



How to start conversations in your county about status conferences

What are status conferences?

Status conferences are informal meetings with the presiding judge, the individual(s) on an assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) order, and members of that individual's care team. Attorneys are not present or required at status conferences. They can be held when an individual is not adhering to their court-ordered treatment or be used as an opportunity to celebrate someone's ongoing engagement and acknowledge the improvements in the individual's health and life as a result.

Status conferences can be scheduled as needed for an individual and can be held for several people at once. The presiding judge needs to agree to include status conferences on their docket. Status conferences benefit both the courts that implement them and the individual on the order.

How to start the discussion with your judge:

Suggest in open session: If there is an individual who you are repeatedly turning in Notice of Non-compliance forms for, when in open session while testifying, you can suggest status conferences could help this person's adherence and hold them accountable, while also giving them an opportunity to talk about barriers they may be experiencing. You can mention that they are being done in other counties with reported success.

Emphasize low time commitment- Many judges have full dockets and may be hesitant to add more to it. Asking for one hour a month on the docket to schedule status conferences for AOT consumers can be a reasonable ask, with a large impact. If your judge agrees, work with the court register, the paralegal, and the case managers to start scheduling status conferences.

Benefits of status conferences:



Black robe effect: In AOT, this refers to the increased accountability felt by an AOT consumer when appearing before a judge, making them more likely to comply with the judge's orders.

Build relationships: Enhance engagement and success through positive interactions.

Save time: Reduce unnecessary hospital transports for those who do not meet hospitalization criteria, saving time and resources for both the courts and individuals on AOT orders.

Decrease hospitalizations: Keep individuals engaged in their treatment plans and providing timely interventions and support can help reduce the need for hospitalizations.

Advance agency: Provide individuals with a chance to discuss the barriers they face.



“In the long run I think status conferences save everyone time because it brings everyone together.”

**Judge Jennie E. Barkey
Genesee County**