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Public Law
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Chapter 268
H.P. 824 - L.D. 1200

**An Act To Streamline the Process for Court-ordered
Mental Health Examinations in Criminal Cases**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 15 MRSA §101-B, as amended by PL 2001, c. 634, §1 and PL 2003, c. 689, Pt. B, §§6 and 7, is repealed.

Sec. 2. 15 MRSA §101-C, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 402, Pt. A, §109, is amended to read:

1. Written demand for records. When a person or entity has been ordered to perform an examination or evaluation pursuant to section ~~101-B~~ 101-D, and the person to be examined has sought the examination, joined in a request or order for the examination or has entered a plea of not criminally responsible by reason of insanity, that person may make written demand upon any individual, partnership, association, corporation, institution or governmental entity to produce the records or copies of the records, in whatever medium preserved, of the subject of the examination or evaluation.

Sec. 3. 15 MRSA §101-D is enacted to read:

§ 101-D. Mental examination of persons accused of crime

1. Competency to proceed. The court may for cause shown order that the defendant be examined to evaluate the defendant's competency to proceed as provided in this subsection.

A. Upon motion by the defendant or by the State, or upon its own motion, a court having jurisdiction in any criminal case may for cause shown order that the defendant be examined by the State Forensic Service for evaluation of the defendant's competency to proceed. When ordered to evaluate a defendant under this paragraph, the State Forensic Service shall promptly examine the defendant and report its initial determination regarding the defendant's competency to proceed to the court. If, based upon its examination, the State Forensic Service concludes that further examination is necessary to fully evaluate the defendant's competency to proceed, the report must so state and must set forth recommendations as to the nature and scope of any further examination. The court shall forward any report filed by the State Forensic Service to the defendant or the defendant's attorney and to the attorney for the State.

B. If the defendant is incarcerated, the examination ordered pursuant to paragraph A must take place within 21 days of the court's order, and the report of that examination must be filed within 30 days of the court's order. If further examination is ordered pursuant to paragraph C, the report of that examination must be filed within 60 days of the court's order. If the State Forensic Service requires an extension of the deadlines set forth above, it shall communicate its request and the reasons for that request to the court and to counsel for the parties. The court shall accommodate any party's request to be heard on the issue of whether an extension should be granted and may grant any extension of time that is reasonable under the circumstances. The examination may take place at the correctional facility where the defendant is incarcerated if the State Forensic Service determines that the correctional facility can provide an appropriate setting for the examination. If the State Forensic Service determines otherwise, the examination will be conducted at a time and place designated by the State Forensic Service. For examinations that take place outside the correctional facility, the correctional facility shall provide transportation and security for the examination.

C. If the report submitted pursuant to paragraph A recommends further evaluation of the defendant or upon motion by the defendant or by the State for good cause shown, the court may order further evaluation of the defendant by the State Forensic Service. Any order for further evaluation may designate the specialty of the person to perform the evaluation. In addition, if at any time during a criminal proceeding an issue of competency to proceed arises with respect to a defendant initially determined to be competent, the court may order such further examination by the State Forensic Service as the court finds necessary and appropriate. The court shall forward any further report filed by the State Forensic Service to the defendant or the defendant's attorney and to the attorney for the State.

2. Insanity; abnormal condition of the mind. The court may for cause shown order that the defendant be evaluated with reference to insanity or abnormal condition of the mind as provided in this subsection.

A. Upon motion by the defendant or by the State, a court having jurisdiction in any criminal case may for cause shown order that the defendant be examined by the State Forensic Service for evaluation of the defendant's mental state at the time of the crime with reference to criminal responsibility under Title 17-A, section 39 and abnormal condition of the mind under Title 17-A, section 38.

(1) When ordered to evaluate a defendant under this paragraph, the State Forensic Service shall promptly examine the defendant and the circumstances of the crime and provide a report of its evaluation to the court. If, based upon its examination, the State Forensic Service concludes that further examination is necessary to fully evaluate the defendant's mental state at the time of the crime, the report must so state and must set forth recommendations as to the nature and scope of any further examination.

(2) The court shall forward any report filed by the State Forensic Service to the defendant or the defendant's attorney and, unless the defendant had objected to the order for examination or unless the attorney for the State has agreed that the report need not be forwarded to the State except as set forth in subparagraph (3), to the attorney for the State.

(3) If the court orders an examination under this paragraph over the objection of the defendant, any report filed by the State Forensic Service may not be shared with the attorney for the State, unless with reference to criminal responsibility the defendant enters a plea of not criminally responsible by reason of insanity or with reference to an abnormal condition of mind the defendant provides notice to the attorney for the State of the intention to introduce testimony as to the defendant's abnormal condition of mind pursuant to the Maine Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 16A(a).

B. If the defendant enters a plea of not criminally responsible by reason of insanity, the court shall order evaluation under paragraph A.

C. If the defendant is incarcerated, the examination ordered pursuant to paragraph A must take place within 45 days of the court's order and the report of that examination must be filed within 60 days of the court's order. If further examination is ordered pursuant to paragraph D, the report of that examination must be filed within 90 days of the court's order. If the State Forensic Service requires an extension of the deadlines set forth above, it shall communicate its request and the reasons for that request to the court and to counsel for the parties. The court shall accommodate a party's request to be heard on the issue of whether an extension should be granted and may grant any extension of time that is reasonable under the circumstances. The examination may take place at the correctional facility where the defendant is incarcerated if the State Forensic Service determines that the correctional facility can provide an appropriate setting for the examination. If the State Forensic Service determines otherwise, the examination must be conducted at a time and place designated by the State Forensic Service. For examinations that take place outside the correctional facility, the correctional facility shall provide transportation and security for the examination.

D. If the report submitted pursuant to paragraph A recommends further evaluation of the defendant or upon motion by the defendant or by the State for good cause shown, the court may order further evaluation of the defendant by the State Forensic Service. An order for further evaluation may designate the specialty of the person to perform the evaluation. The court shall forward any further report filed by the State Forensic Service to the defendant or the defendant's attorney and, unless the defendant had objected to the order for examination, to the attorney for the State.

The court may order an examination under this paragraph over the objection of the defendant, but any report filed by the State Forensic Service must be impounded and may not be shared with the attorney for the State, unless with reference to criminal responsibility the defendant enters a plea of not criminally responsible by reason of insanity or with reference to an abnormal condition of mind the defendant provides notice to the attorney for the State of the intention to introduce testimony as to the defendant's abnormal condition of mind pursuant to the Maine Rules of Criminal Procedure, Rule 16A(a).

3. Mental condition relevant to other issues. The court may for good cause shown order that the defendant be examined to evaluate the defendant's mental condition with reference to issues other than competency, insanity or abnormal condition of the mind as provided in this subsection.

A. Upon motion by the defendant or by the State or upon its own motion a court having jurisdiction in any criminal case may for cause shown order that the defendant be examined by the State Forensic Service for evaluation with respect to any issue necessary for determination in the case, including the

appropriate sentence. The court's order shall set forth the issue or issues to be addressed by the State Forensic Service. When ordered to evaluate a defendant under this paragraph, the State Forensic Service shall promptly examine the defendant and the circumstances relevant to the issues identified in the court's order and report to the court regarding the defendant's mental condition as it pertains to those issues. Prior to a verdict or finding of guilty or prior to acceptance of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, the court may not order examination under this subsection over the objection of the defendant unless the defendant has asserted, or intends to assert, the defendant's mental condition as a basis for an objection, a defense or for mitigation at sentencing. The court shall forward any report filed by the State Forensic Service to the defendant or the defendant's attorney and to the attorney for the State.

B. If the defendant is incarcerated the examination ordered pursuant to paragraph A must take place within 45 days of the court's order and the report of that examination must be filed within 60 days of the court's order. If the State Forensic Service requires an extension of the deadlines set forth above it shall communicate its request and the reasons for that request to the court and to counsel for the parties. The court shall accommodate a party's request to be heard on the issue of whether an extension should be granted and may grant an extension of time that is reasonable under the circumstances. The examination may take place at the correctional facility where the defendant is incarcerated if the State Forensic Service determines that the correctional facility can provide an appropriate setting for the examination. If the State Forensic Service determines otherwise, the examination must be conducted at a time and place designated by the State Forensic Service. For examinations that take place outside the correctional facility, the correctional facility shall provide transportation and security for the examination.

4. Commitment for observation. The court may commit the defendant to the custody of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services for placement in an appropriate institution for the care and treatment of people with mental illness or mental retardation as set forth in this subsection.

A. If the State Forensic Service determines that observation of the defendant in an appropriate institution for the care of people with mental illness or mental retardation will materially enhance its ability to perform an evaluation ordered pursuant to subsection 1, 2, 3 or 9 the State Forensic Service shall so advise the court. The State Forensic Service may make this determination based upon consultation with the defendant's attorney and the attorney for the State and the court and upon such other information as it determines appropriate. In addition, the State Forensic Service may include such a determination in a report to the court that recommends further evaluation of the defendant.

B. Upon a determination by the State Forensic Service under paragraph A, a court having jurisdiction in a criminal case may commit the defendant to the custody of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services for placement in an appropriate institution for the care and treatment of people with mental illness or mental retardation for observation for a period not to exceed 60 days. If the State Forensic Service requires additional time for observation, it shall communicate its request and the reasons for that request to the court and to counsel for the parties. The court shall accommodate a party's request to be heard on the issue of whether an extension should be granted and may extend the commitment for up to an additional 90 days. Unless the defendant objects, an order under this paragraph must authorize the institution where the defendant is placed by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to provide treatment to the defendant. When

further observation of the defendant is determined no longer necessary by the State Forensic Service, the commissioner shall report that determination to the court and the court shall terminate the commitment.

C. If the court has provided for remand to a correctional facility following the commitment under paragraph B, the correctional facility shall execute the remand order upon advice from the Commissioner of Health and Human Services that commitment is determined no longer necessary.

5. Finding of incompetence; custody; bail. If, after hearing upon motion of the attorney for the defendant or upon the court's own motion, the court finds that any defendant is incompetent to stand trial, the court shall continue the case until such time as the defendant is determined by the court to be competent to stand trial and may either:

A. Commit the defendant to the custody of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to be placed in an appropriate institution for the care and treatment of people with mental illness or mental retardation for observation, care and treatment. At the end of 30 days or sooner, and again in the event of recommitment, at the end of 60 days and one year, the State Forensic Service shall forward a report to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services relative to the defendant's competence to stand trial and its reasons. The Commissioner of Health and Human Services shall without delay file the report with the court having jurisdiction of the case. The court shall without delay set a date for and hold a hearing on the question of the defendant's competence to stand trial and receive all relevant testimony bearing on the question. If the court determines that the defendant is not competent to stand trial, but there does exist a substantial probability that the defendant will be competent to stand trial in the foreseeable future, the court shall recommit the defendant to the custody of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to be placed in an appropriate institution for the care and treatment of people with mental illness or mental retardation for observation, care and treatment. When a person who has been evaluated on behalf of the court by the State Forensic Service is committed into the custody of the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services under this paragraph, the court shall order that the State Forensic Service share any information that it has collected or generated with respect to the person with the institution in which the person is placed. If the defendant is charged with an offense under Title 17-A, chapter 9, 11 or 13 or Title 17-A, section 506-A, 802 or 803-A and the court determines that the defendant is not competent to stand trial and there does not exist a substantial probability that the defendant can be competent in the foreseeable future, the court shall dismiss all charges against the defendant and order the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to commence involuntary commitment proceedings pursuant to Title 34-B, chapter 3, subchapter 4 or chapter 5, subchapter 3. If the defendant is charged with offenses not listed in the previous sentence and the court determines that the defendant is not competent to stand trial and there does not exist a substantial probability that the defendant can be competent in the foreseeable future, the court shall dismiss all charges against the defendant and notify the appropriate authorities who may institute civil commitment procedures for the individual;
or

B. Issue a bail order in accordance with chapter 105-A, with or without the further order that the defendant undergo observation at a state mental hospital or mental health facility approved by the Department of Health and Human Services or by arrangement with a private psychiatrist or licensed clinical psychologist and treatment when it is determined appropriate by the State Forensic Service. When outpatient observation and treatment is ordered an examination must take place within 45 days of the court's order and the State Forensic Service shall file its report of that examination within

60 days of the court's order. The State Forensic Service's report to the court must contain the opinion of the State Forensic Service concerning the defendant's competency to stand trial and its reasons. The court shall without delay set a date for and hold a hearing on the question of the defendant's competence to stand trial, which must be held pursuant to and consistent with the standards set out in paragraph A.

6. Examiners. Evaluation of a defendant by the State Forensic Service pursuant to this section must be performed by a licensed psychologist or a psychiatrist. The State Forensic Service may determine whether an examination will be performed by a licensed psychologist or a psychiatrist unless the court has designated the specialty of the examiner in its order.

7. Competence; proceedings. Upon a determination that the defendant is competent to stand trial, proceedings with respect to the defendant must be in accordance with the rules of criminal procedure.

8. No release during commitment period; violation. A person ordered or committed for examination, observation, care or treatment pursuant to this section may not be released from the designated institution during the period of examination. An individual responsible for or permitting the release of a person ordered committed pursuant to this section for examination, observation, care or treatment from the designated institution commits a civil violation for which a fine of not more than \$1,000 may be adjudged.

9. Examination after sentencing. If the issue of insanity, competency, abnormal condition of mind or any other issue involving the mental condition of the defendant is raised after sentencing, the court may for cause shown order the convicted person to be examined by the State Forensic Service. If at the time an examination order is entered by the court the sentenced person is in execution of a sentence of imprisonment imposed for any criminal conduct, the time limits and bail provisions of this section do not apply.

Sec. 4. 15 MRSA §103, as amended by PL 2005, c. 263, §1, is further amended to read:

§ 103. Commitment following acceptance of negotiated insanity plea or following verdict or finding of insanity

When a court accepts a negotiated plea of not criminally responsible by reason of insanity or when a defendant is found not criminally responsible by reason of insanity by jury verdict or court finding, the judgment must so state. In those cases the court shall order the person committed to the custody of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services to be placed in an appropriate institution for the ~~mentally ill or the mentally retarded~~ care and treatment of persons with mental illness or mental retardation for care and treatment. Upon placement in the appropriate institution and in the event of transfer from one institution to another of persons committed under this section, notice of the placement or transfer must be given by the commissioner to the committing court.

When a person who has been evaluated on behalf of a court by the State Forensic Service is committed into the custody of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services pursuant to this section, the court shall order that the State Forensic Service share any information it has collected or generated with respect to the person with the institution in which the person is placed.

As used in this section, "not criminally responsible by reason of insanity" has the same meaning as in Title 17-A, section 39 and includes any comparable plea, finding or verdict in this State under former section 102; under a former version of Title 17-A, section 39; under former Title 17-A, section 58; or under former section 17-B, chapter 149 of the Revised Statutes of 1954.

Sec. 5. 15 MRSA §2211-A, sub-§8, as enacted by PL 1995, c. 431, §1, is amended to read:

8. Competency hearing. Admission to a hospital under this section may not be used to examine or observe a person for the purpose of a criminal proceeding pending in court. Before the trial of a defendant admitted for hospitalization under this section, the court may, at any time upon motion of the defendant's attorney or the attorney for the State or upon the court's own motion, hold a hearing with respect to the competence of that person to stand trial as provided in section ~~101-B~~ 101-D and appropriate disposition may be made. The court's order following a hearing may terminate an admission effected under this section.

Sec. 6. 15 MRSA §3318, sub-§1, ¶B, as amended by PL 2001, c. 471, Pt. F, §3, is further amended to read:

B. Order that the juvenile be examined by a physician or psychologist and refer the juvenile to a suitable facility or program for the purpose of examination, the costs of that examination to be paid by the court. If the report of that examination is that the juvenile is mentally ill or incapacitated to the extent that short-term or long-term hospitalization or institutional confinement is required, the Juvenile Court shall initiate proceedings for voluntary or involuntary commitment as provided in section ~~101-B~~ 101-D and in Title 34-B, chapter 3, subchapter ~~IV~~ 4. The court shall continue the proceedings when a juvenile is voluntarily or involuntarily committed.

Sec. 7. 15 MRSA §3318, sub-§2, ¶B, as amended by PL 2001, c. 471, Pt. F, §3, is further amended to read:

B. The child is not found by the appropriate court to be a mentally ill person or an incapacitated person as defined in section ~~101-B~~ 101-D and in Title 34-B, section 5001.

Sec. 8. 17-A MRSA §1175, first ¶, as amended by PL 2005, c. 527, §14, is further amended to read:

Upon complying with subsection 1, a victim of a crime of murder or stalking or of a Class A, Class B or Class C crime for which the defendant is committed to the Department of Corrections or to a county jail or is committed to the custody of the Commissioner of Health and Human Services either under Title 15, section 103 after having been found not criminally responsible by reason of insanity or under Title 15, section ~~101-B~~ 101-D after having been found incompetent to stand trial must receive notice of the defendant's unconditional release and discharge from institutional confinement upon the expiration of the sentence or upon release from commitment under Title 15, section ~~101-B~~ 101-D or upon discharge under Title 15, section 104-A and must receive notice of any conditional release of the defendant from institutional confinement, including probation, supervised release for sex offenders, parole, furlough, work release, intensive supervision, supervised community confinement, home release monitoring or similar program, administrative release or release under Title 15, section 104-A.

Sec. 9. 17-A MRSA §1175, sub-§3, ¶B, as amended by PL 2005, c. 527, §15, is further amended to read:

B. The nature of the release authorized, whether it is a conditional release, including probation, supervised release for sex offenders, parole, furlough, work release, intensive supervision, supervised community confinement, home release monitoring or a similar program, administrative release or release under Title 15, section 104-A, or an unconditional release and discharge upon release from commitment under Title 15, section ~~101-B~~ 101-D or upon the expiration of a sentence or upon discharge under Title 15, section 104-A;

Sec. 10. 17-A MRSA §1175, sub-§4, ¶A, as amended by PL 2005, c. 527, §16, is further amended to read:

A. Notice has been provided of an unconditional release or discharge upon the expiration of the sentence or upon release under Title 15, section ~~101-B~~ 101-D or upon discharge under Title 15, section 104-A; or

Sec. 11. 34-B MRSA §1212, sub-§2, ¶A, as amended by PL 1989, c. 621, §9, is further amended to read:

A. To perform examinations of the mental condition of a defendant pursuant to Title 15, section ~~101-B~~ 101-D and to do the evaluations or examinations on behalf of any court of record, pursuant to agreement between the commissioner and the jurisdiction requesting that the evaluation be performed;

Effective September 12, 2009