

# Mental Health Treatment Options for Minor Children

Parents or guardians seeking a mental health evaluation or treatment for a child must be notified of all legally available treatment options. These include minor-initiated treatment, parent-initiated treatment, and involuntary commitment.

## **Minor-Initiated Treatment (RCW 71.34.500-530)**

A minor child, 13 to 18 years old, may request an evaluation for outpatient or inpatient mental health treatment without parental consent. If the facility agrees with the need for mental health treatment the child may be offered mental health services. For a child under the age of 13, either parental consent or consent from an approved guardian is required for inpatient treatment.

## **Family Initiated Treatment (RCW 71.34.375)**

If a parent or guardian, for the purpose of mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, or evaluation, brings his or her minor child age 13-18 years old to an evaluation and treatment facility, a hospital emergency room, or an inpatient facility and the child refuses to engage voluntarily. The parent may request the child is seen without consent for a period of 3 months or 12 sessions (whichever criteria is reached first). During this time all efforts will be made to engage the youth voluntarily. If after 3 months or 12 sessions the minor continues to refuse treatment. They will be discharged from services. The parent can request to begin the 3 month or 12 session period again with another therapist.

## **Parent-Initiated Treatment (RCW 71.34.600-660)**

If the child is under the age of 18, the parent, guardian or authorized individual may bring the child to any mental health facility or hospital and request that a mental health evaluation be provided. This evaluation cannot take longer than 72 hours. Consent of the child is not required for either an outpatient or inpatient evaluation, or recommended inpatient treatment.

If it is determined the child has a mental disorder, and there is medical need for inpatient treatment, the parent or guardian may request that the child be held for treatment. If the inpatient program believes the child needs treatment for more than 7 days, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must then review the need for treatment. The child has the right to petition the Superior Court for release from the facility after the 7 days.

After the DSHS review, if DSHS determines that the child no longer needs inpatient treatment, the parent or guardian must be immediately notified and the child will be released within 24 hours. In this case, if the parent or guardian and facility both believe it is medically necessary for the child to remain in inpatient treatment, the facility will hold the child until the 2<sup>nd</sup> judicial day following the DSHS review. This will allow the parent or guardian time to file an at-risk youth petition (RCW 13.32A.191) by calling the Division of Children and Family Services Intake Line or by going to their local Juvenile Court. If DSHS determines that the child needs outpatient treatment and the child declines such treatment, the refusal shall be grounds for the parent or guardian to file an at-risk youth petition.

For information about possible out-of-home placement of the child, call the Division of Children and Family Services and request a family assessment per RCW 13.32A.150. Family Reconciliation Services (RCW 13.32A.040) may also be provided through this Department.

Children admitted to inpatient facilities under minor initiated or parent initiated treatment procedures must be released from the facility immediately upon the written request of the parent.

Please note: **No provider is obligated to provide treatment to a minor under the provisions of Parent-Initiated Treatment. However, a minor's refusal to consent to treatment shall not be the sole basis for a facility's decision to decline services.**

**Involuntary Treatment (RCW 71.34.700-795)**

If the facility believes the child is in need of immediate inpatient mental health treatment and the child refuses to consent to a voluntary admission, the child may be held for up to 12 hours to enable a Designated Mental Health Professional (DMHP) to evaluate the child for possible involuntary commitment. If no voluntary or less restrictive alternatives are available, and the DMHP determines that the child presents as a likelihood of serious harm or gravely disabled, as a result of a mental disorder, the child may be held at a facility. If the child is admitted to an inpatient mental health facility, he/she will be seen by a mental health specialist and medical staff within 24 hours. If it is determined that your child would be better served by a chemical dependency treatment facility he/she will be referred to an approved treatment program defined under RCW70.96A.020.: The child can be held for treatment up to 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. During this time, the facility may petition the court to have the child committed for an additional fourteen days if they believe further treatment is necessary. At the end of the 14 days, the facility may file a petition for up to one hundred eighty days of additional treatment. If the facility does not file a petition for an additional 14 or 180 days, the parent or guardian may seek review of the decision by filing notice with the court and providing a copy of the facility's report. To obtain a copy of the report, a Release of Information form must be completed and submitted to the records department of the inpatient facility.

If the DMHP does not hold the child, the parent or guardian may seek review of that decision by filing notice with the court and providing a copy of the DMHP's report or notes. To obtain a copy of the report or notes, a Release of Information form must be completed and submitted to the records department of the DMHP office.

If the child is released from hospitalization on a conditional release or a court order for a less restrictive alternative and is not following the conditions of that release/order, or has substantially deteriorated in his/her functioning, the child may be taken into custody by a DMHP and transported to an inpatient evaluation and treatment facility. For further assistance or questions, call the local mental health crisis line.

**I have been provided with written and verbal notice of the available treatment options for the child.**

PARENT / GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FACILITY REPRESENTATIVE'S SIGNATURE	DATE
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**Unable to obtain parent / guardian signature or acknowledgement.**

REASON FOR LACK OF SIGNATURE:	
FACILITY REPRESENTATIVE'S SIGNATURE	DATE