

## Bill 32: What Families Need to Know

### What is Bill 32?

Bill 32 is an amendment to British Columbia's Mental Health Act that was passed on December 2, 2025. It removes the former section 31(1), sometimes referred to as the "deemed consent" provision, which was originally intended to provide liability protection for healthcare workers delivering involuntary treatment.

### Why was this change made?

Some people had come to believe that section 31(1) authorized involuntary treatment under the Act, even though that authority has always been found in section 8 ("powers and duties of directors"). Removing section 31(1) and replacing it with clearer liability protection helps reduce this confusion and supports healthcare workers by making the legislation easier to understand.

Importantly, these amendments do not change how patients access involuntary mental health care or how healthcare workers deliver that care under the Act.

### What does this mean for patients?

For patients, Bill 32 does not significantly change how care is provided day to day. People who are involuntarily admitted can still receive treatment when it is necessary for their health and safety. The overall approach to care remains the same.

### What does this mean for families?

For families, Bill 32 does not change their role or responsibilities, nor does it alter how care decisions are made in practice. The impact of the bill is mainly legal and administrative, helping ensure that the mental health system can continue to function without disruption.

### In summary

Bill 32 updates the language of the law to remove an outdated concept and reduce confusion, while keeping the existing care system in place. It is a technical change intended to strengthen the legal foundation of mental health care.

### For more information:

- Bill 32 – 2025: <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/lc/billscurrent/1st43rd:gov32-3>
- BC Government News Release, November 24, 2025. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025HLTH0055-001158>