

New Law (effective January 1, 2025)

Expanding the Definition of Grave Disability

Since 1972, Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) § 5008 (h)(1) (A) has defined the term “gravely disabled” as a condition in which a person, as a result of a mental disorder, is unable to provide for their basic personal needs for food, clothing, or shelter.

In San Diego County, effective January 1, 2025, the definition of grave disability will expand to include the following:

- A condition in which a person, as a result of a mental health disorder, **a co-occurring mental health disorder and a severe substance use disorder, or a severe substance use disorder alone**, is unable to provide for their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, **personal safety, or necessary medical care** (changes emphasized). WIC § 5008(h)(1)(A)
 - **“Severe substance use disorder”** means a diagnosis of a substance-related disorder that meets a diagnostic criterion of “severe.” This is defined in the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. WIC § 5008(o)
 - **“Personal safety”** means the ability of one to survive safely in the community without involuntary detention or treatment pursuant to this part. WIC § 5008(p)
 - **“Necessary medical care”** means care that a licensed health care practitioner, while operating within the scope of their practice, determines to be necessary to prevent serious deterioration of an existing physical medical condition which, if left untreated, is likely to result in serious bodily injury as defined in Section 15610.67. WIC § 5008(q)

The Jewish Family Service Patient Advocacy Program is providing training and guidance to all impacted community partners. Please call our office or email us to schedule a training at: (619) 282-1134 or SB43info@jfssd.org.

View Resources:



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