

SOME KEY DATES IN ALBERTA MENTAL HEALTH LAW

1907 The Insanity Act provided for committal by a Justice of the Peace if a person was ‘insane’ or ‘dangerous.’ An appeal could be made by a relative.

1919 The Mental Defectives Act provided for placement of a “mental defective” person in an institution upon application to the Minister.

1922 A discharge process added to the Insanity Act.

1924 The Mental Diseases Act allowed for “psychopathic wards” in general hospitals.

1955 The term “psychopathic ward” changed to “psychiatric ward” in the Mental Diseases Act.

1965 Proclamation of Mental Health Act which replaced Mental Diseases and Mental Defectives Acts. Complaints could be taken to a review panel.

1972 The Mental Health Act changed to legislate certain rights for patients.

1980 The Mental Health Act changed to add a section dealing with confidentiality of records.

1990 The current Mental Health Act of Alberta was proclaimed January 1, 1990. It established the first Mental Health Patient Advocate in Canada legislated to assist formal patients detained under either two admission or renewal certificates and those acting on their behalf.

2007 The Mental Health Amendment Act received Royal Assent on December 7, 2007.

2009 Proclamation of the first two amendments expanded the criteria for involuntary admission and required discharge information to be provided to the family physician, if known. The amendments also expanded the Advocate’s jurisdiction to include persons under a single admission certificate.

2010 Proclamation of third amendment allowed for Community Treatment Orders (CTOs) and expanded the Alberta Mental Health Patient Advocate’s jurisdiction to include persons subject to a CTO.