

News Release

July 5, 2012

In 2012, Sen. Bill 55 failed to become a law. If passed, Sen. Bill 55 would have for the first time given psychiatric patients a right by state law to file a grievance at the time of their choosing. Sen. Bill 55 would also have given psychiatric patients for the first time a right by state law to file an appeal when a complaint was unsatisfactorily resolved.

It is not a coincidence that state-run Alaska Psychiatric Institute revised their patient grievance procedure when it appeared that Sen. Bill 55 would fail to pass.

Prior to April 2, 2012, patients at API had a right by policy to file a grievance at the time of their choosing. Now after the grievance procedure revision, patients are required to go through an informal complaint process before being allowed to file a grievance. There is no time frame for completion of the informal process.

Due process for the completion of a patient's grievance does not start until API states that the informal process is completed, and that is whenever API says it is complete.

Due process rights for a psychiatric patient's complaint or grievance or appeals should start the day that the patient files a complaint. (Not happening today)

Psychiatric patients are being put in danger in numerous psychiatric facilities and units concerning the grievance procedure and appeal process. Nothing is really going to change until AS47.30.847 is improved by revision.

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