



*California's protection & advocacy system*

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## **Understanding the Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) Act**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Prior to 1967, California's mental health system looked very different than it does now. Many more individuals with mental health disabilities lived in state hospitals and large facilities, often for long periods of their life. Then California passed the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 5000 et seq). Named after its authors, State Assemblyman Frank Lanterman and California State Senators Nicholas C. Petris and Alan Short, the LPS Act sought to, "end the inappropriate, indefinite, and involuntary commitment of persons with mental health disorders." It also established a right to prompt psychiatric evaluation and treatment, in some situations, and set out strict due process protections for mental health clients.

This publication outlines the basics of the LPS Act for mental health consumers. **Chapter 1** describes the LPS short-term holds: "5150"s, 72-hour holds for evaluation and assessment; and "5250"s, 14-day holds for intensive treatment. **Chapter 2** describes the LPS conservatorship process, which governs treatment and placement of individuals found "gravely disabled" and in need of longer-term assistance through a third-party decision maker. **Chapter 3** outlines the rights and protections given to mental health consumers on LPS holds and how they can be enforced.

The LPS statutes and regulations can be complicated. This publication is only a primer on the law. Because of the important liberty interests involved, consumers have the rights to the services of a patients' rights advocate and, in some cases, an appointed attorney. If you or your loved

one has questions about LPS, or needs assistance, it is important to reach out to a qualified attorney or advocate.

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