

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

**Can AOT mandate someone to be hospitalized in a long-term locked facility?**

AOT functions are outpatient based and unrelated to LPS Conservatorships, which are initiated by psychiatric hospitals, thus the AOT program is not capable of initiating long-term involuntary commitment. Taking away someone's right to make decisions for themselves is significant, and although we can provide relevant treatment history to the treatment provider, the ultimate decision of whether or not to pursue long-term involuntary commitment resides with the treating physician and facility.

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**Assisted Outpatient Treatment  
(AOT - LA)  
Laura's Law**



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**Candidate Referral**

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## What is Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)?

Assisted Outpatient Treatment, also known as Laura's Law, was initiated following the 2001 killing of Laura Wilcox by an individual suffering from severe mental illness.

### Overview

Allows LAC DMH to serve seriously mentally ill persons at substantial risk of deterioration as a direct result of poor psychiatric treatment compliance.

AOT eligible individuals are outreached in an effort to voluntarily engage them in Full Service Partnership (FSP) services.

- If services are refused, AOT-LA may petition the court to order the individual into psychiatric outpatient treatment.
- AOT-LA Program expands inter-agency collaboration among courts, County Counsel, Public Defender, Patients' Rights, and local law enforcement.

### Who can refer?

In order to refer someone for AOT-LA services, the referring party must be:

- Co-habitant aged 18 or older
- Close relative (parent, sibling, spouse, or child over age 18)
- Director of client's residential care facility
- Hospital director
- Licensed MH Treatment Provider
- Peace, Parole, and Probation Officers

## Those qualifying for AOT services are:

- 18 years of age or older
- Seriously mentally ill
- Unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision
- Have a history of non-compliance with treatment has and either:
  - \* Two or more hospitalizations or incarcerations within the last 36 months; or
  - \* Within the last 48 months, one or more acts and/or attempts to cause serious physical harm to self and/or others
- Substantially deteriorating;
- Likely to become gravely disabled or seriously harm themselves or others without treatment;
- Failing to engage in available treatment;
- Likely to benefit from AOT services.

## What services can AOT provide?

Extensive outreach and engagement for a minimum of 30 days

- Screening and assessment
- Linkage to outpatient psychiatric treatment, primarily FSP providers
- May petition for court-ordered psychiatric treatment
- Participation in court hearing and follow-up on court mandate

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### **What types of treatment are available through AOT-LA?**

DMH established the AOT-LA program through an expansion of the following adult Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Services and Support (CSS) programs:

- **Outreach and Engagement Teams**

These teams primarily screen requests and referrals and conduct extensive outreach and engagement on candidates who meet criteria.

- **Full Service Partnership Programs**

This intensive outpatient service is field service capable providing an array of services including targeted case management, mental health services, and, if a client elects, medication support services.

- **Alternative Crisis Services**

This residential type of service is carried out at one of three Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) step-down facilities where the client has a bed, 24-hour supervision, and support for more frequent mental health services in an unlocked setting.

### **Is AOT or Laura's Law capable of mandating medication or administering involuntary medication?**

No. Laura's Law states, under WIC 5348(c): "Involuntary medication shall not be allowed absent a separate order by the court pursuant to Sections 5332 to 5335, inclusive". DMH and/or contract providers may provide medication support services provided a consent for medication form is signed by a client.