



ASSISTED  
OUTPATIENT  
TREATMENT  
NOW!

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## WHAT IS AOT?

AOT laws allow continued treatment of people with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) in the community, so that they can live a healthy, safe and productive life. Currently, 47 states have AOT laws. MA is one of only 3 states which does not have AOT laws.

## WHY DO WE NEED AOT LAWS IN MA?

Anosognosia, also called "lack of insight," is a symptom of severe mental illness experienced by some that impairs a person's ability to understand and perceive his or her illness. It is the single largest reason why people with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder refuse medications or do not seek treatment. Without awareness of the illness, refusing treatment appears rational, no matter how clear the need for treatment might be to others.

Currently in MA, there are laws for Roger's guardianship and a court ordered treatment plan for people with SMI. However, there is no way to implement this treatment plan in the community on an outpatient basis, if the patient refuses treatment. This leads to an endless cycle of hospitalization or incarceration, without the ability to follow through with treatment in the community.

AOT laws will allow continuum of treatment in the community, when the patient is released from the hospital.

Untreated SMI in the community leads to homelessness, harm to self or others, and visits to emergency room – all which can be prevented with AOT. Also, continued treatment of SMI, leads to better outcome over time. People with SMI will be able to live independent productive life in the community.

## HOW DO AOT LAWS WORK?

Under AOT laws, a judge may grant an AOT order with a treatment plan for person with SMI. Under an AOT order, a treating team will be assigned to follow through with the treatment plan in the community. Most likely, a person with SMI will be released from the hospital with an AOT order in place.

## WILL AOT ALLOW FORCED TREATMENT OF THE PEOPLE WITH SMI IN THE COMMUNITY?

No one will ever be given medication forcibly in the community under AOT laws.

## WHAT HAPPENS IS THE PATIENT REFUSES TO TAKE THE MEDICATION IN THE COMMUNITY?

If the patient refuses to take the medication, the treating team will work with the patient to encourage them to take the medication, otherwise they may be required go back to the court, and the judge may send the patient to the hospital for evaluation and possible commitment.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING TO BRING AOT LAWS IN MA?

We are actively supporting house bill H.2121: An Act Relative to Assisted Outpatient Therapy to bring AOT laws in MA. For more information on this bill, visit: <https://www.aotnow.org/>