

CHAPTER 8

DISCOVERY OF PRIVILEGED RECORDS IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

S.F. 291

AN ACT relating to the discovery of privileged medical records, including mental health records, in a criminal case and including effective date provisions.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. Section 228.6, subsection 4, Code 2011, is amended to read as follows:

4. a. Mental health information may be disclosed in a civil or administrative proceeding in which an individual eighteen years of age or older or an individual's legal representative or, in the case of a deceased individual, a party claiming or defending through a beneficiary of the individual, offers the individual's mental or emotional condition as an element of a claim or a defense.

b. Mental health information may be disclosed in a criminal proceeding pursuant to section 622.10, subsection 3A.

Sec. 2. Section 622.10, Code 2011, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 3A. a. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the confidentiality privilege under this section shall be absolute with regard to a criminal action and this section shall not be construed to authorize or require the disclosure of any privileged records to a defendant in a criminal action unless either of the following occur:

(1) The privilege holder voluntarily waives the confidentiality privilege.

(2) (a) The defendant seeking access to privileged records under this section files a motion demonstrating in good faith a reasonable probability that the information sought is likely to contain exculpatory information that is not available from any other source and for which there is a compelling need for the defendant to present a defense in the case. Such a motion shall be filed not later than forty days after arraignment under seal of the court. Failure of the defendant to timely file such a motion constitutes a waiver of the right to seek access to privileged records under this section, but the court, for good cause shown, may grant relief from such waiver.

(b) Upon a showing of a reasonable probability that the privileged records sought may likely contain exculpatory information that is not available from any other source, the court shall conduct an in camera review of such records to determine whether exculpatory information is contained in such records.

(c) If exculpatory information is contained in such records, the court shall balance the need to disclose such information against the privacy interest of the privilege holder.

(d) Upon the court's determination, in writing, that the privileged information sought is exculpatory and that there is a compelling need for such information that outweighs the privacy interests of the privilege holder, the court shall issue an order allowing the disclosure of only those portions of the records that contain the exculpatory information. The court's order shall also prohibit any further dissemination of the information to any person, other than the defendant, the defendant's attorney, and the prosecutor, unless otherwise authorized by the court.

b. Privileged information obtained by any means other than as provided in paragraph "a" shall not be admissible in any criminal action.

Sec. 3. **EFFECTIVE UPON ENACTMENT.** This Act, being deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

Approved March 30, 2011