

BENEFITS OF EXTENDED LEAVE

Provisions for Extended Leave exist under the B.C. Mental Health Act. These provisions are used regularly and successfully in certain regions of the province.

Broad Criteria for Use of Extended Leave

For patients who

- Have a diagnosed severe and persistent mental illness
- Lack insight due to the nature of their illness, and are unable to voluntarily seek or comply with treatment; and
- Need treatment in order to prevent deterioration that would predictably result in grave disability, or harms to self or others.

Patients Most Likely to Benefit from Extended Leave

Individuals who:

- Require longer periods of convalescence than acute care hospitals are able to provide (due to bed shortages) – to help ensure stabilization and engagement in treatment
- Respond reasonably well to antipsychotic medication, but show an inability to continue medication after discharge
- Require structured supports in order to function outside hospital, but are not capable of requesting such supports, or of establishing them on their own

Other indicators may be history of prior hospitalizations, diagnosis of schizophrenia, or refusal of medication prior to committal.

Factors Contributing to Successful Use of Extended Leave

- Active support from all treatment providers
- Written hospital policy on leave procedures
- Good communication between inpatient and outpatient treatment staff
- Assertive case management – outreach, community supports, housing, and medication monitoring
- Coordination of mental health and police services. Under the Act, police may be authorized to assume custody in case of non-compliance and deterioration, and to transport the patient to hospital on behalf of treatment providers.