

229A.8 Annual examinations and review — discharge or transitional release petitions by persons committed.

1. Upon civil commitment of a person pursuant to [this chapter](#), a rebuttable presumption exists that the commitment should continue. The presumption may be rebutted when facts exist to warrant a hearing to determine whether a committed person no longer suffers from a mental abnormality which makes the person likely to engage in predatory acts constituting sexually violent offenses if discharged, or the committed person is suitable for placement in a transitional release program.

2. A person committed under [this chapter](#) shall have a current examination of the person's mental abnormality made once every year. The person may retain, or if the person is indigent and so requests, the court may appoint a qualified expert or professional person to examine such person, and such expert or professional person shall be given access to all records concerning the person.

3. The annual report shall be provided to the court that committed the person under [this chapter](#). The court shall conduct an annual review and, if warranted, set a final hearing on the status of the committed person. The annual review may be based only on written records.

4. Nothing contained in [this chapter](#) shall prohibit the person from otherwise petitioning the court for discharge or placement in a transitional release program at the annual review. The department shall provide the committed person with an annual written notice of the person's right to petition the court for discharge or placement in a transitional release program without authorization from the director. The notice shall contain a waiver of rights. The department shall forward the notice and waiver form to the court with the annual report.

5. The following provisions apply to an annual review:

a. The committed person shall have a right to have an attorney represent the person but the person is not entitled to be present at the hearing, if a hearing is held.

b. The Iowa rules of evidence do not apply.

c. The committed person may waive an annual review or may stipulate that the commitment should continue for another year.

d. The court shall review the annual report of the state and the report of any qualified expert or professional person retained by or appointed for the committed person and may receive arguments from the attorney general and the attorney for the committed person if either requests a hearing. The request for a hearing must be in writing, within thirty days of the notice of annual review being provided to counsel for the committed person, or on motion by the court. Such a hearing may be conducted in writing without any attorneys present.

e. (1) The court shall consider all evidence presented by both parties at the annual review. The burden is on the committed person to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that there is relevant and reliable evidence to rebut the presumption of continued commitment, which would lead a reasonable person to believe a final hearing should be held to determine either of the following:

(a) The mental abnormality of the committed person has so changed that the person is not likely to engage in predatory acts constituting sexually violent offenses if discharged.

(b) The committed person is suitable for placement in a transitional release program pursuant to [section 229A.8A](#).

(2) (a) If the committed person shows by a preponderance of the evidence that a final hearing should be held on either determination under subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a) or (b), or both, the court shall set a final hearing within sixty days of the determination that a final hearing be held.

(b) The committed person may waive the sixty-day final hearing requirement under subparagraph subdivision (a); however, the committed person or the attorney for the committed person may reassert the requirement by filing a demand that the final hearing be held within sixty days from the date of the filing of the demand with the clerk of court.

(c) The final hearing may be continued upon request of either party and a showing of good cause, or by the court on its own motion in the due administration of justice, and if the committed person is not substantially prejudiced. In determining what constitutes good cause, the court shall consider the length of the pretrial detention of the committed person.

f. If at the time for the annual review the committed person has filed a petition for discharge or placement in a transitional release program with authorization from the director, the court shall set a final hearing within ninety days of the authorization by the director, and no annual review shall be held.

g. If the committed person has not filed a petition, or has filed a petition for discharge or for placement in a transitional release program without authorization from the director, the court shall first conduct the annual review as provided in [this subsection](#).

h. Any petition can summarily be dismissed by the court as provided in [section 229A.11](#).

i. If at the time of the annual review the committed person is in a secure facility and not in the transitional release program, the state shall have the right to demand that both determinations in paragraph “e”, subparagraph (1), be submitted to the court or jury.

6. The following provisions shall apply to a final hearing:

a. The committed person shall be entitled to an attorney and is entitled to the benefit of all constitutional protections that were afforded the person at the original commitment proceeding. The committed person shall be entitled to a jury trial, if such a demand is made in writing and filed with the clerk of court at least ten days prior to the final hearing.

b. The committed person shall have the right to have experts evaluate the person on the person’s behalf. The court shall appoint an expert if the person is indigent and requests an appointment.

c. The attorney general shall represent the state and shall have a right to demand a jury trial. The jury demand shall be filed, in writing, at least ten days prior to the final hearing.

d. The burden of proof at the final hearing shall be upon the state to prove beyond a reasonable doubt either of the following:

(1) The committed person’s mental abnormality remains such that the person is likely to engage in predatory acts that constitute sexually violent offenses if discharged.

(2) The committed person is not suitable for placement in a transitional release program pursuant to [section 229A.8A](#).

e. If the director has authorized the committed person to petition for discharge or for placement in a transitional release program and the case is before a jury, testimony by a victim of a prior sexually violent offense committed by the person is not admissible. If the director has not authorized the petition or the case is before the court, testimony by a victim of a sexually violent offense committed by the person may be admitted.

f. If a mistrial is declared, the confinement or placement status of the committed person shall not change. After a mistrial has been declared, a new trial must be held within ninety days of the mistrial.

7. The state and the committed person may stipulate to a transfer to a transitional release program if the court approves the stipulation.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §8; 2002 Acts, ch 1139, §10, 27; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §229; 2009 Acts, ch 116, §1; 2018 Acts, ch 1172, §62; 2019 Acts, ch 24, §20; 2019 Acts, ch 59, §66; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §539 – 541](#)

Referred to in [§229A.5B, 229A.9A](#)

Subsection 4 amended

Subsection 5, paragraphs f and g amended

Subsection 6, paragraph e amended