

AOT Background

In 2017, the General Assembly passed Kentucky's first Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) statute, Tim's Law, named after Tim Morton, a Lexington man with schizophrenia who struggled to recognize his illness. Despite dozens of involuntary hospitalizations, he resisted outpatient treatment and ultimately died in 2014 at age 56 due to neglected health issues.

Thanks to the efforts of his parents, advocacy groups, and mental health agencies, Kentucky took a major step toward breaking the cycle of jails, hospitals, and homelessness for individuals with severe mental illness.

The KY Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID) accessed federal funding in 2020 to pilot AOT in two state psychiatric hospitals. Initial outcomes show significant improvements in the lives who participated.

Outcomes from the 139 participants in this project include:

- 90% report feeling capable of handling daily life
- 75% reduction in homelessness
- 75% reduction in emergency visits for mental health
- 95% reduction in psychiatric hospitalization
- 100% reduction in arrests

Additional communities are joining the AOT program to expand service access across Kentucky.

AOT Resources

Visit this link or scan the QR code to view the KY AOT statutes, AOT court forms, and external websites with additional AOT resources.



linktr.ee/aotky

Contact Us

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Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) in Kentucky

What is AOT?

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) is a court-ordered program that ensures people with serious mental illness (SMI) receive ongoing treatment in the community.

The goal is to prevent gaps in care, reducing the risk of hospitalization or incarceration while improving overall well-being.

With regular court oversight and enhanced outpatient support, AOT helps individuals stay on track with treatment and succeed in their communities. By reducing hospital stays and criminal justice involvement, AOT benefits both individuals and conserves limited resources.

AOT is a partnership between individuals, communities, courts, service providers, and government agencies. It helps people with serious mental illness (SMI) live better lives while reducing the strain on community and financial resources.

Who May Request an AOT Order?

Anyone can file a petition in District Court to request Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) for someone with a SMI. This includes a Qualified Mental Health Professional, County Attorney, peace officer, spouse, relative, friend, or guardian.

Who is Eligible for AOT?

To qualify for Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), a person must:

- Have a SMI and a history of not following treatment, which has:
 - Led to hospitalization or arrest at least twice in the past 48 months, or
 - Resulted in an act, threat, or attempt of serious harm to themselves or others in the past 24 months.
- Be unlikely to follow outpatient treatment voluntarily, based on a mental health professional's assessment of their condition and decision-making ability.
- Require court-ordered AOT as the least restrictive and most appropriate treatment option.

