

# Youth Drug Stabilization *(Support for Parents)* Act

## Information for Parents


In Manitoba, the *Youth Drug Stabilization (Support for Parents) Act* came into effect Nov. 1, 2006.

### Youth Drug Stabilization Act

You probably reached for this fact sheet because you have a serious concern about your son or daughter (or a young person who lives with you) who is involved in substance abuse. You want to get them the help they need, but they are unwilling. You may feel that your only choice is to get them help, even if they don't want it.

The *Youth Drug Stabilization (Support for Parents) Act* provides a way to access involuntary detention and short-term stabilization for young Manitobans under 18 years of age. However, the act is intended as a last resort, when other measures have been unsuccessful and where a youth is causing serious self-harm through severe, persistent substance abuse. The purpose of the stabilization period is to provide a safe, secure environment to engage the youth and develop a treatment plan that he or she will follow after discharge.

This fact sheet will help you determine if you should apply under the act for an apprehension order. It outlines what you need to do before you take this step and the steps that you need to follow if you feel that involuntary stabilization is the only option.



This act provides for up to seven days of involuntary stabilization in a facility for this purpose. It does not allow involuntary "treatment" after stabilization. *Ongoing treatment, whether in a facility or in a community-based addictions service, is voluntary.*

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### 1 Before You Begin

You must first ask yourself a few questions about the young person's substance use. Is this an occasional event or is it a severe, recurring pattern that has continued for a long time? Does he or she appear agitated or worn down when not taking the substance? Does your son or daughter devote a large amount of time or energy to getting the drug? Is the young person continuing to use even though it is causing physical or emotional harm that affects relationships, school and recreation? Finally, have you tried to get the young person any counseling or other help?

**Involuntary stabilization is the last resort, not the first.** Severe intoxication alone will not meet the criteria.

### 2 The Criteria

A parent/guardian seeking an apprehension order must produce evidence to a justice of the peace, that a young person:

- *is abusing one or more drugs severely and persistently;*
- *is likely to deteriorate substantially either physically or psychologically as a result of severe and persistent drug/and or alcohol abuse;*
- *should be assessed by an addictions specialist to determine whether they should be detained at a secure facility to be stabilized; and*
- *has consistently refused to agree to a voluntary assessment, or has had one or more unsuccessful interventions to address his or her alcohol and /or drug abuse.*

These basic criteria are outlined in the legislation.

If there is evidence that the youth meets the above criteria, a justice of the peace may issue an apprehension order that authorizes the police to search for, apprehend and transport the youth to a stabilization facility to be assessed by two addictions specialists. When the addictions specialists have assessed the youth, they will make a decision whether to issue a stabilization order.

Addictions specialists are experienced in the area of youth substance abuse and must meet specific professional qualifications and experience. Only addictions specialists working with designated stabilization facilities can issue a stabilization order, and can do so only after the youth is brought to the stabilization facility by police.

### 3 The Process

In order to have your son or daughter apprehended and placed in a stabilization facility:

1. You must contact Centralized Intake - Youth Addictions Service at 1-877-710-3999 and tell them you are considering involuntary stabilization for your son or daughter.
2. The Centralized Intake - Youth Addictions Service will help you determine the suitability of this option for your son or daughter.
3. If involuntary stabilization seems to be the best option, the Centralized Intake - Youth Addictions Service will provide you with an application form and help you with the process.
4. The application form is filed with a justice of the peace.

#### What happens next?

If the justice of the peace is satisfied that the basic criteria in the legislation have been met, he or she may grant an apprehension order. You will also be asked to provide additional information about the youth that will help stabilization facility staff care for the young person and develop a treatment plan. You must then take the apprehension order to the police station in your area. On the basis of this order, police will apprehend the youth and take him or her to a designated stabilization facility.

You will be expected to maintain contact with facility staff and participate in planning meetings when required. Addictions counselors will work with your son or daughter and develop a treatment plan with them to follow after they are discharged.

**Parents are responsible for making sure they have made arrangements in advance for discharge. This responsibility includes transporting and receiving the young person at home and may include taking the individual to a treatment facility if he/she agrees to voluntary residential treatment after the stabilization period.**

Please remember that the youth is not receiving involuntary “treatment” at the stabilization facility. Stabilization means getting the substance out of the body and stabilizing health. This process prepares the youth for ongoing treatment after discharge from the facility.

If at any time during this period an addictions specialist believes that the youth is able to make a reasoned decision on treatment, or it is no longer in his or her best interest to be detained, the specialist may terminate the order holding the youth.

The youth may refuse to attend ongoing treatment after leaving the facility. This is not grounds for continued detention at the stabilization facility.

Stabilization prepares the youth for ongoing treatment and support. Youth substance abuse treatment services are available through the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and the Behavioural Health Foundation. Services range from school-based and community-based counseling programs to residential programs accessible to youth across Manitoba. For a complete directory of specific organizations and services for adults and youth, visit [www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/addictions/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/addictions/index.html).



Youth have the right to:

- receive help from Legal Aid free of charge;
- know why a justice issued an apprehension order for the youth;
- receive a copy of the stabilization order; and
- appeal the decision to issue a stabilization order to a Review Panel.

As soon as possible after apprehension by police, youth will be informed of their right to contact a lawyer and will be given the phone number for Legal Aid. If the youth contacts a lawyer, the lawyer will explain their role and offer to help .