

Tens of Thousands of Children Sent for Involuntary Psychiatric Examination in Florida

More than 36,000 involuntary mental health exams performed on children and 4,000 of these examinations involved children 10 and younger.

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2020

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Each year on October 10th World Mental Health Day is observed for the stated purpose of raising awareness on mental health issues. This year the Florida chapter of the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR), a watchdog organization, hosted a seminar on mental health human rights. The event featured attorney Carmen Miller, a former assistant public defender in the Thirteenth Circuit in Tampa, who has an extensive background in dealing with involuntary psychiatric examinations, called a [Baker Act](#).



As reported by the Baker Act Reporting Center, an astounding 36,078 involuntary psychiatric examinations were initiated on children across the state.

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Ms. Carmen Miller, Attorney

“The Baker Act is misunderstood and thus can easily be abused and misused,” said Ms. Miller. “By providing seminars, I hope to help educate people on the proper way to utilize this tenuous legislation.”

The original stated intention of the Baker Act was to protect the rights and liberties of individuals in crisis, but according to CCHR this law has now become a source of

rampant abuse.

The most recent report on the Baker Act reveals that there were over 200,000 Baker Acts in 2017/2018 and that more than 36,000 of these involved children while another 4,000 involved children 10 and younger. [1]

Unfortunately, too many parents do not know that their child can be taken into custody without their knowledge or consent and transported to a psychiatric facility for an involuntary examination. This is one reason CCHR launched their campaign to educate Florida families on the Baker Act.

"The Baker Acting of a child is a traumatic experience," stated. Samuel Guillard, Executive Director for CCHR Florida. "Parents need guidance, they need answers to their questions and our seminars provide a platform they can get help and advice."

Viewed as a long-term statewide problem, the Baker Acting of children was taken up in 2017 by the Children's Baker Act Task Force. This task force reported that a significant number of children sent for an involuntary psychiatric examination did not meet the criteria to be taken into custody yet the simple solution of bringing parents into the process before the initiation as a Baker Act is still being ignored. [2]

In order to help stop this abuse, CCHR launched a campaign in 2015 to educate families, lawmakers, law enforcement and school districts on mental health rights and in 2019 expanded this campaign to include [parental rights](#) in the area of mental health. Since campaign launch, over half a million people have been educated on their rights.

Additionally, seeing a need for professional advice, CCHR began hosting seminars delivered by professionals on the mental health law, parental rights, psychiatric drug side effects and more. With the recent change in how public events can be held due to restriction put in place in



The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater.



The Florida chapter of CCHR is a non-profit mental health watchdog dedicated to the protection of children.

response to COVID-19, CCHR now holds these events virtually.

To learn more or to reserve a spot for the next complimentary virtual seminar, please call 727-442-8820.

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR's mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: "Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the 'free world' tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of 'mental health,'" he wrote in March 1969. For more information visit www.cchrflorida.org

Sources:

[1] Baker Act Reporting Center
https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/documents/ba_usf_annual_report_2017_2018.pdf

[2] CHILDREN'S BAKER ACT TASK FORCE, MINUTES for FIRST MEETING 7.20.17

<https://myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/involuntary-examination-minors/docs/20170720/20170720-minutes.pdf>

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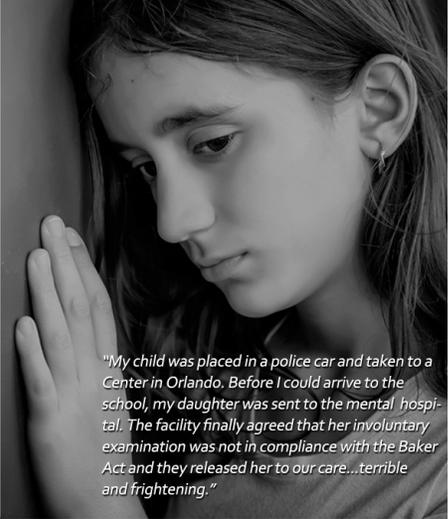


During 2018 there were over 36,000 involuntary psychiatric examinations, a Baker Act, initiated on children in Florida.

Baker Act

#FLParentsRights

The fundamental right of a parent to help their child is being ignored despite the fact that there is an existing provision for the parent to be given an opportunity to help their child as part of the Baker Act law.



Normal Childhood Behavior is not a Mental Illness

INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT of MINORS
Children have tantrums and teenagers have dramatic moments. This behavior can be misinterpreted as signs of mental illness. These specifically are not criteria for Baker Acting a child and are excluded from the definition of mental illness in the state of Florida.

Protect Children's Rights and Ensure Parental Involvement
Citizens Commission On Human Rights
Call 800.782.2878, for more information
www.cchrflorida.org

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"My child was placed in a police car and taken to a Center in Orlando. Before I could arrive to the school, my daughter was sent to the mental hospital. The facility finally agreed that her involuntary examination was not in compliance with the Baker Act and they released her to our care...terrible and frightening."

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