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'Gravely Disabled' Homeless Forced Into Mental Health Care in More States | The Pew...
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September 11, 2019  By: Teresa Wiltz  Topics: Safety Net & Health  Read time: 6 min

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But advocates for the homeless and for civil rights are pushing back against those laws, arguing that confining people against their will violates their civil rights. They also worry that facilities won't have enough room for the additional patients, and that the laws will disproportionately affect minorities.

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**Negotiating Lower Health Care Prices Pays Off for Colorado Community**

**AUTHORS**

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September 11, 2019

By: Teresa Wiltz

Topics: Safety Net & Health

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__Related__

**Topics**  Safety Net, Health  
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September 11, 2019  By: Teresa Wiltz  Topics: Safety Net & Health  Read time: 6 min

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SUBMIT
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'Gravely Disabled' Homeless Forced Into Mental Health Care in More States

STATELINE ARTICLE  September 11, 2019  By: Teresa Wiltz  Topics: Safety Net & Health  Read time: 6 min

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Negotiating Lower Health Care Prices Pays Off for Colorado Community

AUTHORS

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Topics
Safety Net, Health

Places
California, Hawaii

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NBig 11/20

Teresa Wiltz
Staff Writer
Stateline

TOPICS
Safety Net, Health

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California, Hawaii

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**Hawaii Effort**

Under Hawaii’s new law, courts may assign a public guardian for up to a year and order psychiatric treatment for patients deemed to be a danger to themselves.

Honolulu will deploy a “street medicine team” to identify homeless people in need and try to get them into treatment. If they refuse, the team will try to identify a potential guardian among their family members and friends. If none can be found, the team can enlist the help of a judge.

Court-ordered treatment improves the odds of continued treatment after discharge, helping keep people from becoming homeless, said Dailey of the Treatment Advocacy Center. And if a person is already homeless, having the ability to refer that person for an evaluation “provides a much-needed avenue to care,” she said.

Kimo Carvalho — director of community relations and development for the Institute for Human Services, the Honolulu nonprofit that will be administering the program — praised the approach as “much more proactive,” as opposed to "hospitalizing them because they’ve got wounds with maggots coming out.”
In a statement to state lawmakers, Mandy Fernandes of the ACLU of Hawaii said the measure may infringe on people's civil liberties. She said people shouldn't be compelled to get treatment until they've been offered housing, case management by a social worker and other aid. (The ACLU of Hawaii declined an interview request from Stateline.)

But mental health advocates argue that the Hawaii program and others like it restore civil rights to those with mental illness by getting them on a path back to health.

Carvalho pointed out that many homeless people with mental illness live in undignified, unsanitary conditions.

"Because of that, their skin has rotted, they have flesh-eating diseases, they have chronic medical illnesses parallel to their homelessness," Carvalho said. "There's a new generation of psychiatric meds that have the potential to dramatically change their lives."

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