



Individuals

Many individuals living with serious mental illness (SMI) do not adhere to outpatient treatment, often resulting in increased rates of suicide and self-harm, violent behavior, [insecure housing](#), high utilization of ERs, and frequent contact with law enforcement. These behaviors and vulnerabilities lead to high rates of inpatient psychiatric [hospitalization](#) and [incarceration](#). **Assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) is a legal mechanism for providing outpatient treatment to individuals living with SMI whose non-adherence places them at risk for negative outcomes.** AOT works by compelling the recipient to receive specific treatment that will prevent their condition from worsening and by committing the mental health system to provide treatment. AOT orders allow concerned parties (e.g., families, treatment providers) to intervene on behalf of an individual living with an SMI without having to wait until that individual reaches a crisis, increasing the individual's ability to function in the community.

Why does assisted outpatient treatment matter to you?

As someone who is on an AOT order or for whom an AOT order is being considered, you are sure to have many questions. Like other adults living with serious mental illness, you have faced many challenges while learning to navigate your illness, and one of those challenges is recognizing when you need help. Your illness may be preventing you from realizing that you are sick. This lack of realization is a symptom of your illness. **AOT is an attempt to help keep you from being held back by this symptom.**

You have probably experienced instances where people tried to help you by attempting to make you do things that you didn't want to do, or made you feeling punished for having mental illness. At first, AOT may seem like a punishment, but it is different from other attempts to help because the focus is not just on you. **With AOT, the focus is equally on your treatment team and you**, making sure they are providing you with what you need to be successful.

AOT does not last forever. Your case must be reviewed regularly to determine if the AOT order is still necessary, because the goal of AOT is to have you utilize the treatment to become healthy and independent. **You still have rights in the process**, and it is essential that you learn more about AOT so you can take advantage of these rights.

Action Steps for individuals on an assisted outpatient treatment order:

- Learn more about how AOT work and what your [rights are](#).
- Listen to the [success stories](#) from people who were on an [AOT order](#).
- Continue learning more about your illness and what treatment options exist—the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) has great information to help you [advocate for yourself](#).
- Visit the [Office of Recipient Rights](#) online to learn more about your rights when receiving mental health treatment.
- Get support for yourself – the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) offers a wide range of [support](#) options to help you manage your illness.

Click here to learn more about how AOT works and how to file an order

