

# SENATE BILL 928

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By: **Senator Ready**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2021

Assigned to: Rules

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Mental Health Law – Reform of Laws and Delivery of Service**

3 FOR the purpose of modifying certain standards for involuntary admission of individuals  
4 with mental disorders to a certain facility or Veterans' Administration hospital  
5 under certain circumstances; modifying certain standards or emergency evaluations  
6 of individuals with mental disorders under certain circumstances; defining a certain  
7 term; requiring the Maryland Police Training and Standards Commission to provide  
8 certain information to certain schools that conduct police entrance-level and  
9 in-service training courses; and generally relating to the reform of mental health  
10 laws and delivery of services to individuals with mental illness.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
12 Article – Health – General  
13 Section 10-601, 10-617(a), 10-622(a) and (c), 10-623, 10-626(a), and 10-632(e)  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

16 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
17 Article – Health – General  
18 Section 10-632(a)  
19 Annotated Code of Maryland  
20 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

21 Preamble

22 WHEREAS, Research shows that when a person with severe mental illness is in  
23 psychiatric crisis, minimizing the duration of untreated psychosis is essential to  
24 maximizing the person's prospects for recovery; and

25 WHEREAS, While voluntary psychiatric care is preferable, it is sometimes  
26 unattainable due to the inability of some individuals experiencing psychosis to recognize

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 their own illness and need for treatment; and

2 WHEREAS, Maryland's laws authorizing emergency evaluation and civil  
3 commitment for mental health treatment are generally limited to apply only when the  
4 person presents a "danger to life or safety of the individual or others", but offer no guidance  
5 as to the circumstances that might constitute such danger; and

6 WHEREAS, Maryland is one of only five states without explicit statutory language  
7 recognizing the inability to meet one's basic survival needs as a form of danger to self; and

8 WHEREAS, Twenty-four states have statutory language recognizing the risk of  
9 significant psychiatric deterioration if treatment is not rendered as a form of danger to self;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, In its 2020 Annual Report, the Commission to Study Mental and  
12 Behavioral Health in Maryland declared "it is crucial for the State to develop a clear and  
13 unambiguous standard for determining when individuals in crisis pose a danger to  
14 themselves and others", and called for legislation to address this need; now, therefore,

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Health – General**

18 10–601.

19 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

20 (b) "Clinical social worker" means an individual who is licensed under Title 19 of  
21 the Health Occupations Article to practice clinical social work.

22 (c) **"DANGER TO THE LIFE OR SAFETY OF THE INDIVIDUAL OR OF OTHERS"**  
23 **MEANS A SUBSTANTIAL RISK, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S CURRENT**  
24 **CONDITION AND, IF AVAILABLE, PERSONAL AND MEDICAL HISTORY, THAT AS A**  
25 **RESULT OF THE MENTAL DISORDER THE INDIVIDUAL WILL:**

26 **(1) CAUSE BODILY HARM TO THE INDIVIDUAL OR ANOTHER**  
27 **INDIVIDUAL;**

28 **(2) BE UNABLE, EXCEPT FOR REASONS OF INDIGENCE, TO PROVIDE**  
29 **FOR THE INDIVIDUAL'S BASIC NEEDS INCLUDING FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER,**  
30 **HEALTH, OR SAFETY; OR**

31 **(3) SUFFER SUBSTANTIAL DETERIORATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S**  
32 **JUDGMENT, REASONING, OR ABILITY TO CONTROL BEHAVIOR, PROVIDED THAT THE**  
33 **INDIVIDUAL IS CURRENTLY UNABLE TO MAKE A RATIONAL AND INFORMED DECISION**

1 AS TO WHETHER TO SUBMIT TO TREATMENT.

2 [(c)] (D) “Licensed clinical marriage and family therapist” means an individual  
3 who is licensed under Title 17, Subtitle 3A of the Health Occupations Article to practice  
4 clinical marriage and family therapy.

5 [(d)] (E) “Licensed clinical professional counselor” means an individual who is  
6 licensed under Title 17, Subtitle 3A of the Health Occupations Article to practice clinical  
7 professional counseling.

8 [(e)] (F) “Physician” means an individual who is licensed under Title 14 of the  
9 Health Occupations Article to practice medicine in this State.

10 [(f)] (G) “Psychiatric nurse practitioner” means an individual who is:

11 (1) Licensed as a registered nurse and certified as a nurse practitioner  
12 under Title 8 of the Health Occupations Article; and

13 (2) Practicing in the State as a certified registered nurse  
14 practitioner—psychiatric mental health.

15 [(g)] (H) “Psychologist” means an individual who is licensed under Title 18 of the  
16 Health Occupations Article to practice psychology.

17 10–617.

18 (a) A facility or Veterans’ Administration hospital may not admit the individual  
19 under this part unless:

20 (1) The individual has a mental disorder;

21 (2) The individual needs inpatient care or treatment;

22 (3) The individual [presents] **IS REASONABLY EXPECTED, IF NOT**  
23 **HOSPITALIZED, TO PRESENT** a danger to the life or safety of the individual or of others;

24 (4) The individual is unable or unwilling to be admitted voluntarily; and

25 (5) There is no available, less restrictive form of intervention that is  
26 consistent with the welfare and safety of the individual.

27 10–622.

28 (a) A petition for emergency evaluation of an individual may be made under this  
29 section only if the petitioner has reason to believe that the individual:

1 (1) Has a mental disorder; and

2 (2) [Presents] **IS REASONABLY EXPECTED, IF NOT HOSPITALIZED, TO**  
3 **PRESENT** a danger to the life or safety of the individual or of others.

4 (c) (1) A petition under this section shall:

5 (i) Be signed and verified by the petitioner;

6 (ii) State the petitioner's:

7 1. Name;

8 2. Address; and

9 3. Home and work telephone numbers;

10 (iii) State the emergency evaluatee's:

11 1. Name; and

12 2. Description;

13 (iv) State the following information, if available:

14 1. The address of the emergency evaluatee; and

15 2. The name and address of the spouse or a child, parent, or  
16 other relative of the emergency evaluatee or any other individual who is interested in the  
17 emergency evaluatee;

18 (v) If the individual who makes the petition for emergency  
19 evaluation is an individual authorized to do so under subsection (b)(1)(i) of this section,  
20 contain the license number of the individual;

21 (vi) Contain a description of the behavior and statements of the  
22 emergency evaluatee or any other information that led the petitioner to believe that the  
23 emergency evaluatee has a mental disorder and that the individual [presents] **IS**  
24 **REASONABLY EXPECTED, IF NOT HOSPITALIZED, TO PRESENT** a danger to the life or  
25 safety of the individual or of others; and

26 (vii) Contain any other facts that support the need for an emergency  
27 evaluation.

28 (2) The petition form shall contain a notice that the petitioner:

29 (i) May be required to appear before a court; and

1 (ii) Makes the statements under penalties of perjury.

2 10-623.

3 (a) If the petitioner under Part IV of this subtitle is not a physician, psychologist,  
4 clinical social worker, licensed clinical professional counselor, clinical nurse specialist in  
5 psychiatric and mental health nursing, psychiatric nurse practitioner, licensed clinical  
6 marriage and family therapist, health officer or designee of a health officer, or peace officer,  
7 the petitioner shall present the petition to the court for immediate review.

8 (b) After review of the petition, the court shall endorse the petition if the court  
9 finds probable cause to believe that the emergency evaluatee has shown the symptoms of a  
10 mental disorder and that the individual [presents] **IS REASONABLY EXPECTED, IF NOT**  
11 **HOSPITALIZED, TO PRESENT** a danger to the life or safety of the individual or of others.

12 (c) If the court does not find probable cause, the court shall indicate that fact on  
13 the petition, and no further action may be taken under the petition.

14 10-626.

15 (a) A court may order, at any time, an emergency evaluation under Part IV of this  
16 subtitle of an individual who has been arrested, if the court finds probable cause to believe  
17 that the individual has a mental disorder and the individual [presents] **IS REASONABLY**  
18 **EXPECTED, IF NOT HOSPITALIZED, TO PRESENT** a danger to the life or safety of the  
19 individual or of others.

20 10-632.

21 (a) Any individual proposed for involuntary admission under Part III of this  
22 subtitle shall be afforded a hearing to determine whether the individual is to be admitted  
23 to a facility or a Veterans' Administration hospital as an involuntary patient or released  
24 without being admitted.

25 (e) The hearing officer shall:

26 (1) Consider all the evidence and testimony of record; and

27 (2) Order the release of the individual from the facility unless the record  
28 demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that at the time of the hearing each of the  
29 following elements exist as to the individual whose involuntary admission is sought:

30 (i) The individual has a mental disorder;

31 (ii) The individual needs in-patient care or treatment;

32 (iii) The individual [presents] **IS REASONABLY EXPECTED, IF NOT**

1 **HOSPITALIZED, TO PRESENT** a danger to the life or safety of the individual or of others;

2 (iv) The individual is unable or unwilling to be voluntarily admitted  
3 to the facility;

4 (v) There is no available less restrictive form of intervention that is  
5 consistent with the welfare and safety of the individual; and

6 (vi) If the individual is 65 years old or older and is to be admitted to  
7 a State facility, the individual has been evaluated by a geriatric evaluation team and no  
8 less restrictive form of care or treatment was determined by the team to be appropriate.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Maryland Police Training  
10 and Standards Commission shall provide information regarding the definition of “danger  
11 to the life or safety of the individual or of others” in § 10–601 of the Health – General Article,  
12 as enacted by Section 1 of this Act, to all schools that conduct police entrance–level and  
13 in–service training courses required by the Commission, including State, regional, county,  
14 and municipal training schools.

15 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
16 1, 2021.