

LAW AND THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

CIVIL AND CRIMINAL ASPECTS

Fourth Edition

Ralph Reisner
Christopher Slobogin
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Fourth Edition

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To Danute

— *Ralph Reisner*

To Cindy

— *Christopher Slobogin*

To Stuart and Sophia

— *Arti Rai*

*

Preface

This fourth edition of *Law and the Mental Health System* continues to pursue the objectives of the first three editions. First, we want to give the student a clear picture of past, present and possible future legal doctrine, as well as some feel for the most significant clinical and empirical literature, relating to three major topics: the delivery of mental health services, the regulation of the mental health professions, and the relationship between society and people with mental disability. Second, in each of these areas, we try to provide insights into how and to what degree the legal system can be used to implement desired social objectives. Third, this book attempts to sensitize the student to the (often very different) perspectives of the mental health professions on these issues.

The book continues to be divided into three parts, all of which have been significantly updated in this edition with new legal, empirical and critical material. Part I, "The Mental Health Professions and the Law," focuses primarily on the patient-therapist relationship and in that context examines the role of the legal system in promoting the quality of services, the protection of patient autonomy and privacy, and similar values. Chapter One provides important background information concerning the nature and characteristics of mental disorders, the diagnostic process, the modalities of mental health treatment, the mental health professions, and the economics of mental health care; the chapter thus serves as an important backdrop not only to the chapters in Part I but also to the other chapters of the book. The remaining chapters in Part I explore administrative licensing and regulation (Chapter Two), the application of malpractice law (Chapter Three), informed consent doctrine (Chapter Four), and confidentiality (Chapter Five).

Part II, "Deprivations of Liberty and Property," switches the focus to state intervention into the lives of people with mental disability. Chapter Six examines the preliminary issue of the extent to which the mental health professions are able to identify disability and its consequences. The next three chapters provide materials on laws affecting mentally disabled individuals who are charged with or convicted of crime (Chapter Seven), who are thought to be in need of hospitalization (Chapter Eight) and who are believed to be incompetent to exercise control over their property or person (Chapter Nine). Chapter Ten ends Part II with an exploration of issues that arise in treating persons with mental disability who have been the subject of state intervention.

Part III, "Benefits Eligibility and Other Protective Legislation," examines a number of laws meant to benefit all people with mental disability, whether or not the state has acted to deprive them of liberty or property. Chapter Eleven looks at federal benefit programs connected with education and social security. Chapter Twelve discusses laws that attempt to prevent discrimination against people with mental disability, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For their help on the book, the authors wish to acknowledge several individuals. As in the instance of earlier editions, Ralph Reisner was the beneficiary of help, counsel and advice from many quarters. In particular, he is deeply indebted to Lee Wong, a recent graduate of the University of California-San Diego, who in her last two years at the university assisted him on various projects. Her skill, dedication, and enthusiasm in all endeavors related to the revision of this book were invaluable. Hopefully, her involvement in the project will also prove to be of some benefit to her in her future career as a physician. Particular thanks are also due to Dr. John R. Kelsoe of the Department of Psychiatry, University of California at San Diego, for his invaluable help and review of the section in Chapter One pertaining to organic therapies. His extraordinary knowledge of the field helped the author sift through a complex and rapidly changing area of law. Finally Professor Reisner expresses his gratitude and appreciation to his wife Danute, for the encouragement and support that she has graciously and unstintingly provided over the many years that he has been involved in this writing project.

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December 1, 2003

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- Boyd v. Albert Einstein Medical Center, 377 Pa.Super. 609, 547 A.2d 1229 (Pa.Super.1988), 227
- Boyer, In re, 636 P.2d 1085 (Utah 1981), 906
- Boykin v. Alabama, 395 U.S. 238, 89 S.Ct. 1709, 23 L.Ed.2d 274 (1969), 824, 962
- Brady v. Hopper**, 570 F.Supp. 1333 (D.Colo.1983), **189**, 193
- Brady v. United States, 397 U.S. 742, 90 S.Ct. 1463, 25 L.Ed.2d 747 (1970), 825
- Brandt v. Grubin, 131 N.J.Super. 182, 329 A.2d 82 (N.J.Super.L.1974), 127, 169
- Bratty v. Attorney General of Northern Ireland, 1961 WL 21083 (HL 1961), 567
- Brawner, United States v., 471 F.2d 969, 153 U.S.App.D.C. 1 (D.C.Cir.1972), 534
- Breed v. Jones, 421 U.S. 519, 95 S.Ct. 1779, 44 L.Ed.2d 346 (1975), 762
- Bricker, State v., 321 Md. 86, 581 A.2d 9 (Md.1990), 483
- Bright, United States v., 517 F.2d 584 (2nd Cir.1975), 576, 577, 578, 579, 581
- Brown v. Mississippi, 297 U.S. 278, 56 S.Ct. 461, 80 L.Ed. 682 (1936), 1020
- Brown v. Storz, 710 S.W.2d 402 (Mo.App. E.D.1986), 910
- Brown, United States v., 891 F.Supp. 1501 (D.Kan.1995), 584
- Buchanan v. Kentucky, 483 U.S. 402, 107 S.Ct. 2906, 97 L.Ed.2d 336 (1987), 510
- Burchett v. Bower, 355 F.Supp. 1278 (D.Ariz.1973), 850
- Burgess v. Superior Court, 9 Cal.Rptr.2d 615, 831 P.2d 1197 (Cal.1992), 209, 211, 212, 213
- Burgus v. Rush Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center, No. 91L8493 & 93L14050 (Ill.Cir.Ct.), 150, 153
- Butler v. Perry, 240 U.S. 328, 36 S.Ct. 258, 60 L.Ed. 672 (1916), 1101
- Buttonow, In re, 297 N.Y.S.2d 97, 244 N.E.2d 677 (N.Y.1968), 829
- Buttrum v. Black, 721 F.Supp. 1268 (N.D.Ga.1989), 495
- Buzzelle's Estate v. Colorado State Hospital, 176 Colo. 554, 491 P.2d 1369 (Colo. 1971), 1101
- Byers, United States v., 740 F.2d 1104, 239 U.S.App.D.C. 1 (D.C.Cir.1984), 508, 511, 512
- Caesar v. Mountanos, 542 F.2d 1064 (9th Cir.1976), 374
- California Assn. of Psychology Providers v. Rank**, 270 Cal.Rptr. 796, 793 P.2d 2 (Cal.1990), **99**, 105
- Canon v. Thumudo, 430 Mich. 326, 422 N.W.2d 688 (Mich.1988), 234
- Canterbury v. Spence**, 464 F.2d 772, 150 U.S.App.D.C. 263 (D.C.Cir.1972), 251, **257**, 263, 264, 265, **266**, 267, **271**, 272, 275, 281

- Carparts Distribution Center, Inc. v. Automotive Wholesaler's Ass'n of New England, Inc., 37 F.3d 12 (1st Cir.1994), 65
- Castillo v. United States, 552 F.2d 1385 (10th Cir.1977), 163
- Cedar Rapids Community School Dist. v. Garret F. ex rel. Charlene F., 526 U.S. 66, 119 S.Ct. 992, 143 L.Ed.2d 154 (1999), 1154, 1155
- Chambers, United States v., 885 F.Supp. 12 (D.D.C.1995), 640
- Chandler v. City of Dallas, 2 F.3d 1385 (5th Cir.1993), 1201
- Charters, United States v., 863 F.2d 302 (4th Cir.1988), 939, 941, 990, 1094, 1095
- Chase, State v., 206 Kan. 352, 480 P.2d 62 (Kan.1971), 517
- Chavez, People v., 629 P.2d 1040 (Colo. 1981), 837
- Chevron U.S.A. Inc. v. Echazabal, 536 U.S. 73, 122 S.Ct. 2045, 153 L.Ed.2d 82 (2002), 1192
- Chevron U.S.A., Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., 467 U.S. 837, 104 S.Ct. 2778, 81 L.Ed.2d 694 (1984), 1203
- Chill v. Mississippi Hosp. Reimbursement Com'n, 429 So.2d 574 (Miss.1983), 1107
- Christensen v. Bowen**, 633 F.Supp. 1214 (N.D.Cal.1986), **1174**, 1180, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1185
- Chumbler v. McClure, 505 F.2d 489 (6th Cir.1974), 138
- City of (see name of city)**
- Clancy, Commonwealth v., 402 Mass. 664, 524 N.E.2d 395 (Mass.1988), 362
- Clark v. Cohen, 794 F.2d 79 (3rd Cir.1986), 1117
- Clark v. Cohen, 613 F.Supp. 684 (E.D.Pa. 1985), 1073
- Clark v. Donahue, 885 F.Supp. 1159 (S.D.Ind.1995), 1073
- Clark v. Virginia Bd. of Bar Examiners**, 880 F.Supp. 430 (E.D.Va.1995), **1239**, 1249
- Cleburne, Tex., City of v. Cleburne Living Center**, 473 U.S. 432, 105 S.Ct. 3249, 87 L.Ed.2d 313 (1985), 864, 865, **1251**, 1260, 1262
- Cleveland v. Policy Management Systems Corp., 526 U.S. 795, 119 S.Ct. 1597, 143 L.Ed.2d 966 (1999), 1218
- Cleveland v. Policy Management Systems Corp., 120 F.3d 513 (5th Cir.1997), 1218
- Clites v. State, 322 N.W.2d 917 (Iowa App. 1982), 127
- Clovis Unified School Dist. v. California Office of Administrative Hearings, 903 F.2d 635 (9th Cir.1990), 1155
- Coates v. City of Cincinnati, 402 U.S. 611, 91 S.Ct. 1686, 29 L.Ed.2d 214 (1971), 700
- Cobbs v. Grant, 104 Cal.Rptr. 505, 502 P.2d 1 (Cal.1972), 267, 268
- Coker v. Georgia, 433 U.S. 584, 97 S.Ct. 2861, 53 L.Ed.2d 982 (1977), 616
- Cole, State v.**, 295 N.W.2d 29 (Iowa 1980), **359**, 361
- College Sav. Bank v. Florida Prepaid Post-secondary Educ. Expense Bd., 527 U.S. 666, 119 S.Ct. 2219, 144 L.Ed.2d 605 (1999), 1221
- Colorado v. Connelly**, 479 U.S. 157, 107 S.Ct. 515, 93 L.Ed.2d 473 (1986), **1020**, 1028
- Commonwealth v. _____ (see opposing party)**
- Commitment of G.M., In re, 743 N.E.2d 1148 (Ind.App.2001), 941
- Commitment of W.Z., In re, 173 N.J. 109, 801 A.2d 205 (N.J.2002), 657
- Commonwealth ex rel. v. _____ (see opposing party and relator)**
- Conklin, In re, 946 F.2d 306 (4th Cir.1991), 1153
- Connecticut Dept. of Public Safety v. Doe, 538 U.S. 1, 123 S.Ct. 1160, 155 L.Ed.2d 98 (2003), 664
- Connecticut Traumatic Brain Injury Ass'n v. Hogan, 161 F.R.D. 8 (D.Conn.1995), 1073
- Conservatorship of Waltz, 180 Cal.App.3d 722, 227 Cal.Rptr. 436 (Cal.App. 4 Dist. 1986), 281, 282
- Cooper v. Oklahoma, 517 U.S. 348, 116 S.Ct. 1373, 134 L.Ed.2d 498 (1996), 982
- Corcoran v. United HealthCare, Inc., 965 F.2d 1321 (5th Cir.1992), 228
- Corgan v. Muehling**, 167 Ill.App.3d 1093, 118 Ill.Dec. 698, 522 N.E.2d 153 (Ill. App. 1 Dist.1988), **163**, 168, 223
- Corporate Health Ins., Inc. v. Texas Dept. of Ins., 215 F.3d 526 (5th Cir.2000), 228
- Cottrill, State ex rel. v. Meigs Cty. Bd. of Mental Retardation & Dev. Disabilities, 86 Ohio App.3d 596, 621 N.E.2d 728 (Ohio App. 4 Dist.1993), 1120
- County of (see name of county)**
- Craig, State v., 82 Wash.2d 777, 514 P.2d 151 (Wash.1973), 577
- Creamer v. Danks, 700 F.Supp. 1169 (D.Me. 1988), 234
- Crenshaw, State v., 98 Wash.2d 789, 659 P.2d 488 (Wash.1983), 550
- Crews, People v.**, 122 Ill.2d 266, 119 Ill. Dec. 308, 522 N.E.2d 1167 (Ill.1988), **604**, 610, 611
- Cruz v. Ward, 558 F.2d 658 (2nd Cir.1977), 850
- Cruzan by Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Dept. of Health, 497 U.S. 261, 110 S.Ct. 2841, 111 L.Ed.2d 224 (1990), 731, 918, 919, 942
- Cruzan by Cruzan v. Harmon, 760 S.W.2d 408 (Mo.1988), 918, 919
- Currens, United States v., 290 F.2d 751 (3rd Cir.1961), 548, 549
- Currie v. United States, 644 F.Supp. 1074 (M.D.N.C.1986), 201

- Cynthia B. v. New Rochelle Hosp. Medical Center, 470 N.Y.S.2d 122, 458 N.E.2d 363 (N.Y.1983), 374
- Dalehite v. United States, 346 U.S. 15, 73 S.Ct. 956, 97 L.Ed. 1427 (1953), 231
- Daniel R.R. v. State Bd. of Educ., 874 F.2d 1036 (5th Cir.1989), 1167, 1168
- Daniels v. Williams, 474 U.S. 327, 106 S.Ct. 662, 88 L.Ed.2d 662 (1986), 246
- Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc., 509 U.S. 579, 113 S.Ct. 2786, 125 L.Ed.2d 469 (1993), 441, 442, 443, 463, 464, 466, 470
- Dautremont v. Broadlawns Hosp., 827 F.2d 291 (8th Cir.1987), 943
- Davis v. Balson, 461 F.Supp. 842 (N.D. Ohio 1978), 1097, 1098, 1103
- Davis v. Lhim, 124 Mich.App. 291, 335 N.W.2d 481 (Mich.App.1983), 137, 200
- Davis, United States v., 835 F.2d 274 (11th Cir.1988), 522
- Davoll v. Webb, 943 F.Supp. 1289 (D.Colo. 1996), 1219
- Day v. State, 378 So.2d 1156 (Ala.Crim.App. 1979), 358
- Daymude v. State**, 540 N.E.2d 1263 (Ind. App. 1 Dist.1989), **339**
- Decina, People v., 157 N.Y.S.2d 558, 138 N.E.2d 799 (N.Y.1956), 566
- Dellmuth v. Muth, 491 U.S. 223, 109 S.Ct. 2397, 105 L.Ed.2d 181 (1989), 1156
- Dennis v. Allison, 698 S.W.2d 94 (Tex. 1985), 236
- Denny-Shaffer, United States v., 2 F.3d 999 (10th Cir.1993), 566
- Department of Mental Hygiene v. Kirchner, 60 Cal.2d 716, 36 Cal.Rptr. 488, 388 P.2d 720 (Cal.1964), 1106
- DeShaney v. Winnebago County Dept. of Social Services, 489 U.S. 189, 109 S.Ct. 998, 103 L.Ed.2d 249 (1989), 1073, 1074, 1117, 1118
- Dietrich v. Brooks, 27 Or.App. 821, 558 P.2d 357 (Or.App.1976), 817
- Dixon v. Weinberger, 405 F.Supp. 974 (D.D.C.1975), 1119
- Dodd v. Hughes**, 81 Nev. 43, 398 P.2d 540 (Nev.1965), **686**, 688, 689
- Doe v. New York University, 666 F.2d 761 (2nd Cir.1981), 1236
- Doe, People v., 103 Ill.App.3d 56, 58 Ill.Dec. 664, 430 N.E.2d 696 (Ill.App. 4 Dist. 1981), 361
- Doe v. Roe**, 93 Misc.2d 201, 400 N.Y.S.2d 668 (N.Y.Sup.1977), **328**
- Donaldson v. O'Connor**, 493 F.2d 507 (5th Cir.1974), **1054**
- Doremus v. Farrell, 407 F.Supp. 509 (D.Neb.1975), 783, 788
- Downs v. Department of Public Welfare, 368 F.Supp. 454 (E.D.Pa.1973), 1101
- Drope v. Missouri, 420 U.S. 162, 95 S.Ct. 896, 43 L.Ed.2d 103 (1975), 963, 964, 976, 978, 990
- Dukes v. United States Healthcare, Inc., 57 F.3d 350 (3rd Cir.1995), 228
- Duncan v. Louisiana, 391 U.S. 145, 88 S.Ct. 1444, 20 L.Ed.2d 491 (1968), 783
- Duncan v. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 214 F.R.D. 43 (D.D.C. 2003), 1221
- Durham v. United States, 214 F.2d 862, 94 U.S.App.D.C. 228 (D.C.Cir.1954), 533, 534, 536
- Dush v. Appleton Elec. Co., 124 F.3d 957 (8th Cir.1997), 1218
- Dusky v. United States, 362 U.S. 402, 80 S.Ct. 788, 4 L.Ed.2d 824 (1960), 1015
- Dutton v. Johnson County Bd. of County Com'rs, 859 F.Supp. 498 (D.Kan.1994), 1205
- Duvall v. Cabinet for Human Resources, 920 F.Supp. 111 (E.D.Ky.1996), 1073
- Duzynski v. Nosal, 324 F.2d 924 (7th Cir. 1963), 233
- Eckerhart v. Hensley, 475 F.Supp. 908 (W.D.Mo.1979), 1096
- Eddings v. Oklahoma, 455 U.S. 104, 102 S.Ct. 869, 71 L.Ed.2d 1 (1982), 616
- Edmonds, City of v. Oxford House, Inc.**, 514 U.S. 725, 115 S.Ct. 1776, 131 L.Ed.2d 801 (1995), **1268**
- Edney, People v.**, 385 N.Y.S.2d 23, 350 N.E.2d 400 (N.Y.1976), **375**, 383, 496
- Edwards, United States v.**, 819 F.2d 262 (11th Cir.1987), **519**, 521
- Edwards, United States v., 488 F.2d 1154 (5th Cir.1974), 495
- E.E.O.C. v. Amego, Inc.**, 110 F.3d 135 (1st Cir.1997), **1205**, 1216
- E.E.O.C. v. CNA Ins. Companies, 96 F.3d 1039 (7th Cir.1996), 64
- E.E.O.C. v. Staten Island Sav. Bank, 207 F.3d 144 (2nd Cir.2000), 64
- Enmund v. Florida, 458 U.S. 782, 102 S.Ct. 3368, 73 L.Ed.2d 1140 (1982), 616
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 97 S.Ct. 285, 50 L.Ed.2d 251 (1976), 850
- Estelle v. Smith**, 451 U.S. 454, 101 S.Ct. 1866, 68 L.Ed.2d 359 (1981), **497**, 506, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 518
- Ewing v. California, 538 U.S. 11, 123 S.Ct. 1179, 155 L.Ed.2d 108 (2003), 664
- Ex parte (see name of party)**
- Faber v. Sweet Style Mfg. Corp., 40 Misc.2d 212, 242 N.Y.S.2d 763 (N.Y.Sup.1963), 886
- Fain v. Commonwealth, 78 Ky. 183 (Ky. 1879), 565
- Familystyle of St. Paul, Inc. v. City of St. Paul, Minn., 923 F.2d 91 (8th Cir.1991), 1276, 1277
- Familystyle of St. Paul, Inc. v. City of St. Paul, Minn., 728 F.Supp. 1396 (D.Minn. 1990), 1276