

CHAPTER 229A

COMMITMENT OF SEXUALLY VIOLENT PREDATORS

Referred to in [§13B.4](#), [81.2](#), [226.1](#), [232.55](#), [235A.15](#), [235A.18](#), [692A.114](#), [811.1](#), [815.9](#), [815.10](#), [815.11](#), [901A.2](#), [915.45](#)

Notice to victims of discharge of committed person, see [§915.45](#)

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229A.1 Legislative findings.

1. The general assembly finds that a small but extremely dangerous group of sexually violent predators exists which is made up of persons who do not have a mental disease or defect that renders them appropriate for involuntary treatment pursuant to the treatment provisions for mentally ill persons under [chapter 229](#), since that chapter is intended to provide short-term treatment to persons with serious mental disorders and then return them to the community. In contrast to persons appropriate for civil commitment under [chapter 229](#), sexually violent predators generally have antisocial personality features that are unamenable to existing mental illness treatment modalities and that render them likely to engage in sexually violent behavior.

2. The general assembly finds that sexually violent predators' likelihood of engaging in repeat acts of predatory sexual violence is high and that the existing involuntary commitment procedure under [chapter 229](#) is inadequate to address the risk these sexually violent predators pose to society.

3. The general assembly further finds that the prognosis for rehabilitating sexually violent predators in a prison setting is poor, because the treatment needs of this population are very long-term, and the treatment modalities for this population are very different from the traditional treatment modalities available in a prison setting or for persons appropriate for commitment under [chapter 229](#).

4. Therefore, the general assembly finds that a civil commitment procedure for the long-term care and treatment of the sexually violent predator is necessary. The procedures regarding sexually violent predators should reflect legitimate public safety concerns, while providing treatment services designed to benefit sexually violent predators who are civilly

committed. The procedures should also reflect the need to protect the public, to respect the needs of the victims of sexually violent offenses, and to encourage full, meaningful participation of sexually violent predators in treatment programs.

98 Acts, ch 1171, §1; 2002 Acts, ch 1139, §1, 27; 2019 Acts, ch 24, §19

229A.2 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#):

1. “Agency with jurisdiction” means an agency which has custody of or releases a person serving a sentence or term of confinement or is otherwise in confinement based upon a lawful order or authority, and includes but is not limited to the department of corrections, the department of health and human services, a judicial district department of correctional services, and the Iowa board of parole.

2. “Appropriate secure facility” means a state facility that is designed to confine but not necessarily to treat a sexually violent predator.

3. “Convicted” means found guilty of, pleads guilty to, or is sentenced or adjudicated delinquent for an act which is an indictable offense in this state or in another jurisdiction including in a federal, military, tribal, or foreign court, including but not limited to a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent, whether or not the juvenile court records have been sealed under [section 232.150](#), and a person who has received a deferred sentence or a deferred judgment or has been acquitted by reason of insanity. “Convicted” includes the conviction of a juvenile prosecuted as an adult. “Convicted” also includes a conviction for an attempt or conspiracy to commit an offense. “Convicted” does not mean a plea, sentence, adjudication, deferred sentence, or deferred judgment which has been reversed or otherwise set aside.

4. “Department” means the department of health and human services.

5. “Director” means the director of health and human services.

6. “Discharge” means an unconditional discharge from the sexually violent predator program. A person released from a secure facility into a transitional release program or released with supervision is not considered to be discharged.

7. “Likely to engage in predatory acts of sexual violence” means that the person more likely than not will engage in acts of a sexually violent nature. If a person is not confined at the time that a petition is filed, a person is “likely to engage in predatory acts of sexual violence” only if the person commits a recent overt act.

8. “Mental abnormality” means a congenital or acquired condition affecting the emotional or volitional capacity of a person and predisposing that person to commit sexually violent offenses to a degree which would constitute a menace to the health and safety of others.

9. “Predatory” means acts directed toward a person with whom a relationship has been established or promoted for the primary purpose of victimization.

10. “Presently confined” means incarceration or detention in a correctional facility, a rehabilitation camp, a residential facility, a county jail, a halfway house, or any other comparable facility, including but not limited to placement at such a facility as a condition of probation, parole, or special sentence following conviction for a sexually violent offense.

11. “Recent overt act” means any act that has either caused harm of a sexually violent nature or creates a reasonable apprehension of such harm.

12. “Safekeeper” means a person who is confined in an appropriate secure facility pursuant to [this chapter](#) but who is not subject to an order of commitment pursuant to [this chapter](#).

13. “Sexually motivated” means that one of the purposes for commission of a crime is the purpose of sexual gratification of the perpetrator of the crime.

14. “Sexually violent offense” means:

a. A violation of any provision of [chapter 709](#).

b. A violation of any of the following if the offense involves sexual abuse, attempted sexual abuse, or intent to commit sexual abuse:

(1) Murder as defined in [section 707.1](#).

(2) Kidnapping as defined in [section 710.1](#).

(3) Burglary as defined in [section 713.1](#).

- (4) Child endangerment under [section 726.6, subsection 1](#), paragraph “e”.
- c. Sexual exploitation of a minor in violation of [section 728.12](#).
- d. Pandering involving a minor in violation of [section 725.3, subsection 2](#).
- e. An offense involving an attempt or conspiracy to commit any offense referred to in [this subsection](#).
- f. An offense under prior law of this state or an offense committed in another jurisdiction which would constitute an equivalent offense under paragraphs “a” through “e”.
- g. Any act which, either at the time of sentencing for the offense or subsequently during civil commitment proceedings pursuant to [this chapter](#), has been determined beyond a reasonable doubt to have been sexually motivated.

15. “*Sexually violent predator*” means a person who has been convicted of or charged with a sexually violent offense and who suffers from a mental abnormality which makes the person likely to engage in predatory acts constituting sexually violent offenses, if not confined in a secure facility.

16. “*Transitional release*” means a conditional release from a secure facility operated by the department with the conditions of such release set by the court or the department.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §2; 99 Acts, ch 61, §1, 14; 2002 Acts, ch 1139, §2, 27; 2007 Acts, ch 91, §1; 2010 Acts, ch 1074, §1; 2014 Acts, ch 1059, §1; 2018 Acts, ch 1165, §96; 2019 Acts, ch 17, §1, 2; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §534](#)

Referred to in [§272C.15, 671A.2, 692A.101, 901A.1](#)

229A.3 Notice of discharge of sexually violent predator — immunity from liability — multidisciplinary team — prosecutor’s review committee — assessment of person.

1. When it appears that a person who is confined may meet the definition of a sexually violent predator, the agency with jurisdiction shall give written notice to the attorney general and the multidisciplinary team established in [subsection 4](#), no later than ninety days prior to any of the following events:

- a. The anticipated discharge of a person who has been convicted of a sexually violent offense from total confinement, except that in the case of a person who is returned to prison for no more than ninety days as a result of revocation of parole, written notice shall be given as soon as practicable following the person’s readmission to prison.

- b. The discharge of a person who has been charged with a sexually violent offense and who has been determined to be incompetent to stand trial pursuant to [chapter 812](#).

- c. The discharge of a person who has been found not guilty by reason of insanity of a sexually violent offense.

2. If notice is given under [subsection 1](#), the agency with jurisdiction shall inform the attorney general and the multidisciplinary team established in [subsection 4](#), of both of the following:

- a. The person’s name, identifying factors, anticipated future residence, and offense history.

- b. Documentation of any institutional evaluation and any treatment received.

3. The agency with jurisdiction, its employees, officials, members of the multidisciplinary team established in [subsection 4](#), members of the prosecutor’s review committee appointed as provided in [subsection 5](#), and individuals contracting, appointed, or volunteering to perform services under [this section](#) shall be immune from liability for any good-faith conduct under [this section](#).

4. The director of the department of corrections shall establish a multidisciplinary team which may include individuals from other state agencies to review available records of each person referred to such team pursuant to [subsection 1](#). The team, within thirty days of receiving notice, shall assess whether or not the person meets the definition of a sexually violent predator. The team shall notify the attorney general of its assessment.

5. The attorney general shall appoint a prosecutor’s review committee to review the records of each person referred to the attorney general pursuant to [subsection 1](#). The prosecutor’s review committee shall assist the attorney general in the determination of whether or not the person meets the definition of a sexually violent predator. The assessment

of the multidisciplinary team shall be made available to the attorney general and the prosecutor's review committee.

6. [This section](#) shall not be construed as a limit on persons subject to commitment under [this chapter](#).

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §3; 2019 Acts, ch 17, §3](#)

Referred to in [§229A.5A, 229A.14](#)

229A.4 Petition — time — contents.

1. If it appears that a person presently confined may be a sexually violent predator and the prosecutor's review committee has determined that the person meets the definition of a sexually violent predator, the attorney general may file a petition alleging that the person is a sexually violent predator and stating sufficient facts to support such an allegation.

2. A prosecuting attorney of the county in which the person was convicted or charged, or the attorney general if requested by the prosecuting attorney, may file a petition alleging that a person is a sexually violent predator and stating sufficient facts to support such an allegation, if it appears that a person who has committed a recent overt act meets any of the following criteria:

a. The person was convicted of a sexually violent offense and is no longer presently confined for that offense.

b. The person was charged with, but was acquitted of, a sexually violent offense by reason of insanity and has been released from confinement or any supervision.

c. The person was charged with, but was found to be incompetent to stand trial for, a sexually violent offense and has been released from confinement or any supervision.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §4; 99 Acts, ch 61, §2, 14; 2019 Acts, ch 17, §4](#)

Referred to in [§229A.5, 229A.6](#)

229A.5 Person taken into custody — determination of probable cause — hearing — evaluation.

1. Upon filing of a petition under [section 229A.4](#), the court shall make a preliminary determination as to whether probable cause exists to believe that the person named in the petition is a sexually violent predator. Upon a preliminary finding of probable cause, the court shall direct that the person named in the petition be taken into custody and that the person be served with a copy of the petition and any supporting documentation and notice of the procedures required by [this chapter](#). If the person is in custody at the time of the filing of the petition, the court shall determine whether a transfer of the person to an appropriate secure facility is appropriate pending the outcome of the proceedings or whether the custody order should be delayed until the date of release of the person.

2. Within seventy-two hours after being taken into custody or being transferred to an appropriate secure facility, a hearing shall be held to determine whether probable cause exists to believe the detained person is a sexually violent predator. The hearing may be waived by the respondent. The hearing may be continued upon the 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 respondent is not substantially prejudiced. At the probable cause hearing, the detained person shall have the following rights:

a. To be provided with prior notice of date, time, and location of the probable cause hearing.

b. To respond to the preliminary finding of probable cause.

c. To appear in person at the hearing.

d. To be represented by counsel.

e. To present evidence on the respondent's own behalf.

f. To cross-examine witnesses who testify against the respondent.

g. To view and copy all petitions and reports in the possession of the court.

3. At the hearing, the rules of evidence do not apply, and the state may rely solely upon the petition filed under [subsection 1](#), but the state may also supplement the petition with additional documentary evidence or live testimony.

4. At the conclusion of the hearing, the court shall enter an order which does both of the following:

- a. Verifies the respondent's identity.
- b. Determines whether probable cause exists to believe that the respondent is a sexually violent predator.

5. If the court determines that probable cause does exist, the court shall direct that the respondent be transferred to an appropriate secure facility for an evaluation as to whether the respondent is a sexually violent predator. The evaluation shall be conducted by a person deemed to be professionally qualified to conduct such an examination.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §5](#); [99 Acts, ch 61, §3, 4, 14](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1139, §3, 27](#)

Referred to in [§229A.5B](#), [229A.5C](#), [229A.6A](#), [229A.7](#), [229A.12A](#), [811.1](#)

229A.5A Powers of investigative personnel before a petition is filed.

1. The prosecuting attorney or attorney general is authorized upon the occurrence of a recent overt act, or upon receiving written notice pursuant to [section 229A.3](#), or before the filing of a petition under [this chapter](#), to subpoena and compel the attendance of witnesses, examine the witnesses under oath, and require the production of documentary evidence for inspection, reproduction, or copying. Except as otherwise provided by [this section](#), the prosecuting attorney or attorney general shall have the same powers and limitations, subject to judicial oversight and enforcement, as provided by [this chapter](#) and by the Iowa rules of civil procedure. Any person compelled to appear under a demand for oral testimony under [this section](#) may be accompanied, represented, and advised by counsel at the person's own expense.

2. The examination of all witnesses under [this section](#) shall be conducted by the prosecuting attorney or attorney general before an officer authorized to administer oaths under [section 63A.1](#). The testimony shall be taken by a certified shorthand reporter or by a sound recording device and shall be transcribed or otherwise preserved in the same manner as provided for the preservation of depositions under the Iowa rules of civil procedure. The prosecuting attorney or attorney general may exclude from the examination all persons except the witness, witness's counsel, the officer before whom the testimony is to be taken, law enforcement officials, and a certified shorthand reporter. Prior to oral examination, the person shall be advised by the prosecuting attorney or attorney general of the person's right to refuse to answer any questions on the basis of the privilege against self-incrimination. The examination shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the rules dealing with the taking of depositions.

[99 Acts, ch 61, §5, 14](#); [2000 Acts, ch 1058, §23](#)

229A.5B Escape from custody — penalty.

1. A person who is detained pursuant to [section 229A.5](#) or is subject to an order of civil commitment under [this chapter](#) shall remain in custody unless released by court order or discharged under [section 229A.8](#) or [229A.10](#). A person who has been placed in a transitional release program or who is under release with supervision is considered to be in custody. A person in custody under [this chapter](#) shall not do any of the following:

- a. Leave or attempt to leave a facility without the accompaniment of authorized personnel or leave or attempt to leave a facility without authorization.
- b. Knowingly and voluntarily be absent from a place where the person is required to be present.
- c. Leave or attempt to leave the custody of personnel transporting or guarding the person while the person is away from a facility.

2. A person who violates [subsection 1](#) commits a serious misdemeanor or may be subject to punishment for contempt.

3. If a person commits a violation of [subsection 1](#) and remains unconfined, the attorney general or the chief law enforcement officer of the political subdivision where the violation occurs may make a public announcement that the person is unconfined and may provide relevant information about the person to the community. The attorney general may also notify a victim or the family of a victim of the person that the person is unconfined.

4. [This section](#) shall not be construed to prohibit the use of other lawful means for the return of the person.

[2001 Acts, ch 27, §1](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1139, §4, 27](#); [2015 Acts, ch 12, §1](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1165, §97](#)

Referred to in [§229A.8A](#)

229A.5C Criminal offenses committed while detained or subject to an order of commitment.

1. If a person who is detained pursuant to [section 229A.5](#) or who is subject to an order of civil commitment under [this chapter](#) commits a public offense, the civil commitment proceedings or treatment process shall be suspended until the criminal proceedings, including any term of confinement, are completed. The person shall also not be eligible for bail pursuant to [section 811.1](#).

2. a. Upon the filing of a complaint, indictment, or information, the person shall be transferred to the county jail in the county where the public offense occurred until the criminal proceedings have been completed.

b. If the person is sentenced to a term of confinement in a county jail, the person shall serve the sentence at the county jail. If the person is sentenced to the custody of the director of the department of corrections, the person shall serve the sentence at a correctional institution.

c. (1) If a person who is subject to an order of civil commitment under [this chapter](#) is transferred to a county jail or sentenced to a term of confinement in a county jail pursuant to [this subsection](#), the department shall reimburse the county at a rate of fifty dollars per day for the time period the person is temporarily held after transfer or is confined in the county jail.

(2) The department shall use funds appropriated to the department for costs associated with the treatment and commitment of sexually violent predators in the unit located at the state mental health institute at Cherokee, or use funds transferred pursuant to [section 218.6](#), for the payment of reimbursements pursuant to subparagraph (1).

3. A person who is subject to an order of civil commitment under [this chapter](#) shall not be released from jail or paroled or released to a facility or program located outside the county jail or correctional institution other than to a secure facility operated by the department.

4. A person who committed a public offense while in a transitional release program or on release with supervision may be returned to a secure facility operated by the department upon completion of any term of confinement that resulted from the commission of the public offense.

5. If the civil commitment proceedings for a person are suspended due to the commission of a public offense by the person, the ninety-day trial demand lapses. Upon completion of any term of confinement that resulted from the commission of the public offense, a new ninety-day trial demand automatically begins.

[2002 Acts, ch 1139, §5, 27](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1165, §98](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §535](#); [2025 Acts, ch 96, §1](#)

Subsection 2 amended

229A.5D Medical treatment.

A safekeeper is entitled to necessary medical treatment.

[2002 Acts, ch 1139, §6, 27](#)

229A.6 Counsel and experts — indigent persons.

1. A respondent to a petition alleging the person to be a sexually violent predator shall be entitled to the assistance of counsel upon the filing of the petition under [section 229A.4](#) and, if the respondent is indigent, the court shall appoint counsel to assist the respondent at state expense.

2. If a respondent is subjected to an examination under [this chapter](#), the respondent may retain experts or professional persons to perform an independent examination on the respondent's behalf. If the respondent wishes to be examined by a qualified expert or professional person of the respondent's own choice, the examiner of the respondent's choice shall be given reasonable access to the respondent for the purpose of the examination, as well as access to all relevant medical and psychological records and reports. If the respondent is indigent, the court, upon the respondent's request, shall determine whether

the services are necessary and the reasonable compensation for the services. If the court determines that the services are necessary and the requested compensation for the services is reasonable, the court shall assist the respondent in obtaining an expert or professional person to perform an examination or participate in the trial on the respondent's behalf. The court shall approve payment for such services upon the filing of a certified claim for compensation supported by a written statement specifying the time expended, services rendered, expenses incurred on behalf of the respondent, and compensation received in the same case or for the same services from any other source.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §6](#)

229A.6A Transport orders.

1. A person who has been detained prior to trial pursuant to [section 229A.5](#) or who has been civilly committed may be transported for the following purposes:

a. To trial and any other court proceedings if the court has authorized a transport order. A transport order may only be requested by the court, the person's attorney, or the attorney general. Transportation shall be provided by the sheriff of the county in which the action has been brought, unless the court specifies otherwise or the parties agree to a different transportation arrangement. If a transport order is not authorized, the person may appear at any court proceedings other than trial by telephone or electronic means.

b. To a medical facility for medical treatment, if necessary medical treatment is not available at the facility where the person is confined. A transport order is not required to transport the person for medical treatment. However, the person is not entitled to choose the medical facility where treatment is to be obtained or the medical personnel to provide the treatment. Transportation of a committed person shall be provided by the sheriff of the county in which the person is confined if requested by the department.

c. To a medical, psychological, or psychiatric evaluation. A person shall not be transported to another facility for evaluation without a court order. When a transportation order is requested under this paragraph, notice must be provided to the opposing party, and the opposing party must be given a reasonable amount of time to object to the issuance of such an order. The cost of the transportation shall be paid by the party who requests the order.

d. To a facility for placement or treatment in a transitional release program or for release with supervision. A transport order is not required under this paragraph.

2. [This section](#) shall not be construed to grant a person the right to personally appear at all court proceedings under [this chapter](#).

[2002 Acts, ch 1139, §7, 27; 2018 Acts, ch 1165, §99; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §536](#)

229A.7 Trial — determination — commitment procedure — chapter 28E agreements — mistrials.

1. If the person charged with a sexually violent offense has been found incompetent to stand trial and the person is about to be released pursuant to [chapter 812](#), or if a petition has been filed seeking the person's commitment under [this chapter](#), the court shall first hear evidence and determine whether the person did commit the act or acts charged. At the hearing on this issue, the rules of evidence applicable in criminal cases shall apply, and all constitutional rights available to defendants at criminal trials, other than the right not to be tried while incompetent, shall apply. After hearing evidence on this issue, the court shall make specific findings on whether the person did commit the act or acts charged, the extent to which the person's incompetence affected the outcome of the hearing, including its effect on the person's ability to consult with and assist counsel and to testify on the person's own behalf, the extent to which the evidence could be reconstructed without the assistance of the person, and the strength of the prosecution's case. If, after the conclusion of the hearing on this issue, the court finds, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the person did commit the act or acts charged, the court shall enter a final order, appealable by the person, on that issue, and may proceed to consider whether the person should be committed pursuant to [this chapter](#).

2. If a person has been found not guilty by reason of insanity, the court shall determine whether the acts charged were proven as a matter of law. If as a matter of law the finding of not guilty by reason of insanity requires a finding that the underlying elements of the charged

offense were proven, then no further fact-finding is required. If as a matter of law the finding of not guilty by reason of insanity does not require a finding that the underlying elements of the charged offense be proven, the case shall proceed in the same manner as if the person were found to be incompetent to stand trial as provided in [subsection 1](#).

3. Within ninety days after either the entry of the order waiving the probable cause hearing or completion of the probable cause hearing held under [section 229A.5](#), the court shall conduct a trial to determine whether the respondent is a sexually violent predator. The respondent or the attorney for the respondent may waive the ninety-day trial requirement as provided in [this section](#); however, the respondent or the attorney for the respondent may reassert a demand and the trial shall be held within ninety days from the date of filing the demand with the clerk of court. The trial may be continued upon the 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 when the respondent will not be substantially prejudiced. In determining what constitutes good cause, the court shall consider the length of the pretrial detention of the respondent.

4. The respondent, the attorney general, or the judge shall have the right to demand that the trial be before a jury. Such demand for the trial to be before a jury shall be filed, in writing, at least ten days prior to trial. If no demand is made, the trial shall be before the court. Except as otherwise provided, the Iowa rules of evidence and the Iowa rules of civil procedure shall apply to all civil commitment proceedings initiated pursuant to [this chapter](#).

5. *a.* At trial, the court or jury shall determine whether, beyond a reasonable doubt, the respondent is a sexually violent predator. If the case is before a jury, the verdict shall be unanimous that the respondent is a sexually violent predator.

b. If the court or jury determines that the respondent is a sexually violent predator, the respondent shall be committed to the custody of the director for control, care, and treatment until such time as the person's mental abnormality has so changed that the person is safe to be placed in a transitional release program or discharged. The determination may be appealed.

c. At trial, the court shall admit, and the fact finder may rely on, the findings of an administrative parole judge or other agency fact finder.

6. If the court or jury determines that the respondent is a sexually violent predator, the court shall order the respondent to submit a DNA sample for DNA profiling pursuant to [section 81.4](#).

7. The control, care, and treatment of a person determined to be a sexually violent predator shall be provided at a facility operated by the department. At all times prior to placement in a transitional release program or release with supervision, persons committed for control, care, and treatment by the department pursuant to [this chapter](#) shall be kept in a secure facility and those patients shall be segregated at all times from any other patient under the supervision of the department. A person committed pursuant to [this chapter](#) to the custody of the department may be kept in a facility or building separate from any other patient under the supervision of the department. The department may enter into a [chapter 28E](#) agreement with the department of corrections or other appropriate agency in this state or another state for the confinement of patients who have been determined to be sexually violent predators. Patients who are in the custody of the director of the department of corrections pursuant to a [chapter 28E](#) agreement and who have not been placed in a transitional release program or released with supervision shall be housed and managed separately from criminal offenders in the custody of the director of the department of corrections, and except for occasional instances of supervised incidental contact, shall be segregated from those offenders.

8. If the court makes the determination or the jury determines that the respondent is not a sexually violent predator, the court shall direct the respondent's release. Upon release, the respondent shall comply with any requirements to register as a sex offender as provided in [chapter 692A](#). Upon a mistrial, the court shall direct that the respondent be held at an appropriate secure facility until another trial is conducted. Any subsequent trial following a

mistrial shall be held within ninety days of the previous trial, unless such subsequent trial is continued or the ninety days are waived as provided in [subsection 3](#).

98 Acts, ch 1171, §7; 99 Acts, ch 61, §6, 7, 14; 2000 Acts, ch 1058, §24; 2002 Acts, ch 1139, §8, 9, 27; 2004 Acts, ch 1060, §1, 2; 2004 Acts, ch 1084, §2; 2005 Acts, ch 158, §11, 19; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §228; 2018 Acts, ch 1165, §100; 2019 Acts, ch 17, §5; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §537, 538

Referred to in §9E.2, 81.1, 92.20

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](#)

229A.8A Transitional release.

1. The department may establish a transitional release program and provide control, care, and treatment, and supervision of committed persons placed in such a program.

2. A committed person is suitable for placement in the transitional release program if the court finds that all of the following apply:

a. The committed person's mental abnormality is no longer such that the person is a high risk to reoffend.

b. The committed person has achieved and demonstrated significant insights into the person's sex offending cycle.

c. The committed person has accepted responsibility for past behavior and understands the impact sexually violent crimes have upon a victim.

d. A detailed relapse prevention plan has been developed and accepted by the treatment provider which is appropriate for the committed person's mental abnormality and sex offending history.

e. No major discipline reports have been issued for the committed person for a period of six months.

f. The committed person is not likely to escape or attempt to escape custody pursuant to [section 229A.5B](#).

g. The committed person is not likely to engage in predatory acts constituting sexually violent offenses while in the program.

h. The placement is in the best interest of the committed person.

i. The committed person has demonstrated a willingness to agree to and abide by all rules of the program.

3. If the committed person does not agree to the conditions of release, the person is not eligible for the transitional release program.

4. A committed person who refuses to register as a sex offender is not eligible for placement in a transitional release program.

5. Committed persons in the transitional release program are not necessarily required to be segregated from other persons.

6. The department shall be responsible for establishing and implementing the rules and directives regarding the location of the transitional release program, staffing needs, restrictions on confinement and the movement of committed persons, and for assessing the progress of committed persons in the program. The court may also impose conditions on a committed person placed in the program.

7. The department may contract with other government or private agencies, including the department of corrections, to implement and administer the transitional release program.

[2002 Acts, ch 1139, §11, 27; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §47; 2004 Acts, ch 1175, §463, 468; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §542](#)

Referred to in [§229A.8](#)

229A.8B Violations of transitional release.

1. The treatment staff in a transitional release program may remove the committed person from the program for a violation of any rule or directive, and return the person to a secure facility. The treatment staff may request the district court to issue an emergency ex parte order directing any law enforcement officer to take the committed person into custody so that the person can be returned to a secure facility. The request for an ex parte order may be made orally or by telephone, but the original written request or a facsimile copy of the original request shall be filed with the clerk of court no later than 4:30 p.m. on the next business day the office of the clerk of court is open.

2. If a committed person absconds from a transitional release program in violation of the rules or directives, a presumption arises that the person poses a risk to public safety. The department, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, may make a public announcement about the absconder. The public announcement may include a description of the committed person, that the person is in transitional release from the sexually violent predator program, and any other information important to public safety.

3. Upon the return of the committed person to a secure facility, the director or the director's designee shall notify the court that issued the ex parte order that the absconder has been returned to a secure facility, and the court shall set a hearing to determine if a violation occurred. If a court order was not issued, the director or the director's designee shall contact the nearest district court with jurisdiction to set a hearing to determine whether a violation of the rules or directives occurred. The court shall schedule a hearing after receiving notice that the committed person has been returned from the transitional release program to a secure facility.

4. At the hearing, the burden shall be upon the attorney general to show by a preponderance of the evidence that a violation of the rules or directives occurred. The hearing shall be to the court.

5. If the court determines a violation occurred, the court shall either order the committed person to be returned to the transitional release program or to be confined in a secure facility. The court may impose further conditions upon the committed person if returned to the transitional release program. If the court determines no violation occurred, the committed person shall be returned to the transitional release program.

2002 Acts, ch 1139, §12, 27; 2018 Acts, ch 1165, §101; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §543

229A.9 Detention and commitment to conform to constitutional requirements.

The involuntary detention or commitment of persons under [this chapter](#) shall conform to constitutional requirements for care and treatment.

98 Acts, ch 1171, §9

229A.9A Release with supervision.

1. In any proceeding under [section 229A.8](#), the court may order the committed person released with supervision if any of the following apply:

a. The attorney general stipulates to the release with supervision.

b. The court or jury has determined that the person should be released from a secure facility or a transitional release program, but the court has determined the person suffers from a mental abnormality and it is in the best interest of the community to order release with supervision before the committed person is discharged.

2. If release with supervision is ordered, the department shall prepare within sixty days of the order of the court a release plan addressing the person's needs for counseling, medication, community support services, residential services, vocational services, substance use disorder treatment, sex offender treatment, or any other treatment or supervision necessary.

3. The court shall set a hearing on the release plan prepared by the department before the committed person is released from a secure facility or a transitional release program.

4. If the court orders release with supervision, the court shall order supervision by an agency with jurisdiction that is familiar with the placement of criminal offenders in the community. The agency with jurisdiction shall be responsible for initiating proceedings for violations of the release plan as provided in [section 229A.9B](#).

5. A committed person may not petition the court for release with supervision.

6. A committed person released with supervision is not considered discharged from civil commitment under [this chapter](#).

7. After being released with supervision, the person may petition the court for discharge as provided in [section 229A.8](#).

8. The court shall retain jurisdiction over the committed person who has been released with supervision until the person is discharged from the program. The department or a judicial district department of correctional services shall not be held liable for any acts committed by a committed person who has been ordered released with supervision.

2002 Acts, ch 1139, §13, 27; 2014 Acts, ch 1059, §2; 2018 Acts, ch 1165, §102; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §544

229A.9B Violations of release with supervision.

1. If a committed person violates the release plan, the agency with jurisdiction over the person may request the court to issue an emergency ex parte order directing any law enforcement officer to take the person into custody so that the person can be returned to a secure facility. The request for an ex parte order may be made orally or by telephone, but the original written request or a facsimile copy of the request shall be filed with the clerk of court no later than 4:30 p.m. on the next business day the office of the clerk of court is open.

2. If a committed person has absconded in violation of the conditions of the person's release plan, a presumption arises that the person poses a risk to public safety. The department or contracting agency, in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, may make a public announcement about the absconder. The public announcement may

include a description of the committed person, that the committed person is on release with supervision from the sexually violent predator program, and any other information pertinent to public safety.

3. Upon the return of the committed person to a secure facility, the director or the director's designee shall notify the court that issued the ex parte order that the committed person has been returned to a secure facility, and the court shall set hearing to determine if a violation occurred. If a court order was not issued, the director or the director's designee shall contact the nearest district court with jurisdiction to set a hearing to determine whether a violation of the conditions of the release plan occurred. The court shall schedule a hearing after receiving notice that the committed person has been returned to a secure facility.

4. At the hearing, the burden shall be upon the attorney general to show by a preponderance of the evidence that a violation of the release plan occurred.

5. If the court determines a violation occurred, the court shall receive release recommendations from the department and either order that the committed person be returned to release with supervision or placed in a transitional release program, or be confined in a secure facility. The court may impose further conditions upon the committed person if returned to release with supervision or placed in the transitional release program. If the court determines no violation occurred, the committed person shall be returned to release with supervision.

[2002 Acts, ch 1139, §14, 27](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1165, §103](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §545](#)

Referred to in [§229A.9A](#)

229A.10 Petition for discharge — procedure.

1. If the director determines that the person's mental abnormality has so changed that the person is not likely to engage in predatory acts that constitute sexually violent offenses if discharged, the director shall authorize the person to petition the court for discharge. The petition shall be served upon the court and the attorney general. The court, upon receipt of the petition for discharge, shall order a hearing within thirty days. The attorney general shall represent the state, and shall have the right to have the petitioner examined by an expert or professional person of the attorney general's choice. The hearing shall be before a jury if demanded by either the petitioner or the attorney general. If the attorney general objects to the petition for discharge, the burden of proof shall be upon the attorney general to show beyond a reasonable doubt that the petitioner's mental abnormality or personality disorder remains such that the petitioner is likely to engage in predatory acts that constitute sexually violent offenses if discharged.

2. Upon a finding that the state has failed to meet its burden of proof under [this section](#), the court shall authorize the committed person to be discharged.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §10](#); [99 Acts, ch 61, §8, 14](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1139, §15, 27](#); [2003 Acts, ch 44, §48](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §546](#)

Referred to in [§229A.5B](#)

229A.11 Subsequent discharge or transitional release petitions — limitations.

Nothing in [this chapter](#) shall prohibit a person from filing a petition for discharge or placement in a transitional release program, pursuant to [this chapter](#). However, if a person has previously filed a petition for discharge or for placement in a transitional release program without the authorization of the director, and the court determines either upon review of the petition or following a hearing that the petition was frivolous or that the petitioner's condition had not so changed that the person was not likely to engage in predatory acts constituting sexually violent offenses if discharged, or was not suitable for placement in the transitional release program, then the court shall summarily deny the subsequent petition unless the petition contains facts upon which a court could find the condition of the petitioner had so changed that a hearing was warranted. Upon receipt of a first or subsequent petition from a committed person without the director's authorization, the court shall endeavor whenever possible to review the petition and determine if the petition is

based upon frivolous grounds. If the court determines that a petition is frivolous, the court shall dismiss the petition without a hearing.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §11](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1139, §16, 27](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §547](#)

Referred to in [§229A.8](#)

229A.12 Director — responsibility for costs — reimbursement.

The director shall be responsible for all costs relating to the evaluation, treatment, and services provided to a person that are incurred after the person is committed to the director's custody after the court or jury determines that the respondent is a sexually violent predator and pursuant to commitment under any provision of [this chapter](#). If placement in a transitional release program or supervision is ordered, the director shall also be responsible for all costs related to the transitional release program or to the supervision and treatment of any person. Reimbursement may be obtained by the director from the patient and any person legally liable or bound by contract for the support of the patient for the cost of confinement or of care and treatment provided. To the extent allowed by the United States social security administration, any benefit payments received by the person pursuant to the federal Social Security Act shall be used for the costs incurred. As used in [this section](#), "*any person legally liable*" does not include a political subdivision.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §12](#); [98 Acts, ch 1181, §26](#); [99 Acts, ch 61, §9, 14](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1139, §17, 27](#); [2005 Acts, ch 175, §99](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §548](#)

229A.12A Director of the department of corrections — responsibility for safekeeper.

The director of the department of corrections shall have authority, once a person is detained pursuant to [section 229A.5](#), to make a determination as to the appropriate secure facility within the department of corrections in which the safekeeper is to be placed, taking into consideration the safekeeper's medical needs and ability to interact with offenders who have been committed to the custody of the director of the department of corrections. The director has authority to determine the safekeeper's degree of segregation from offenders, including whether total segregation is appropriate under the circumstances or whether the safekeeper should be permitted to participate in normal confinement activities in the presence of offenders.

[2002 Acts, ch 1139, §18, 27](#)

229A.13 Severability.

If any provision of [this chapter](#) or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application and, to this end, the provisions of [this chapter](#) are severable.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §14](#)

229A.14 Release of confidential or privileged information and records.

Notwithstanding any provision in the Code regarding confidentiality to the contrary, any relevant information and records which would otherwise be confidential or privileged, except information subject to attorney-client privilege and attorney work product, shall be released to the agency with jurisdiction or the attorney general for the purpose of meeting the notice requirement provided in [section 229A.3](#) and determining whether a person is or continues to be a sexually violent predator.

[98 Acts, ch 1171, §15](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1139, §19, 27](#)

229A.15 Court records — sealed and opened by court order.

1. Except as otherwise provided in [this section](#), any psychological reports, drug and alcohol reports, treatment records, reports of any diagnostic center, medical records, or victim impact statements which have been submitted to the court or admitted into evidence under [this chapter](#) shall be part of the record but shall be sealed and opened only on order of the court.

2. The documents described in [subsection 1](#) shall be available to the prosecuting attorney

or attorney general, the committed person, and the attorney for the committed person without an order of the court.

98 Acts, ch 1171, §16; 2018 Acts, ch 1172, §63

229A.15A Civil protective order.

A victim of a crime that was committed before the filing of a petition under [this chapter](#) by a safekeeper or by a person subjected to an order of civil commitment pursuant to [this chapter](#), may obtain a protective order against the safekeeper or person using the procedures set out in [section 915.22](#).

2002 Acts, ch 1139, §20, 27

229A.15B Rulemaking authority.

The department shall adopt rules pursuant to [chapter 17A](#) necessary to administer [this chapter](#).

2002 Acts, ch 1139, §21, 27; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §549

229A.16 Short title.

[This chapter](#) shall be known and may be cited as the “*Sexually Violent Predator Act*”.

98 Acts, ch 1171, §17