



## Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

### Laura's Law Implementation Model Project

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#### I. Purpose

Assembly Bill (AB) 1421 (Thomson, Chapter 1017, Statutes of 2002) established the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Demonstration Project Act of 2002, known as Laura's Law. Laura's Law sought to address the needs of mentally ill adults at substantial risk for relapse and deterioration as a result of not having accessed mental health services or voluntarily maintained participation in such services due to the symptoms of their mental illness, by providing a process to allow court-ordered outpatient treatment. The legislation established an option for counties to provide a way for courts, probation and the mental health systems to address the needs of individuals who are unable to benefit from mental health treatment programs in the community without supervision.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) intends to develop model policies, procedures, and budget estimates that would be necessary to support a full implementation of Laura's Law in LA County, at a scale of approximately 500 evaluations per year, and 300 enrollees at any given time, including about 60 crisis residential beds. The development process begins with a broad analysis of the requirements of Laura's Law and the legal, clinical, programmatic, and fiscal mechanisms need to meet them. It also may identify alternative models. The analysis is guided by DMH and an expert consultant, and includes community input from a broad range of involved agencies and stakeholders, as well as collaboration with Nevada County, which implemented Laura's Law some years ago.

The unique programmatic component associated with Laura's Law implementation is the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Team. This new team will screen requests, conduct extensive outreach and engagement, develop petitions and manage the court processes to connect AOT enrollees with service providers chiefly those who are Full Service Partnership (FSP) providers. The treatment component of Laura's Law will be delivered through Full Service Partnership (FSP) providers through an expansion of existing capacity. Successful and full implementation of this program is predicated upon extensive inter-agency collaboration and provision of significant resources, as required by Laura's Law, from the courts, County Counsel, Public Defender, the District Attorney's office and local law enforcement.

#### II. Project Development and Timeline

The project is being developed in close collaboration with countywide experts and key stakeholders through a series of meetings.

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Date	Task
<b>July 8, 2013</b>	Convened experts and stakeholders at DMH headquarters to review components of Laura’s Law through a fictionalized case study and compile important questions about LL implementation.
<b>July 9 – September 9, 2013</b>	Multiple internal meetings were called to address the questions raised by the stakeholders.
<b>September 30, 2013</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> stakeholder group meeting was convened at DMH headquarters to present information related to addressing the questions/concerns and developing a procedure for LL
<b>October 1 – 16, 2013</b>	From 2nd stakeholder meeting input a) modify current draft procedure and b) develop questions for Nevada County on LL operational issues and procedures in their county.
<b>October 16, 2013</b>	DMH and stakeholder one day visit to Nevada County to identify further operational issues with LL programs and suggested solutions.
<b>October 17 – November 15, 2013</b>	<p>Development of subsequent procedures draft, and identification of needs from other agencies (Court, County Counsel, DA, PD)</p> <p>Budget development and alternatives development:            Option 1: Use prudent reserve as bridge            Option 2: Redirect possible unspent CSS            Option 3: Combination of the above</p> <p>Jointly develop petition procedures with County Counsel, starting with Nevada County template. Challenges will be resource identification and possible conforming of procedures to possible legal determinations.</p> <p>Jointly develop hearing procedures with County Counsel, Public Defender, DA, and superior court, starting with Nevada County template. Challenges will be resource identification and consensus on acceptable procedure for all parties.</p> <p>Develop default program startup procedures pending full identification of resources and interagency consensus.</p> <p>Initiate implementation planning.</p>

**III. Challenges**

1. Resource identification and possible conforming of procedures to possible legal determinations in developing petition procedures with County Counsel. .
2. Resource identification and consensus on acceptable procedure for all parties in

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developing hearing procedures with County Counsel, Public Defender, DA and Superior Court.

3. Define and operationalize clinical opinions referenced in the law.
4. Determine DMH’s role in due process.
5. Operationalize DMH’s custodial authority.