

Zach,

Thank you for reaching out and not making any assumptions. I can tell you we are a small county, and we have not had a lot of cases that would necessarily require a "Yellow Flag" commitment. This is where it gets a little complicated, so please bear with me. We have had quite a few cases where individuals are taken into protective custody. They are taken to the hospital for an evaluation. The hospital then takes responsibility for the individual. They will assess him and determine if that person needs to be involuntarily committed or "Blue Paper." Our experience has been the this is completed by the hospital, however, that information is not shared with us due to HIPAA. If there are no weapons involved, this process works well. If, however, there are weapons involved, and we need to get the person committed, AND get a weapons restriction order, then we have to go through the "Yellow Flag" process and that requires the psychiatric assessment to be done by Spurwink. This has to be done via Telehealth as hospitals in Maine refuse to do it.

I have checked our records and spoken with members of my staff and have been told that we have only tried to do this one time, in recent memory, but the person voluntarily turned their rifle over to our deputies, so we did not have to initiate the "Yellow Flag" process.

I think to answer your question "why" is very difficult for me. I believe there are several reasons, which I have tried to explain above. I think as we look to assess our policies and procedures, this is the very kind of thing we will look at. What are the barriers we see locally? Have other options been employed that we've relied on in the past, that have worked.

We have a very close nit law enforcement community in our southern mid coast area, and we work with people. We know our people. We try to find solutions to problems that will make people better and keep people safe. And, we pride ourselves on that.

I hope I have answered your questions sufficiently.

Thank you,
Joel