

# The Fundamentals of Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)



Presented by:  
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# Introduction

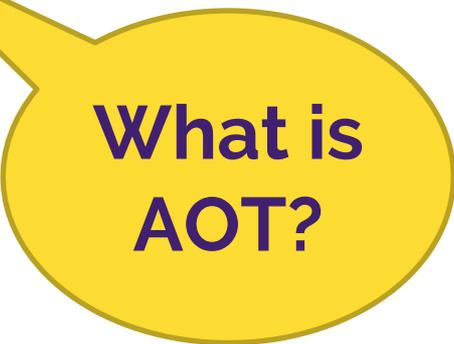


**The Treatment Advocacy Center is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating barriers to the timely and effective treatment of severe mental illness.**

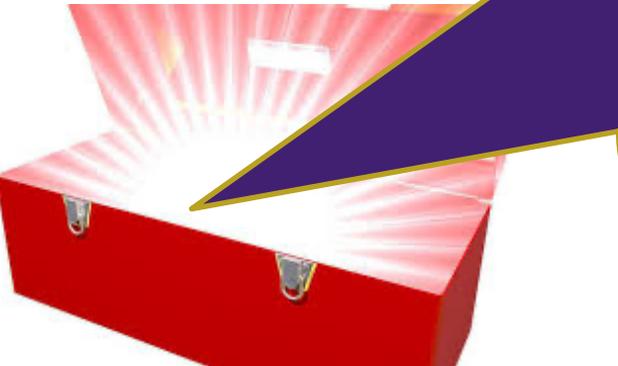
# Questions I hope to answer

- **What is AOT?**
- **How does it work?**
- **Is AOT effective?**
- **How do I help get a program started?**





**What is  
AOT?**



Assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) is a tool in the toolbox for civil courts and mental health systems to work collaboratively to help individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) caught in a cycle of repeat hospitalizations, homelessness and incarcerations. Individuals who benefit from AOT have a history of inconsistent engagement with treatment often due to diminished awareness of the need for treatment.

# Many Reasons for Non-Engagement

- **Stigma**
- **Inadequate community mental health services**
- **Lack of transportation**
- **Side effects of medications**
- **Mistrust of doctors**
- **Anosognosia/lack of insight into illness**



# Anosognosia and Non-adherence



# Kendra's Law



**How does  
AOT work?**



## **Three Paths to AOT**

**Petition for AOT is filed in civil court:**

- 1. Upon discharge from hospitalization**
- 2. Directly from the community to prevent hospitalization and/or avoid CJ involvement**
- 3. Upon transition from jail/prison**



**Who is a  
good  
candidate  
for AOT?**

### Required Criteria:

- ✓ **Meets criteria under the law**

### Other Criteria to Consider:

- ✓ **Primary diagnosis of schizophrenia, schizoaffective or bipolar disorder**
- ✓ **Is able to understand responsibilities under the terms of the AOT court order**
- ✓ **Necessary treatment is available in the community**
- ✓ **Person's disorder likely to respond to treatment**
- ✓ **May have secondary substance use disorder**
- ✓ **Does not enjoy being in the hospital**

# Black Robe Effect Works

- Judge commands respect as symbol of authority
- Judge and treatment team act as motivators
- Black robe effect works on treatment system too



# AOT is toothless, so what's the point?

- **It's not mental health court**
  - **No jail or fines**
- **No contempt of court**
- **No forcibly administered meds**



# *There Are Consequences of Non-Adherence*

- Judge holds periodic check-ins
- Time in program is extended
- Pick-up order for evaluation is ordered
- If needed, rehospitalization





77%

fewer experienced  
psychiatric  
hospitalization



74%

fewer experienced  
homelessness



83%

fewer experienced  
arrest



87%

fewer experienced  
incarceration

Is AOT  
Effective?

**Does AOT  
Save  
Money?**



**50%** cost savings in New York



**40%** cost savings  
in North Carolina

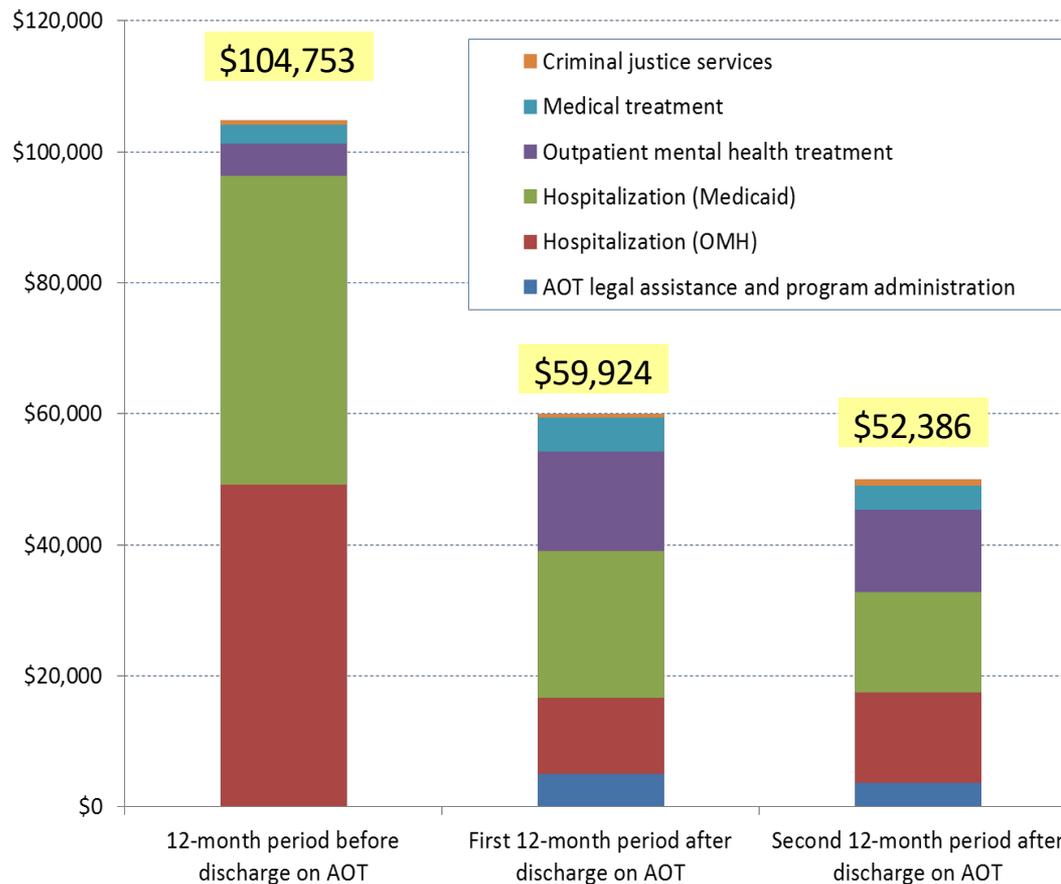


**40%** cost savings  
in Summit County, Ohio



**\$1.81** saved for ever dollar spent  
in Nevada County, California

# Cost of AOT, mental health and criminal justice services before and after AOT in NYC



Swanson JW, Swartz MS, Van Dorn RA, Robbins PC, Steadman HJ, McGuire TG, Monahan J (2013). The cost of Assisted Outpatient Commitment: Can it save states money? *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 170:1423-1432.

**So you  
want an  
AOT  
program in  
your  
County?**

## **Become an AOT Champion**



# Educate Yourself about AOT

[www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/AOT](http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/AOT)

AOT Research Summary

<https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/storage/documents/tac-aot-summary-pdf.pdf>

AOT Implementation White Paper

<https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/storage/documents/backgrounders/White Paper FINAL 1.pdf>

AOT Learning Modules

<https://smiadviser.org/about/aot>

# Develop Your Elevator Speech



**What are  
the key  
components  
of an  
effective  
elevator  
speech?**

- **Capture the listeners attention**
- **Identify the problem**
- **State the solution**
- **Follow up with an interesting or compelling fact**
- **End with an ask**



**For the last 3 years, my family member has been on a restrictive and expensive conservatorship here in California. Had there been an AOT program in Sacramento County three years ago, he would have been able to stay in the community and get support from family and friends here. It would have also saved the county thousands of dollars that they could have used for other programs and to treat more people effectively.**

# Engage Others



## Key Stakeholders

- NAMI Executive Director
- Mental Health Authority Administrator
- Hospital Administrator
- ED/Crisis Facility Director
- Provider Agency Director
- Civil Court Judge
- District Attorney/Prosecutor
- Public Defender
- Sheriff/Police Chief/CIT Coordinator

**Call me!**



TREATMENT  
ADVOCACY  
CENTER

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