



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

AB-1205 Mental health services: assisted outpatient treatment. (2025-2026)

SHARE THIS:  

Date Published: 02/21/2025 09:00 PM

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 1205

Introduced by Assembly Member Muratsuchi

February 21, 2025

An act to amend Section 5346 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to mental health.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1205, as introduced, Muratsuchi. Mental health services: assisted outpatient treatment.

Existing law, known as Laura's Law, requires a county or group of counties to provide assisted outpatient treatment as part of mental health services, unless a county or group of counties opts out by a resolution passed by the governing body, as specified. Existing law authorizes participating counties to pay for the services using moneys distributed to the counties from various continuously appropriated funds, including the Behavioral Health Services Fund when included in a county plan, as specified.

For participating counties, existing law authorizes a court to order a person who is the subject of a certain petition to obtain assisted outpatient treatment if the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that various conditions are met, including, among others, that the person is experiencing a mental illness and that the person has a history of lack of compliance with treatment for their mental illness, as specified. Existing law sets forth certain rights of the person relating to the hearing and imposes conditions on an extension to an initial treatment order.

This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to those provisions.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 5346 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

5346. (a) In any county or group of counties where services are available as provided in Section 5348, a court may order a person who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to this section to obtain assisted outpatient treatment if the court finds, by clear and convincing evidence, that the facts stated in the verified petition filed in accordance with this section are true and establish that all of the requisite criteria set forth in this section are met, including, but not limited to, each of the following:

(1) The person is 18 years of age or older.

(2) The person is experiencing a mental illness as defined in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subdivision (b) of Section 5600.3.

(3) There has been a clinical determination that, in view of the person's treatment history and current behavior, at least one of the following is true:

(A) The person is unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision and the person's condition is substantially deteriorating.

(B) The person is in need of assisted outpatient treatment in order to prevent a relapse or deterioration that would be likely to result in grave disability or serious harm to the person or to others, as defined in Section 5150.

(4) The person has a history of lack of compliance with treatment for the person's mental illness, in that at least one of the following is true:

(A) The person's mental illness has, at least twice within the last 36 months, been a substantial factor in necessitating hospitalization, or receipt of services in a forensic or other mental health unit of a state correctional facility or local correctional facility, not including any period during which the person was hospitalized or incarcerated immediately preceding the filing of the petition.

(B) The person's mental illness has resulted in one or more acts of serious and violent behavior toward themselves or another, or threats, or attempts to cause serious physical harm to themselves or another within the last 48 months, not including any period in which the person was hospitalized or incarcerated immediately preceding the filing of the petition.

(5) The person has been offered an opportunity to participate in a treatment plan by the director of the local mental health department, or the director's designee, provided the treatment plan includes all of the services described in Section 5348, and the person continues to fail to engage in treatment.

(6) Participation in the assisted outpatient treatment program would be the least restrictive placement necessary to ensure the person's recovery and stability.

(7) It is likely that the person will benefit from assisted outpatient treatment.

(b) (1) A petition for an order authorizing assisted outpatient treatment may be filed by the county behavioral health director, or the director's designee, in the superior court in the county in which the person who is the subject of the petition is present or reasonably believed to be present.

(2) A request may be made only by any of the following persons to the county mental health department for the filing of a petition to obtain an order authorizing assisted outpatient treatment:

(A) A person 18 years of age or older with whom the person who is the subject of the petition resides.

(B) A person who is the parent, spouse, or sibling or child 18 years of age or older of the person who is the subject of the petition.

(C) The director of a public or private agency, treatment facility, charitable organization, or licensed residential care facility providing mental health services to the person who is the subject of the petition in whose institution the subject of the petition resides.

(D) The director of a hospital in which the person who is the subject of the petition is hospitalized.

(E) A licensed mental health treatment provider who is either supervising the treatment of, or treating for a mental illness, the person who is the subject of the petition.

(F) A peace officer, parole officer, or probation officer assigned to supervise the person who is the subject of the petition.

(G) A judge of a superior court before whom the person who is the subject of the petition appears.

(3) Upon receiving a request pursuant to paragraph (2), the county behavioral health director shall conduct an investigation into the appropriateness of filing of the petition. The director shall file the petition only if the director determines that there is a reasonable likelihood that all the necessary elements to sustain the petition can be proven in a court of law by clear and convincing evidence.

(4) The petition shall state all of the following:

(A) Each of the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment as set forth in subdivision (a).

(B) Facts that support the petitioner's belief that the person who is the subject of the petition meets each criterion, provided that the hearing on the petition shall be limited to the stated facts in the verified petition, and the petition contains all the grounds on which the petition is based, in order to ensure adequate notice to the person who is the subject of the petition and that person's counsel.

(C) That the person who is the subject of the petition is present, or is reasonably believed to be present, within the county where the petition is filed.

(D) That the person who is the subject of the petition has the right to be represented by counsel in all stages of the proceeding under the petition, in accordance with subdivision (c).

(5) (A) The petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit of a licensed mental health treatment provider designated by the local mental health director who shall state, if applicable, either of the following:

(i) That the licensed mental health treatment provider has personally examined the person who is the subject of the petition no more than 10 days ~~prior to~~ before the submission of the petition, the facts and reasons why the person who is the subject of the petition meets the criteria in subdivision (a), that the licensed mental health treatment provider recommends assisted outpatient treatment for the person who is the subject of the petition, and that the licensed mental health treatment provider is willing and able to testify at the hearing on the petition.

(ii) That, no more than 10 days ~~prior to~~ before the filing of the petition, the licensed mental health treatment provider, or the provider's designee, has made appropriate attempts to elicit the cooperation of the person who is the subject of the petition, but has not been successful in persuading that person to submit to an examination, that the licensed mental health treatment provider has reason to believe that the person who is the subject of the petition meets the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment, and that the licensed mental health treatment provider is willing and able to examine the person who is the subject of the petition and testify at the hearing on the petition.

(B) An examining mental health professional in their affidavit to the court shall address the issue of whether the defendant has capacity to give informed consent regarding psychotropic medication.

(c) The person who is the subject of the petition shall have the right to be represented by counsel at all stages of a proceeding commenced under this section. If the person so elects, the court shall immediately appoint the public defender or other attorney to assist the person in all stages of the proceedings. The person shall pay the cost of the legal services if able to do so.

(d) (1) Upon receipt by the court of a petition submitted pursuant to subdivision (b), the court shall fix the date for a hearing at a time not later than five days from the date the petition is received by the court, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. The petitioner shall promptly cause service of a copy of the petition, together with written notice of the hearing date, to be made personally on the person who is the subject of the petition, and shall send a copy of the petition and notice to the county office of patient rights, and to the current health care provider appointed for the person who is the subject of the petition, if the provider is known to the petitioner. Continuances shall be permitted only for good cause shown. In granting continuances, the court shall consider the need for further examination by a physician or the potential need to provide expeditiously assisted outpatient treatment. Upon the hearing date, or upon any other date or dates to which the proceeding may be continued, the court shall hear testimony. If it is deemed advisable by the court, and if the person who is the subject of the petition is available and has received notice pursuant to this section, the court may examine in or out of court the person who is the subject of the petition who is alleged to be in need of assisted outpatient treatment. If the person who is the subject of the petition does not appear at the hearing, and appropriate attempts to elicit the attendance of the person have failed, the court may conduct the hearing in the person's absence. If the hearing is conducted without the person present, the court shall set forth the factual basis for conducting the hearing without the person's presence. The person who is the subject of the petition shall maintain the right to appear before the court in person, but may appear by videoconferencing means if they choose to do so.

(2) The court shall not order assisted outpatient treatment unless an examining licensed mental health treatment provider, who has personally examined, and has reviewed the available treatment history of, the person who is the subject of the petition within the time period commencing 10 days before the filing of the petition, testifies at the hearing. An examining mental health professional may appear before the court by videoconferencing means.

(3) If the person who is the subject of the petition has refused to be examined by a licensed mental health treatment provider, the court may request that the person consent to an examination by a licensed mental health treatment provider appointed by the court. If the person who is the subject of the petition does not consent and the court finds reasonable cause to believe that the allegations in the petition are true, the court may order any person designated under Section 5150 to take into custody the person who is the subject of the petition and transport the person, or cause the person to be transported, to a hospital for examination by a licensed mental health treatment provider as soon as is practicable. Detention of the person who is the

subject of the petition under the order may not exceed 72 hours. If the examination is performed by another licensed mental health treatment provider, the examining licensed mental health treatment provider may consult with the licensed mental health treatment provider whose affirmation or affidavit accompanied the petition regarding the issues of whether the allegations in the petition are true and whether the person meets the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment.

(4) The person who is the subject of the petition shall have all of the following rights:

(A) To adequate notice of the hearings to the person who is the subject of the petition, as well as to parties designated by the person who is the subject of the petition.

(B) To receive a copy of the court-ordered evaluation.

(C) To counsel. If the person has not retained counsel, the court shall appoint a public defender.

(D) To be informed of the right to judicial review by habeas corpus.

(E) To be present at the hearing unless the person waives the right to be present.

(F) To present evidence.

(G) To call witnesses on the person's behalf.

(H) To cross-examine witnesses.

(I) To appeal decisions, and to be informed of the right to appeal.

(5) (A) If, after hearing all relevant evidence, the court finds that the person who is the subject of the petition does not meet the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment, the court shall dismiss the petition.

(B) If, after hearing all relevant evidence, the court finds that the person who is the subject of the petition meets the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment, and there is no appropriate and feasible less restrictive alternative, the court may order the person who is the subject of the petition to receive assisted outpatient treatment for an initial period not to exceed six months. In fashioning the order, the court shall specify that the proposed treatment is the least restrictive treatment appropriate and feasible for the person who is the subject of the petition. The order shall state the categories of assisted outpatient treatment, as set forth in Section 5348, that the person who is the subject of the petition is to receive, and the court may not order treatment that has not been recommended by the examining licensed mental health treatment provider and included in the written treatment plan for assisted outpatient treatment as required by subdivision (e). If the person has executed an advance health care directive pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 4650) of Part 1 of Division 4.7 of the Probate Code, any directions included in the advance health care directive shall be considered in formulating the written treatment plan.

(C) The court may conduct status hearings with the person and the treatment team to receive information regarding progress related to the categories of treatment listed in the treatment plan and may inquire about medication adherence.

(6) If the person who is the subject of a petition for an order for assisted outpatient treatment pursuant to subparagraph (B) of paragraph (5) refuses to participate in the assisted outpatient treatment program, the court may order the person to meet with the assisted outpatient treatment team designated by the director of the assisted outpatient treatment program. The treatment team shall attempt to gain the person's cooperation with treatment ordered by the court. The person may be subject to a 72-hour hold pursuant to subdivision (f) only after the treatment team has attempted to gain the person's cooperation with treatment ordered by the court, and has been unable to do so.

(e) Assisted outpatient treatment shall not be ordered unless the licensed mental health treatment provider recommending assisted outpatient treatment to the court has submitted to the court a written treatment plan that includes services as set forth in Section 5348, and the court finds, in consultation with the county behavioral health director, or the director's designee, all of the following:

(1) That the services are available from the county, or a provider approved by the county, for the duration of the court order.

(2) That the services have been offered to the person by the local director of mental health, or the director's designee, and the person has been given an opportunity to participate on a voluntary basis, and the person has failed to engage in, or has refused, treatment.

(3) That all of the elements of the petition required by this article have been met.

(4) That the treatment plan will be delivered to the county behavioral health director, or to the director's appropriate designee.

(f) If, in the clinical judgment of a licensed mental health treatment provider, the person who is the subject of the petition has failed or has refused to comply with the treatment ordered by the court, and, in the clinical judgment of the licensed mental health treatment provider, efforts were made to solicit compliance, and, in the clinical judgment of the licensed mental health treatment provider, the person may be in need of involuntary admission to a hospital for evaluation, the provider may request that persons designated under Section 5150 take into custody the person who is the subject of the petition and transport the person, or cause the person to be transported, to a hospital, to be held up to 72 hours for examination by a licensed mental health treatment provider to determine if the person is in need of treatment pursuant to Section 5150. Any continued involuntary retention in a hospital beyond the initial 72-hour period shall be pursuant to Section 5150. If at any time during the 72-hour period the person is determined not to meet the criteria of Section 5150, and does not agree to stay in the hospital as a voluntary patient, the person shall be released and any subsequent involuntary detention in a hospital shall be pursuant to Section 5150. Failure to comply with an order of assisted outpatient treatment alone may not be grounds for involuntary civil commitment or a finding that the person who is the subject of the petition is in contempt of court.

(g) If the director of the assisted outpatient treatment program determines that the condition of the patient requires further assisted outpatient treatment, the director shall apply to the court, ~~prior to~~ before the expiration of the period of the initial assisted outpatient treatment order, for an order authorizing continued assisted outpatient treatment for a period not to exceed 180 days from the date of the order. The procedures for obtaining an order pursuant to this subdivision shall be in accordance with subdivisions (a) to (f), inclusive. The period for further involuntary outpatient treatment authorized by a subsequent order under this subdivision may not exceed 180 days from the date of the order.

(h) (1) At intervals of not less than 60 days during an assisted outpatient treatment order, the director of the outpatient treatment program shall file an affidavit with the court that ordered the outpatient treatment affirming that the person who is the subject of the order continues to meet the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment. At these times, the person who is the subject of the order shall have the right to a hearing on whether or not the person still meets the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment if they disagree with the director's affidavit. The burden of proof shall be on the director.

(2) When making the affidavit pursuant to paragraph (1), the director of the outpatient treatment program shall also report to the court on adherence to prescribed medication.

(i) During each 60-day period specified in subdivision (h), if the person who is the subject of the order believes that they are being wrongfully retained in the assisted outpatient treatment program against their wishes, the person may file a petition for a writ of habeas corpus, thus requiring the director of the assisted outpatient treatment program to prove that the person who is the subject of the order continues to meet the criteria for assisted outpatient treatment.

(j) A person ordered to undergo assisted outpatient treatment pursuant to this article, who was not present at the hearing at which the order was issued, may immediately petition the court for a writ of habeas corpus. Treatment under the order for assisted outpatient treatment may not commence until the resolution of that petition.

(k) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2021.