1 State of Arkansas As Engrossed: H3/1/01 A Bill 2 83rd General Assembly HOUSE BILL 1764 3 Regular Session, 2001 4 By: Representatives Dees, Borhauer 5 6 7 For An Act To Be Entitled 8 9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE ADULT ABUSE ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. 10 11 12 **Subtitle** 13 AN ACT TO AMEND THE ADULT ABUSE ACT. 14 15 16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS: 17 18 19 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code 5-28-101 is amended to read as follows: 20 5-28-101. Definitions. 21 As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires: 22 (1) "Abuse" means: 23 (A) Any intentional and unnecessary physical act which inflicts 24 pain on or causes injury to an endangered or impaired adult, including sexual 25 abuse; or 26 (B) Any intentional or demeaning act which subjects an endangered or impaired adult to ridicule or psychological injury in a manner likely to 27 28 provoke fear or alarm; 29 (2) "Caregiver" means a related or unrelated person, owner, agent, high managerial agent of a public or private organization, or a public or private 30 31 organization that has the responsibility for the protection, care, or custody 32 of an endangered or impaired adult as a result of assuming the responsibility 33 voluntarily, by contract, through employment, or by order of the court; (3)(A) "Department" means the Department of Human Services. 34 35 (B) The director of the department may assign responsibilities for administering the various duties imposed upon the department under this 36

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chapter to respective divisions of the department which, in his or her opinion, are best able to render service or administer the provisions of this chapter;

(4) "Endangered adult" means:

- (A) An adult eighteen (18) years of age or older who is found to be in a situation or condition which poses an imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm to that person and who demonstrates a lack of capacity to comprehend the nature and consequences of remaining in that situation or condition; or
- (B) A resident eighteen (18) years of age or older of a long-term care facility which is required to be licensed under § 20-10-224 who is found to be in a situation or condition which poses an imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm to such person and who demonstrates the lack of capacity to comprehend the nature and consequences of remaining in that situation or condition;
- (5) "Exploitation" means the illegal use or management of an endangered or impaired adult's funds, assets, or property, or the use of an endangered or impaired adult's person, power of attorney,  $\tau$  or guardianship for the profit or advantage of himself or another;
- (6)(A) "Imminent danger to health or safety" means a situation in which death or severe bodily injury could reasonably be expected to occur without intervention.
- (B) The burden of proof shall be upon the Department of Human Services to show by clear and convincing evidence that such imminent danger exists;
- (7) (A) "Impaired adult" means an adult a person eighteen (18) years or older who suffers from as a result of mental or physical disease or defect and as a consequence thereof impairment is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation and as a consequence thereof is endangered.
- (B) For purposes of this chapter, adult residents of a long-term care facility are presumed to be impaired adults;
- (8) "Neglect" means acts or omissions by the <u>an</u> endangered or <u>impaired</u> adult, for example self-neglect, or intentional acts or omissions by a caregiver <u>responsible</u> for the care and supervision of an endangered or impaired adult constituting:

1	(A) Negligently failing to provide necessary treatment,
2	rehabilitation, care, food, clothing, shelter, supervision, or medical
3	services to an endangered or impaired adult;
4	(B) Negligently failing to report health problems or changes in
5	health problems or changes in the health condition of an endangered or
6	impaired adult to the appropriate medical personnel; or
7	(C) Negligently failing to carry out a prescribed treatment plan;
8	(9)(A) "Physical injury" means the impairment of physical condition or
9	the infliction of substantial pain.
10	(B) Where the person is an endangered or impaired adult, there
11	shall be a presumption that any physical abuse resulted in the infliction of
12	substantial pain;
13	(10)(A) "Protective services" means services to protect the endangered
14	or impaired adult from:
15	(i) Self-neglect or self-abuse; and
16	(ii) Abuse or neglect by others;
17	(B) Protective services shall include, but not be limited to:
18	(i) Evaluation of the need for services;
19	(ii) Arrangements for appropriate services;
20	(iii) Assistance in obtaining financial benefits to which
21	the person is entitled; or
22	(iv) Securing medical and Legal services.
23	(C)(i) Protective services may include:
24	(a) Referrals for services available in the
25	communi ty;
26	(b) Seeking protective custody or court-ordered
27	services for endangered adults; or
28	(c) In appropriate cases, assistance in locating an
29	appropriate person or entity interested in and able to assume guardianship
30	over an endangered adult;
31	(ii) In situations involving exploitation of an endangered
32	or impaired adult not resulting in any imminent danger to health or safety, or
33	involving protection of the property of such an impaired adult, protective
34	services may include one (1) or more of the following:
35	(a) Referrals for Legal assistance;
36	(b) Referrals, as appropriate, to law enforcement or

1 prosecutors; 2 (c) Assistance in locating an appropriate person or 3 entity interested in and able to assume quardianship; 4 (11) "Serious bodily harm" means physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical 5 injury, or serious physical injury as defined in this chapter; 6 (12) "Serious physical injury" means physical injury to an endangered 7 or impaired adult that creates a substantial risk of death or that causes 8 protracted disfigurement, protracted impairment of health, or loss or 9 protracted impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ; 10 (13) "Sexual abuse" means deviate sexual activity, sexual contact, or 11 sexual intercourse, as those terms are defined in § 5-14-101, with another 12 person who is not the actor's spouse and who is incapable of consent because 13 he or she is mentally defective, mentally incapacitated, or physically 14 helpless, as those terms are defined in § 5-14-101; and (14) "Subject of the report" means the endangered or impaired adult, 15 16 the adult's guardian, and the offender. 17 18 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code 5-28-203 is amended to read as follows: 19 5-28-203. Persons required to report abuse. 20 (a)(1) Whenever any of the following has observed or has reasonable 21 cause to suspect that an endangered or impaired adult has been subjected to 22 conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse, sexual 23 abuse, neglect, or exploitation, as defined in this chapter, he or she shall 24 immediately report or cause a report to be made in accordance with the 25 provisions of this section: 26 (A) A physician; 27 (B) A surgeon; 28 (C) A coroner; 29 A dentist; (D) 30 (E) An osteopath; 31 (F) A resident intern; 32 (G) A registered nurse; 33 (H) Hospital personnel who are engaged in the administration, examination, care, or treatment of persons; 34

Any social worker;

(J) A case manager;

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1	(K)	A case worker;
2	(L)	A mental health professional;
3	(M)	A peace officer;
4	(N)	A law enforcement officer;
5	(0)	A facility administrator;
6	(P)	An employee in a facility; <del>or</del>
7	(Q)	An employee of the Department of Human Services.
8	(R)	A firefighter; or
9	(S)	An emergency medical technician (EMT).

- (2) Whenever a person is required to report under this chapter in his capacity as a member of the staff, an employee in a facility, or an employee of the Department of Human Services, he shall immediately notify the person in charge of the institution, facility, or agency, or his designated agent, who shall then become responsible for making a report or cause a report to be made.
- (3) In addition to those persons and officials required to report suspected adult abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, any other person may make a report if the person has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult has been abused, neglected, or exploited, as defined in this chapter.
- (b)(1) A report required under this chapter shall be made to the central registry by the receiving agency for abused or neglected adults not residing in long-term care facilities.
- (2) A report for abused or neglected adults residing in a long-term care facility shall be made immediately to the local law enforcement agency for the jurisdiction in which the facility is located, and to the Office of Long-Term Care of the Division of Medical Services of the Department of Human Services pursuant to regulations of that office.
- (3) The Office of Long-Term Care shall notify the central registry and the office of the Attorney General.
- 30 (c) No privilege or contract shall relieve anyone required by this subchapter 31 to make notification of the requirement of making notification.
- 33 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code 5-28-206 is amended to read as follows: 34 5-28-206. Reporting procedures generally.
- 35 (a) A report of abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an 36 adult may, pursuant to this chapter, be made by telephone and shall be

followed by a written report within forty-eight (48) hours, if so requested by the receiving agency or central registry.

- (b) When a report is initially received by an agency other than the central registry, the receiving agency shall immediately forward a copy of the report to the statewide central registry on forms supplied by the registry.
- (c) When appropriate, a copy of the initial report shall immediately be made available to the appropriate law enforcement agency for its consideration.

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- SECTION 4. Arkansas Code 5-28-210 is amended to read as follows: 5-28-210. Investigation.
- (a)(1)(A) In cases involving an abused, neglected or exploited adult residing in a long-term care facility certified pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act, the local law enforcement agency or the office of the Attorney General shall make a thorough investigation.
- (B) In all other cases involving abused, neglected, or exploited adults, the department shall make a thorough investigation.
- (2) Referrals may be made to local law enforcement during the pendency of the department's investigation where cause exists to believe that a crime may have occurred.
- (b) The primary purpose of such investigation is to protect the abused, neglected, or exploited adult.
- (c)(1) The investigation shall be completed and a determination entered.
  - (2) The investigation and investigative report shall include:
- (A) The nature, extent, and cause of the abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the adult;
  - (B) The identity of the person responsible;
  - (C) The names and conditions of other adults in the home;
- 30 (D) The evaluation of the persons responsible for the care 31 of the abused, neglected, or exploited adult, if any;
- 32 (E) The home environment and relationship of the abused, 33 neglected, or exploited adult to the next of kin or other person responsible 34 for his care, and all other pertinent data; and
- 35 (F)(i)(a) A visit to the abused, neglected, or exploited adult's home and an interview with the abused, neglected, or exploited adult.

1 (b) The investigators shall interview the 2 abused, neglected, or exploited adult alone and out of the hearing of any next 3 of kin or other persons responsible for his or her care. 4 (c) An interpreter may be present during the interview of the abused, neglected, or exploited adult, if necessary. 5 6 (ii) If the admission to the home, institution, or 7 other place that the abused, neglected, or exploited adult may be, or 8 permission of the next of kin or other person responsible for the adult or in 9 charge of any place where the abused, neglected, or exploited adult may be, cannot be obtained, then the probate court, upon cause shown, shall order the 10 11 next of kin or person responsible and in charge of any place where the abused, 12 neglected, or exploited adult may be to allow entrance for the examination and 13 investigation. 14 (G) Further, if admission to the home cannot be obtained 15 due to hospitalization or similar absence of the abused, neglected, or 16 exploited adult and admission to the home is necessary to complete the 17 investigation, then the probate court, upon cause shown, shall order and 18 authorize law enforcement to assist the department in obtaining entrance to 19 the home for the required investigation of the home environment. 20 (d)(1) The investigation may include a medical, psychological, social, 21 vocational, financial, and educational evaluation and review, where necessary. 22 (2)(A) The medical, mental health, or other records regarding the 23 abused, neglected, or exploited adult maintained by any facility or maintained 24 by any person required by § 5-28-203 to report suspected abuse, neglect, or 25 exploitation shall be made available to the department for the purposes of 26 conducting an evaluation or review under this subsection. 27 (B) Financial records maintained by a bank or similar institution shall be made available to the department for the purpose of 28 29 conducting an evaluation or review under this subsection. 30 (3) No privilege or contract shall relieve anyone required by 31 this subchapter to make notification of the requirement of making 32 noti fi cati on. 33 (e)(1)(A) If, before the investigation is completed, the opinion of the investigators is that the immediate removal of the abused, neglected, or 34 35 exploited adult is necessary to protect him or her from further abuse, sexual

abuse, exploitation, or neglect, the investigators may petition the probate

1 court for an order of temporary <del>protective</del> custody <u>or exercise a seventy-two</u> 2 (72) hour hold pursuant to § 5-28-301.

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- (B) The probate court, upon good cause being shown, may issue an order for temporary protective custody in the manner and procedures provided in § 5-28-303.
- 6 (2)(A) If, before the investigation is completed, the opinion of 7 the investigators is that the abused, exploited, or neglected adult is in imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm, that available services have 8 9 been offered to alleviate the danger and have been refused, and the abused, 10 exploited, or neglected adult's capacity to comprehend the nature and 11 consequences of remaining in the situation or condition cannot be adequately 12 assessed in the home, the investigators may petition the probate court for an 13 order of temporary protective custody for the purpose of having the adult 14 eval uated.
- 15 (B) The probate court, upon good cause being shown, may 16 issue an order for temporary custody for the purpose of having the adult 17 evaluated.
- 18 (C) The petition shall be filed and the order issued in the 19 manner and procedures provided in § 5-28-303.
  - (f) The department shall make a written report or case summary, together with services offered and accepted, to the state central registry on forms supplied by the registry for the purpose.
  - (g) Upon completion of the investigation, the investigating agency shall determine that the allegations of adult abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation are either:
  - (1)(A)(i) Unfounded, which shall be entered when the allegation is not supported by a preponderance of the evidence.
- 28 (ii) Unfounded reports may be used within the 29 department prior to expungement for purposes of danger assessment on future 30 reports.
- 31 (iii) There can be no disclosure outside the 32 department of unfounded reports or information obtained during an unfounded 33 investigation, except for release to:
- 34 (a) The prosecutor for the limited purpose of 35 prosecution of a person who willfully makes false notification pursuant to 36 this subchapter;

1	(b) A subject of the report <u>, as limited by § 5-</u>
2	<u>28-212</u> ; or
3	(c) A court if the information in the record is
4	necessary for a determination of an issue before the court.
5	(B)(i) This section shall not prevent the department, prior
6	to completion of an investigation, from:
7	(a) Offering services;
8	(b) Petitioning the court for protective
9	custody; or
10	(c) Petitioning the probate court for an order
11	of investigation.
12	(ii) Further, this section shall not prohibit sharing
13	of information, prior to investigative determination, as discussed elsewhere
14	in this chapter, with:
15	(a) Law enforcement;
16	(b) Coroners or medical examiners; or
17	(c) Prosecutors.
18	(C)(i) If the investigation cannot be completed, the
19	investigation shall be determined incomplete and placed in inactive status for
20	one (1) year, at which time it will be expunged.
21	(ii) The report shall include documentation
22	indicating why the investigation could not be completed.
23	(D) For purposes of disclosure, pending or inactive reports
24	shall be treated as unfounded; and
25	(2)(A) Founded, which shall be entered when the allegation is
26	supported by some credible evidence a preponderance of the evidence.
27	(B) A determination of founded shall not be entered solely
28	because an adult, practicing his or her religious beliefs, is receiving
29	spiritual treatment as indicated in § 5-28-105.
30	(h) The founded investigative reports maintained in the department's
31	central registry shall be made available to the probate court upon request.
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33	SECTION 5. Arkansas Code 5-28-211(b)(10)(A), concerning rights of
34 25	subjects of reports to notice of findings and to amendment and appeal, is
35 26	amended to read as follows:  (b)(1)(A)(i) Following completion of the investigation, the department
36	(b)(1)(A)(i) Following completion of the investigation, the department

1 shall notify each known subject of the report of the determination within 2 thirty (30) days after completion of the investigation.

(ii) In cases of unfounded self-neglect, no notification to the subject of the report is required.

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- SECTION 6. Arkansas Code 5-28-213(a), concerning availability of reports of adult abuse, is amended to read as follows:
- Reports made pursuant to this chapter which are determined to be 8 founded, as well as any other information obtained, and reports written or 10 photographs taken concerning founded reports in the possession of the 11 Department of Human Services shall be confidential and shall be made available 12 only to:
  - (1) A physician who has before him an endangered or impaired adult whom he reasonably believes may have been abused, sexually abused, exploited, or neglected;
  - (2) A person authorized to place the adult in protective custody when such a person has before him an adult whom he reasonably believes may have been abused, sexually abused, exploited, or neglected, and such person requires the information to determine whether to place the adult in protective custody;
  - (3) An authorized agency having responsibility for the care or supervision of an endangered or impaired adult;
    - (4) Any person who is the subject of a report;
  - (5) A court, where it determines that such information is necessary for the determination of an issue before the court;
  - (6)(A) A prosecuting attorney, law enforcement official, or coroner conducting a criminal investigation or investigating a death; or
  - (B) The Attorney General or his designated investigator when conducting an investigation of abuse, exploitation, or neglect;
  - (7)(A) A person mandated reporter who has made a report of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation, only to the extent that he may be informed after completion and closure of the investigation whether legal action was taken, services were provided, or no action was taken.
  - (B) No further information shall be released and the person shall be informed of the confidentiality of the information and the penalties for disclosure; and

1 (8)(A) Agencies employing personal care assistants for purposes 2 of screening applicants upon submission of a signed, notarized release from 3 the applicant.

(B) The only information released to the agency will be whether or not the registry contains any founded reports naming the applicant as an offender.

- SECTION 7. Arkansas Code 5-28-301 is amended to read as follows: 5-28-301. Emergency custody.
- (a)(1) The Department of Human Services or a law enforcement official may take an abused, neglected, or exploited adult into emergency protective custody or any person in charge of a hospital or similar institution or any physician treating any such adult may keep that adult in his custody, whether or not medical treatment is required, if the circumstances or condition of the adult is such that returning to or continuing at his place of residence or in the care or custody of a parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the adult's care presents imminent danger to that adult's health or safety and the adult lacks the capacity to comprehend the nature and consequences of remaining in a situation that presents imminent danger to his health or safety.
- (2)(A)(i) However, emergency protective custody shall not exceed seventy-two (72) hours, excluding weekends and holidays, and the Department of Human Services shall be notified immediately upon taking such adult into emergency protective custody.
- (ii) The Department of Human Services may release custody of the adult within the seventy-two (72) hours if the adult is no longer in circumstances or conditions that present imminent danger to the adult's health or safety.
- (B) An emergency ex parte order of custody shall be obtained on the abused, neglected, or exploited adult within the seventy-two (72) hours.
- (3)(A)(i) When emergency protective custody is exercised pursuant to this section, the person exercising such custody or the department shall have authority to consent to having the abused, neglected, or exploited adult transported by <a href="Law enforcement or by">Law enforcement or by</a> ambulance if medically appropriate, even if the adult objects.

1	(ii) No court order shall be required for such <u>law</u>
2	enforcement or ambulance transport.
3	(B)(i) When an ambulance driver or company or law
4	enforcement officer acts in good faith pursuant to this subdivision (a)(3),
5	the immunity provisions of § 5-28-215 shall apply.
6	(ii) The good faith of the ambulance driver or
7	company or law enforcement officer shall be presumed.
8	(b) $\underline{(1)}$ If the court grants the ex parte order of emergency custody, a
9	preliminary hearing shall be held within five (5) working days to establish
10	probable cause for grounds for <del>protective</del> <u>temporary</u> custody.
11	(2) The probable cause hearing shall be a miscellaneous hearing.
12	(c) $\frac{(1)}{(1)}$ Upon a finding of probable cause, the court may order temporary
13	protective custody for up to fourteen (14) thirty (30) days pending the
14	hearing for long-term protective custody.
15	(2) Upon a finding that extenuating circumstances are present and
16	that the hearing cannot be held within fourteen (14) days, the court may
17	extend the period of temporary protective custody for up to nineteen (19)
18	<del>days.</del>
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20	SECTION 8. Arkansas Code 5-28-303 is amended to read as follows:
21	5-28-303. Temporary custody.
22	(a)(1) The Department of Human Services may file a petition requesting
23	the probate court to find that there is probable cause to place an abused,
24	neglected, or exploited adult in temporary custody for a period of up to
25	thirty (30) days.
26	(2) This hearing shall be a miscellaneous hearing.
27	(b) During the period the abused, neglected, or exploited adult is in
28	<pre>emergency or temporary custody, the court may:</pre>
29	(1) Order or authorize the department to obtain:
30	(A) Medical treatment; or
31	(B) Physical or psychological evaluations;
32	(2) Investigate the adult's financial affairs; or
33	(3) Order that a hearing for long-term protective custody or
34	court-ordered services be held.
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36	SECTION 9. Arkansas Code 5-28-304 is amended to read as follows:

1 5-28-304. Long-term custody - Notice - Court Ordered Services.

2 (a)(1)(A) The Department of Human Services may file a petition 3 requesting that an abused, neglected, or exploited adult be placed in the 4 department's long-term protective custody.

- (B) Alternatively, or in combination with a petition for protective emergency or temporary custody, the department may file a petition for court-ordered services requesting that the abused, neglected, or exploited adult or the primary caregiver of the adult be ordered to accept services in the adult's home environment in lieu of being placed in protective custody.
- (2) The petition requesting long-term protective custody or court-ordered services may be combined with the petition requesting <u>emergency</u> or temporary <u>protective</u> custody.
- (b) Notice of a petition for long-term protective custody or courtordered services shall be served upon the respondent at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the time set for a hearing.
- (c) Upon service of the notice, the respondent will be given notice of the long-term hearing, a copy of the petition, and a copy of the order for the hearing.
- 19 (d) In addition, the respondent will be advised of the following 20 rights:
  - (1) The right to effective assistance of counsel;
  - (2) The right to be present at the hearing;
  - (3) The right to present evidence on his own behalf;
  - (4) The right to cross-examine witnesses who testify against him;
- 25 (5) The right to present witnesses in his own behalf;
  - (6) The right to remain silent; and
  - (7) The right to view and copy all petitions, reports, and documents retained in the court file.
  - (e) The person or persons serving the notice shall return the certificate of service to the court verifying that the petition, the order for hearing, and a statement of the rights in subsection (d) of this section have been delivered and notice given.
    - (f) Additionally, notice shall be given to:
  - (1) The Legal counsel;

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35 (2) The next of kin whose names and addresses are known to the 36 petitioner;

1 (3) The person having physical custody of the respondent;

- 2 (4) Any person named in the petition; and
- 3 (5) Such other persons or entities as the court may require.
  - (g) The probate clerk shall not charge or collect a filing fee from the department when it files a petition for:
- 6 (1) Temporary Emergency, temporary or long-term protective 7 custody;
  - (2) Temporary custody for purposes of evaluation;
  - (3) Court-ordered services; or
  - (4) An order of investigation.

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12 SECTION 10. Arkansas Code 5-28-306 is amended to read as follows:

- 13 5-28-306. Long-term custody Hearing Placement Appeal.
  - (a) A hearing for long-term protective custody or court-ordered services shall be no later than thirty (30) days from the date the order for emergency or temporary protective custody was signed, unless the court extends the time in which the hearing must be held upon a finding that extenuating circumstances exist.
  - (b) The court may hold a hearing for long-term protective custody or court-ordered services anywhere in the judicial district.
  - (c)(1) The court shall make a finding in connection with the determination of the least restrictive alternative to be considered proper under the circumstances, including the finding for noninstitutional care wherever possible.
  - (2) Where there are services available to remedy the imminent danger to the abused, neglected, or exploited adult, the court may order the adult or the caregiver for the adult to accept the services in lieu of placing the adult in protective custody.
    - (d) In the order, the court shall specify:
      - (1) The placement or care plan to be followed;
- 31 (2) The reason for the placement or care to be given;
  - (3) The scope and duration of the order;
- 33 (4) That the department periodically review the case every six 34 (6) months, or more frequently if warranted;
- 35 (5) That the department monitor the services being received in 36 lieu of protective custody as often as is necessary to prevent the recurrence

1 of the danger; a	OT	tne	danger;	and
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(6) The requirement of judicial court review of the case, either formal or informal as determined by the court, at least once a year.

- (e) No long-term protective custody may be ordered unless there is a determination by the court that:
- (1) The person is lacking the capacity to comprehend the nature and consequences of remaining in a situation that presents an imminent danger to his health or safety;
- (2) The individual is unable to provide for his own protection from abuse or neglect; and
  - (3) The court finds clear and convincing evidence that the individual to be placed is in need of placement as provided in this chapter.
- (f) Placement may be in such facilities as nursing homes, boarding homes, medical institutions, foster care services, or other facilities that provide either medical or personal supervision.
- (g)(1) Placement under this section does not replace commitment of a person in need of acute psychiatric treatment, a person in need of casework supervision by mental health professionals, or alcohol or drug abuse treatment.
- (2) Placement under this section does not apply to domestic abuse of mentally competent persons.
- (3) No adult shall be placed in the custody of the department for the sole purpose of consenting to the adult's medical treatment.
- (h) Any person aggrieved by any order for long-term protective custody or for court-ordered services may appeal to a court of competent jurisdiction in the manner and procedures now provided by law.

27 /s/ Dees