

Bring the Patients' Bill of Rights Into the 21st Century

The Problem



We hear a lot of talk about the importance of maintaining social connections during the pandemic. Why, then, are patients in inpatient psychiatric facilities limited to connecting to friends and family through mail and a community use telephone?



The Solution



Connecticut law should be changed so that people can have access to their personal cell phone and access to a computer and internet for e-mail while they are in an inpatient psychiatric facility.



Current Law

(Proposed Text underlined)

Sec. 17a-546. (Formerly Sec. 17-206g). Communication by mail and telephone.

(a) Every patient shall be permitted to communicate by sealed mail or by email with any individual, group or agency, except as provided in this section.

(b) Every hospital for treatment of persons with psychiatric disabilities shall furnish writing materials and postage to any patient desiring them, and shall furnish access to a computer and the internet for the purpose of sending and receiving e-mail.

(e) Every patient shall be permitted to make and receive telephone calls, except as provided in this section. Public telephones shall be made available in appropriate locations.

Patients shall have access to their own personal cell phones to make and receive calls, to send and receive texts and to send and receive email, except as provided in this section.



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