including the results of any diagnostic
23 examination by the private or public facility, the court finds that grounds for involuntary
24 commitment have been clearly established, the court shall issue an order of 30-day
25 commitment to the private or public facility.

26 (c) A person committed for a 30-day period shall remain in the custody of a
27 private or public facility for treatment for a period of not more than 30 days. At the end
28 of the 30-day period, the person shall be automatically discharged unless the director of
29 the approved public facility or approved private facility, before the expiration of the
30 period, files a petition for recommitment under AS 47.37.205.

31 (d) A private or public facility must be capable of providing adequate and

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1 appropriate treatment for a person in its custody. A public facility may transfer a person
2 in its custody from one approved public treatment facility to another if the transfer is
3 medically advisable.

4 (e) A person committed to the custody of an approved public facility or an
5 approved private facility shall be discharged at any time before the end of the period for
6 which the person has been committed if either of the following conditions is met:

7 (1) further treatment is not likely to bring about significant improvement
8 in the person's condition; or

9 (2) treatment is no longer adequate or appropriate.

10 (f) The court shall inform the person whose commitment or recommitment is
11 sought of the right to contest the petition, to be represented by counsel at every stage of
12 the proceedings relating to commitment and recommitment, to have counsel appointed
13 by the court or provided by the court, if the person is unable to obtain counsel, and of
14 the right to a jury trial if recommitment is sought under AS 47.37.205. The person
15 whose commitment or recommitment is sought shall be informed of the right to be
16 examined by a licensed physician of the person's choice. If the person is unable to
17 obtain a licensed physician and requests examination by a physician, the court shall
18 appoint a licensed physician for the examination.

19 (g) If a private treatment facility agrees with the request of a competent patient
20 or the patient's parent, adult sibling, adult child, or guardian to accept the patient for
21 treatment, the administrator of the public treatment facility shall transfer the patient to
22 the private treatment facility.

23 (h) A person committed under this chapter may at any time seek discharge from
24 commitment by writ of habeas corpus under AS 12.75.

25 * Sec. 12. AS 47.37 is amended by adding a new section to read:

26 Sec. 47.37.205. PROCEDURE FOR RECOMMITMENT FOLLOWING 30-
27 DAY COMMITMENT. (a) At any time during a person's 30-day commitment, the
28 director of an approved public facility or approved private facility may file with the court
29 a petition for a 180-day commitment of that person. The petition must include all
30 material required under AS 47.37.190(a) except that references to "30 days" shall be read
31 as "180 days" and must allege that the person continues to be an alcoholic or drug abuser

1 who is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs, or who continues to be at risk of serious
2 physical harm or illness.

3 (b) Upon the filing of a petition for recommitment under (a) of this section, the
4 court shall fix a date for hearing no later than 10 days after the date the petition was
5 filed. A copy of the petition and of the notice of hearing, including the date fixed by
6 the court, shall be served on

7 (1) the petitioner;

8 (2) the person whose recommitment is sought or the person's guardian,
9 if any;

10 (3) the attorney representing the person whose recommitment is sought;

11 (4) the original petitioner under AS 47.37.190(a), if different from the
12 petitioner for recommitment;

13 (5) any other person the court considers appropriate.

14 (c) If, not less than two days before the date set for a recommitment hearing
15 under (a) of this section, the person being recommitted or the person's counsel or advisor
16 files a written request with the court, the court shall summon and impanel a jury of six
17 residents of the judicial district to hear and consider evidence concerning the condition
18 of the person being recommitted.

19 (d) At the hearing regarding recommitment for a 180-day period, the court or
20 jury shall proceed as provided in AS 47.37.200(a) and (b).

21 (e) The provisions of AS 47.37.200(c) - (h) shall apply equally to periods of
22 recommitment under this section, except that references to "30 days" shall be read as
23 "180 days."

24 * Sec. 13. AS 47.37 is amended by adding a new section to read:

25 Sec. 47.37.207. UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCES: RETURN TO FACILITY.

26 When a person committed under AS 47.37.190 - 47.37.205 is absent from a treatment
27 facility without authorization, the administrator, or that person's designee, may contact
28 peace officers who shall take the person into custody and return the respondent to the
29 treatment facility.

30 * Sec. 14. AS 47.37.210(b) is amended to read:

31 (b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, the director may make available

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1 information from patients' records for purposes of research into the causes and
2 treatment of alcoholism or drug abuse. Information [. NO INFORMATION] may
3 not disclose a patient's name.

4 * Sec. 15. AS 47.37 is amended by adding a new section to read:

5 Sec. 47.37.235. LIMITATIONS ON LIABILITY; BAD FAITH
6 APPLICATION A FELONY. (a) Except as provided under (b) of this section, a
7 person acting in good faith upon either actual knowledge or reliable information who
8 takes a person into protective custody or detains a person under AS 47.37.170 -
9 47.37.180, or who petitions for commitment under AS 47.37.180 - 47.37.205, is not
10 subject to civil or criminal liability.

11 (b) The following persons may not be held civilly or criminally liable for
12 detaining or failing to detain a person under AS 47.37.170 - 47.37.270 or for releasing
13 a person under AS 47.37.170 - 47.37.270 at or before the end of the period for which
14 the person was admitted or committed for protective custody or treatment if the
15 persons have performed their duties in good faith and without gross negligence:

16 (1) an officer of an approved public or private treatment facility;

17 (2) the administrator of an approved public or private treatment facility,
18 and the staff of an approved public or private treatment facility;

19 (3) a public official performing functions necessary to the
20 administration of AS 47.37.170 - 47.37.270;

21 (4) a peace officer or other person responsible for detaining or
22 transporting a person under AS 47.37.170 - 47.37.270.

23 (c) A person who knowingly initiates an involuntary commitment petition
24 under AS 47.37.180 - 47.37.205 without having good cause to believe that the other
25 person is an alcoholic or drug abuser and is incapacitated or at risk of serious physical
26 harm or illness if not treated is guilty of a class C felony.

27 * Sec. 16. AS 47.37.270(1) is amended to read:

28 (1) "alcoholic or drug abuser" means a person who demonstrates
29 increased tolerance to alcohol or drugs, who suffers from withdrawal when alcohol
30 or drugs are not available, whose habitual lack of self-control concerning the use
31 of alcohol or drugs causes significant hazard to the person's health, and who

1 continues to use alcohol or drugs despite the adverse consequences [HABITUALLY
2 LACKS SELF-CONTROL IN USING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, OR USES
3 ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES TO THE EXTENT THAT THE PERSON'S HEALTH IS
4 SUBSTANTIALLY IMPAIRED OR ENDANGERED, OR THE PERSON'S SOCIAL
5 OR ECONOMIC FUNCTION IS SUBSTANTIALLY DISRUPTED];

6 * Sec. 17. AS 47.37.270(10) is amended to read:

7 (10) "incapacitated by alcohol or drugs" means a person who, as a
8 result of alcohol or drugs, is unconscious or whose judgment is otherwise so impaired
9 that the person (A) is incapable of realizing and making [A] rational decisions
10 [DECISION] with respect to the [A] need for treatment and (B) is unable to take care
11 of the person's basic safety or personal needs, including food, clothing, shelter, or
12 medical care [, AS EVIDENCED OBJECTIVELY BY EXTREME PHYSICAL
13 DEBILITATION, PHYSICAL HARM OR THREATS OF HARM TO OTHERS OR
14 CHRONIC INABILITY TO HOLD REGULAR EMPLOYMENT];

15 * Sec. 18. AS 47.37.270(13) is amended to read:

16 (13) "intoxicated person" means a person whose mental or physical
17 functioning is substantially impaired as a result of the use of alcohol or drugs;

18 * Sec. 19. AS 47.37.270(14) is amended to read:

19 (14) "treatment" means the broad range of emergency, outpatient,
20 intermediate, and inpatient services and care that may be extended to alcoholics, [AND]
21 intoxicated persons, or drug abusers, including diagnostic evaluation, medical,
22 psychiatric, psychological, and social service care, vocational rehabilitation and career
23 counseling;

24 * Sec. 20. AS 47.37.270 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

25 (16) "drugs" means a drug that is included in the controlled substance
26 schedules set out in AS 11.71.140 - 11.71.190.

27 * Sec. 21. AS 47.37.170(j) is repealed.