

Frequently Asked Questions



Q. If I am listed as a witness, do I have to appear in court?

A. Yes. However, if there is a problem talk to the social worker at the facility where the person is admitted. Please contact us early in the process so another witness can be located if possible. Contact the Social Worker department by calling (480) 344-2000.

Q. How long will the person be on court order and will they have to stay in the hospital the entire time?

A. The court order lasts for one year or 365 days. It is usually a combination of inpatient and outpatient court order. The inpatient portion can be up to 90 days, if the patient is a danger to self; 180 days if the patient is a danger to others or persistently and acutely disabled; or 365 days if the patient is gravely disabled. This does not mean the person has to stay in the hospital for the full 90 days, 180 days or 365 days. As soon as the patient is well enough to be treated in a less restrictive setting they will be discharged from the hospital and begin the outpatient portion of their court order.

Q. If the person is still on court order and living in the community under the outpatient part of the court order and the need arises for another hospitalization, do we have to go through the evaluation process again with another hearing?

A. No. If the person still has inpatient days left on the court order and it is still within one year from the original court order, the process does not have to be repeated. The outpatient clinical team can ask the court to amend the court order to revert back to the inpatient portion of the court order. Also, the outpatient team may have some other solutions that are less restrictive.

Desert Vista- Behavioral Health Center



Phone: (480) 344-2000

Location:

570 West Brown Road
Mesa, AZ 85201

Desert Vista is located west of Country Club on the north side of Brown Road in Mesa.

Psychiatric Center At Maricopa Medical Center



Phone: (480) 344-2000

Location:

2619 East Pierce
Phoenix, AZ 85008

The Psychiatric Annex is located behind Maricopa Medical Center (Southeast side of 24th Street and Roosevelt Street) on Pierce Street.



Both facilities are part of
Maricopa Integrated Health System
2601 East Roosevelt Street
Phoenix, AZ 85008
(602) 344-5011

<http://mihs.maricopa.gov>



The Court Ordered Evaluation Process



**Completed in
Maricopa County**

**MIHS
Department of Psychiatry**

General Information

Maricopa Integrated Health System's Desert Vista Behavioral Health Center and Psychiatric Center provides a safe place for people in need of behavioral health care and psychiatric services. Both inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services are provided in a comfortable, friendly environment.

Our psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, social workers, and nursing staff work together in a multi-disciplinary team collaborating closely with:

- Referring physicians;
- Outpatient treatment teams from behavioral health agencies;
- Primary care physicians and
- Other health care professionals to ensure the best outcomes for the patient and your loved one.

If you are involved in or thinking about beginning the court ordered evaluation process for someone you know or care about whom you believe needs psychiatric care but is unwilling or unable to obtain this care voluntarily, the following information will help you better understand the process of the court ordered evaluation.

Hours

Individuals are admitted 24 hours a day to either Desert Vista or the Psychiatric Center.

Once a patient is admitted, visiting hours are available from 2:00 to 7:00 pm daily.

The Process

Once the application for evaluation is filed you can expect:

- The patient to undergo a 72-hour psychiatric evaluation. The hospital staff has 72 hours or three working days to complete the evaluation. Weekend and holidays do not count in the three-day evaluation process.



- Two doctors will perform a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation with the patient. The doctor may also order psychological testing.



- A Social Worker will gather information from the witnesses, such as family members, and other people who may be involved in the patient's life. This is very important as the people who live around or with the patient often can provide good information about what has been happening.

It is important to note that you might be subpoenaed as a witness to testify in court about your observation of the patient's recent behavior that has caused you concern. If you are a witness, you may only testify about what you have personally observed.



- By the end of the 72-hour evaluation period, the inpatient treatment team will determine if the patient needs court ordered treatment for a mental disorder. The applicant of the petition cannot change his/her mind and sign the patient out of the hospital. If the treatment team decides the patient could benefit from the court ordered treatment, all the legal documents and evaluations are sent to the judge. A hearing to

determine if court ordered treatment should be ordered is scheduled by the legal staff.

- If the judge decides the patient should be scheduled for a mental health hearing, the hearing will be set for about one week after the end of the 72-hour evaluation. The patient stays in the hospital until the hearing is held. This is not a criminal hearing; it is a civil mental health hearing.



- If the doctors or the judge do not believe the patient needs to be on court ordered treatment (according to the criteria established in the law) the person would be discharged.
- On the day of the court hearing, the witness(es) will come to Desert Vista Behavioral Health Center where the court hearing is held. The witness(es) will testify in court. The patient will have a public defender to represent him/her in court. The patient will be present in court.

When the Judge makes a decision

Following the hearing, one of three things will happen. The judge will decide:

1. Yes, court ordered treatment is necessary and the patient is to remain in the hospital until the inpatient treatment team believes the patient is ready for discharge and will then begin the outpatient portion of the court order.
2. Yes, Court ordered treatment is necessary, but the person is well enough to begin the outpatient portion of the court order. The person is discharged to begin the outpatient portion of the court order.
3. No, court ordered treatment is not necessary and the patient is discharged.