



Written by [Mallory Sauer](#) on June 4, 2013

## “Mental Illness” Diagnoses Are the Slippery Slope to Gun Confiscation

According to a recent [study](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 20 percent of children in the United States — one out of five — has a mental disorder. Perhaps even more sobering, the latest edition of the “psychiatric Bible,” the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5), claims there is more than [a 50-percent chance](#) that an American will develop a mental disorder in his or her lifetime. The CDC reported that 25 percent of adults already suffer from mental illness and affirmed the idea that the number will rise to 50 percent, as the DSM-5 predicts.



These claims are disputed, however. Dr. Allen Frances, author of the DSM-4, [has challenged the claims](#) of the new manual, specifically those concerning ADHD. Frances stated the following about the proliferation of claims of mental illness:

We’re already over diagnosing ADHD. Almost 20 percent of teen boys get the diagnosis of ADHD, and about 10 percent of boys are on stimulant drugs. We don’t need to make it easier to diagnose ADHD. If we decided as a society that the use of stimulants is good, it shouldn’t be done through a fake medical diagnosis.

ADHD, according to a recent study by the CDC, “was the most prevalent current diagnosis among children aged 3-17 years,” and although “scientists are studying the causes ... there is no test to diagnose ADHD.” In other words, the most common form of mental illness in children is not testable. Yet both children and adults are still being medicated.

The situation becomes more disturbing when connected with gun control.

While it seems reasonable to prohibit the “dangerously mentally ill” from owning firearms, the high prevalence of mental illness diagnoses is likely to be the slippery slope that leads to widespread gun confiscation.

In fact, merely using present and proposed legislation and tweaking the meaning of a few words would do the trick. New gun-grabbing laws already require some people who have “mental illness” to hand over their weapons to the government — so anti-gun legislators merely need to find an excuse to take guns away from all people with “mental illness.”

Actions by authorities show how close we are to that reality.

New York resident David Lewis [received a letter](#) from the Erie County clerk on April 1, informing Lewis that his gun license was being suspended and that failure to comply and hand over his firearms would result in the revocation of his gun license altogether.



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The reason for his license suspension and removal of his firearms was that Lewis had taken anti-anxiety medication. Even though he had a clean record, was not reported to be mentally ill, and had stopped taking the prescribed medication the previous year, the New York SAFE Act allowed the government to obstruct his Second Amendment right.

Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs, representing the office that sent Lewis the letter, explained that there had been a mistake. "When the State Police called to tell us they made a mistake and had the wrong person, ... it became clear that the State did not do their job here, and now we all look foolish." After an Erie County Supreme Court judge determined that the letter was sent in error, Lewis' privileges were reinstated.

Similarly, in California, a resident near Los Angeles recently felt the full brunt of a new law Governor Jerry Brown signed last month requiring citizens who legally purchased handguns and assault rifles to surrender them to the government if they have since committed a crime or suffer from mental illness. Nine agents from the California Justice Department, armed with pistols, paid a visit to the man's home and [walked out with his three registered firearms](#) because the gun owner had recently spent two days in a mental hospital.

Another California resident, Lynette Phillips, [voluntarily admitted herself to a mental hospital](#) last December, where she spent two days. Phillips says that her medication had been adjusted and that, subsequently, she could not stop crying. A nurse noted in her file, however, that Phillips was involuntarily admitted and suggested that she might be suicidal. Phillips was shocked at these claims. "I kept telling her I had a grand-baby at home and had to be better for Christmas," she said. "Does that sound like the words of someone who is a risk to themselves and others?"

Nevertheless, nine police officers with the California Justice Department, armed and wearing bulletproof vests, showed up on her doorstep and asked to enter her home. Phillips and her husband, David, had never had problems with the law before, so they let the officers inside without asking for a warrant. Although invasive and unconstitutional, this new gun law does not actually give warrants for officers to look through homes for firearms.

After the couple had politely directed them to where their guns were kept, the officers left with all three of the Phillips' legally owned firearms.

In Phillips' case, not only was her gun confiscated, but her husband's guns were as well. Though David Phillips is a law-abiding citizen with no criminal history and no record of mental illness or use of psychotropic drugs, his guns were still taken.

Michelle Gregory, a spokeswoman for the California attorney general's office, attempted to shed light on the issue. "The prohibited person can't have access to a firearm," she said, indicating that the "prohibited person" does not have to be the registered owner of the gun. Since David lived under the same roof as someone who is "mentally ill," his firearms were taken by the government. After all, his wife could have access to them.

The definition of someone who is officially "mentally ill" could be changed at a moment's notice once these types of laws are in place, making them an extreme danger to rights. So far, only California and New York have implemented them, but other states may follow. California Attorney General Kamala Harris even wrote a letter to Vice President Biden, who was leading a White House review of firearms policy, suggesting that he consider California's methods an example for the entire nation.

As the situation stands now, the New York law mandates that all mental health professionals,



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psychiatrists, and psychologists must report any patient they believe may be “dangerous” to local officials, who will then have the authority to seize all firearms that individual might own — don’t make your psychiatrist angry. The dangerous person’s name will then be entered into state and national registries so that no future gun purchases can occur — not legal purchases, anyway.



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