§ 10.09 Annual examinations and petitions for discharge.

(a) The commissioner shall provide the respondent and counsel for respondent with an annual written notice of the right to petition the court for discharge. The notice shall contain a form for the waiver of the right to petition for discharge.

(b) The commissioner shall also assure that each respondent committed under this article shall have an examination for evaluation of his or her mental condition made at least once every year (calculated from the date on which the supreme or county court judge last ordered or confirmed the need for continued confinement pursuant to this article or the date on which the respondent waived the right to petition for discharge pursuant to this section, whichever is later, as applicable) conducted by a psychiatric examiner who shall report to the commissioner his or her written findings as to whether the respondent is currently a dangerous sex offender requiring confinement. At such time, the respondent also shall have the right to be evaluated by an independent psychiatric examiner. If the respondent is financially unable to obtain an examiner, the court shall appoint an examiner of the respondent's choice to be paid within the limits prescribed by law. Following such evaluation, each psychiatric examiner shall report his or her findings in writing to the commissioner and to counsel for respondent. The commissioner shall review relevant records and reports, along with the findings of the psychiatric examiners, and shall make a determination in writing as to whether the respondent is currently a dangerous sex offender requiring confinement.

(c) The commissioner shall annually forward the notice and waiver form, along with a report including the commissioner's written determination and the findings of the psychiatric examination, to the supreme or county court where the respondent is located.

(d) The court shall hold an evidentiary hearing as to retention of the respondent within forty-five days if it appears from one of the annual submissions to the court under subdivision (c) of this section (i) that the respondent has petitioned, or has not affirmatively waived the right to petition, for discharge, or (ii) that even if the respondent has waived the right to petition, and the commissioner has determined that the respondent remains a dangerous sex offender requiring confinement, the court finds on the basis of the materials described in subdivision

(b) of this section that there is a substantial issue as to whether the respondent remains a dangerous sex offender requiring confinement. At an evidentiary hearing on that issue under this subdivision, the attorney general shall have the burden of proof.

(e) If, at any time, the commissioner determines that the respondent no longer is a dangerous sex offender requiring confinement, the commissioner shall petition the court for discharge of the respondent or for the imposition of a regimen of strict and intensive supervision and treatment. The petition shall be served upon the attorney general and the respondent, and filed in the supreme or county court where the person is located. The court, upon review of the petition, shall either order the requested relief or order that an evidentiary hearing be held.

(f) The respondent may at any time petition the court for discharge and/or release to the community under a regimen of strict and intensive supervision and treatment. Upon review of the respondent's petition, other than in connection with annual reviews as described in subdivisions (a), (b) and (d) of this section, the court may order that an evidentiary hearing be held, or may deny an evidentiary hearing and deny the petition upon a finding that the petition is frivolous or does not provide sufficient basis for reexamination prior to the next annual review. If the court orders an evidentiary hearing under this subdivision, the attorney general shall have the burden of proof as to whether the respondent is currently a dangerous sex offender requiring confinement.

(g) In connection with any evidentiary hearing held pursuant to subdivision (d), (e), or (f) of this section, upon the request of either party or upon its own motion, the court may direct the submission of evidence, and may order a psychiatric evaluation if the court finds that any available examination reports are not current or otherwise not sufficient.

(h) At the conclusion of an evidentiary hearing, if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent is currently a dangerous sex offender requiring confinement, the court shall continue the respondent's confinement. Otherwise the court, unless it finds that the respondent no longer suffers from a mental abnormality, shall issue an order providing for the discharge of the respondent to a regimen of strict and intensive supervision and treatment pursuant to section 10.11

of this article.