

What is Arnold v. Sarn?

Arnold v. Sarn was a class action lawsuit filed in 1981 against the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and Maricopa County alleging that adults with a serious mental illness in Maricopa County were not receiving the services that Arizona law required.

The lawsuit was filed by Charles “Chick” Arnold, a Maricopa County Public Fiduciary. A public fiduciary is a legal guardian. The lawsuit was filed against James E. Sarn, the director of ADHS at that time.



Why is it important?

This decision helped to shape the Arizona mental health system and expand services in Maricopa County for individuals with a serious mental illness.

What services were improved and expanded?

In 2014, an agreement was reached by all parties which required the State to increase the following mental health services for individuals with a serious mental illness in Maricopa County:

1. Increased the number of ACT teams from 15 to 23

“ACT” is Assertive Community Treatment. An ACT team is a group of mental health professionals who work together as a team to support members. They are available 24/7 and help people where they live, not just in an office. The team includes a psychiatric prescriber, nurse, co-occurring disorder specialist (also known as substance abuse specialist), vocational specialist, and Credentialed Peer Support Specialist.

2. Increased supported employment services for an additional 750 members

These are services to help members prepare for, find, and keep jobs. This can include job coaching, transportation, and specialized job training.

3. Increased Permanent Supportive Housing slots for 1,200 more members

Housing services support members to get and keep affordable housing.

4. Expanded Peer Support services and Family Support services to 1,500 more members

- Peer support services are delivered by individuals who have personal experience with mental illness and/or substance use. This service is aimed at supporting members to develop skills to promote long-term and sustainable recovery.
- Family support services are designed to help families better support their family member's treatment and recovery from mental illness and/or substance use.

The agreement also included continuous monitoring of these services. For more information visit:

www.azahcccs.gov/AHCCCS/HealthcareAdvocacy/arnoldvsarn.html

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