



## **Frequently Asked Questions: Ricky's Law (Integrated Involuntary Treatment)**

Updated July 28, 2021

### **How does Ricky's Law change behavioral health crisis response in King County on April 1, 2018?**

- Ricky's Law revises Washington's Involuntary Treatment Act (Revised Code of Washington 71.05 and 71.34) to require evaluation of people in severe crisis resulting from substance use disorders (SUDs), alongside previous law for people whose crisis is due to a mental health condition.
- It revises the name of Designated Mental Health Professionals (DMHPs) who provide these involuntary treatment evaluations (and help arrange other alternatives) to Designated Crisis Responders (DCRs).
- A 16-bed Secure Withdrawal Management (SWM) facility opened in King County in fall 2018. **King County DCRs can ONLY detain for SUD-related crises to that facility when there is bed availability.**

### **What will DCRs do when a person meets criteria for Ricky's Law, but there is no SWM bed available?**

- The DCR will work with the person to offer a less restrictive voluntary treatment option in King County. The DCR, hospital, or other provider will assist the person with placement.
- The DCR will also evaluate whether the person meets detention criteria due to a mental health condition, which could open up other involuntary treatment options.

### **Why can't a person be held involuntarily in a hospital setting until a SWM bed comes open?**

- The legal authority to hold a person involuntarily outside a treatment facility in a setting such as a community hospital or emergency department, while providing them timely and appropriate services, is limited to mental health detentions, and is not permitted for SUD detentions.

If you have more questions about Ricky's Law or involuntary commitment services in King County, please visit our website (<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/mental-health-substance-abuse/services/crisis-services.aspx>) or call 206-263-9200.

If you or someone you know is in behavioral health crisis and needs assistance, please contact the Crisis Clinic at 206-461-3222. The Crisis Clinic can help connect you to the supports or assistance that best fit your situation. If you have immediate safety concerns, please call 911.