



# New York City Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program\*

**NYC**<sup>TM</sup>  
Health

\* This brochure contains information obtained from the New York State Office of Mental Health website. It has been updated and modified primarily for residents of New York City seeking information about AOT.



## **What is the Assisted Outpatient Treatment program?**

The Assisted Outpatient Treatment program (AOT) was created by Kendra's law. Kendra's law states that people with serious mental illness who are a danger to themselves or others can be court-ordered to participate in mental health treatment. Most importantly if you have a serious mental illness, AOT can help you receive treatment services that may allow you to live independently in your community.

## **Why am I being considered for AOT?**

You might be considered for AOT if someone you know feels it is a challenge for you to live safely or independently in the community without the right mental health treatment, or if previous treatment plans did not work. This person can reach out to the AOT team, who will ask the courts to review your case.





## You can be assigned to the AOT program if you:

- Are 18 years or older
- Suffer from a mental illness
- Have a hard time living independently in your community according to a doctor's exam
- Find it difficult to stick to the treatment plan you agreed on with your provider, which has led to:
  - Two psychiatric hospitalizations or incarcerations in the last three years
  - An attempt to hurt yourself or someone else, or having hurt yourself or someone else, at least once in the last four years

## How can AOT help me?

AOT makes sure you receive all of the services you might need to live successfully in your community. AOT will also monitor your progress and participation in your treatment services to make sure you're staying on track.

## Why do I need to go to an exam site?

You must see a doctor for an exam before you receive a court order for AOT. You have the right to bring a friend or family member to your exam. The doctor will work with you to create a treatment plan that will help you feel better and live safely.





## Do I have a say in what services are included in my treatment plan?

Yes, the doctor should ask you (and the family member or friend you brought with you) what services you think may help. They will try to include your requests in your final treatment plan. Your treatment plan will include a Care Coordination Provider or Assertive Community Treatment team who will make sure your plan addresses all of your needs and that you can access all of the services in your plan.

## Can anyone help me voice my legal concerns?

You have the right to a lawyer who will help you voice your legal concerns. Mental Hygiene Legal Service will assign you a lawyer. They are on your side and want to help you in any way possible. Your lawyer will:

- Answer any questions that you have about AOT
- Let AOT and the court know your wishes and legal concerns
- Give you a business card with a number to call if you have any questions

If you are not happy with your appointed lawyer, you may call the Mental Hygiene Legal Service at **646-386-5891** (if you live in Manhattan or the Bronx) or at **516-746-4545** (if you live in Brooklyn, Staten Island or Queens).





## What happens after my exam?

You, your lawyer and your family member or friend who came to your exam will receive a copy of the legal paperwork that explains why you are being considered for AOT. This paperwork also includes your court date.

On your court date, a judge will listen to why people think you need AOT and may ask you to share how you feel about AOT. The court will then assign you to AOT if the judge thinks that the program will help you.

## What is a renewal process?

A renewal is when the court and AOT program decide if you need to continue with AOT. The renewal process begins four to five weeks before your original AOT court order expires. You are required to have another doctor's exam at that time. The exam process is the same as when you first joined AOT: you have the right to bring a friend or family member to your exam and a doctor has to work with you to create a treatment plan. You then go to court and the judge reviews the results of your exam and the progress you have made with your treatment plan. The court can extend your AOT assignment for up to one year, or the court, AOT and your health care providers can decide that you no longer need a court order to make sure you are receiving treatment.





## What do I do if I have questions or concerns?

You can call anyone on the list of providers on your treatment plan. You can also call the AOT staff at **347-396-6843**.

## What is the “Free Language Line”?

The AOT exam sites have a phone number you can call if English is not your first language. You can get a free translator who will make sure you can communicate with your doctor and lawyer.



## What are my rights?

- You have the right to an attorney who will help you voice your concerns.
- You have the right to create an advanced directive, which is a written document that gives specific treatment instructions on what can be done if you are unable to make decisions for yourself.
- You have the right to participate in the creation of your treatment plan.
- You have the right to bring a friend or family member to your exam.
- You have the right to select a friend or family member to receive your AOT legal paperwork.
- You have the right to use the free language line available at the exam site to help you communicate smoothly with your lawyer or doctor.

## How do I file a complaint?

If you want to file a complaint about an experience you had with AOT staff, you may call the program at **347-396-6843** or the State Office of Mental Health's New York City field office at **212-330-6376**.



## Who do I contact for more information about AOT?

For more information, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search "AOT" or the New York State Office of Mental Health website at [bi.omh.ny.gov/aot](https://bi.omh.ny.gov/aot).

## You can also contact your AOT borough office:

### Manhattan and Rikers Island

Phone 347-396-7373

### Queens

Phone 347-396-7004

### Bronx

Phone 347-396-7375

### Brooklyn and Staten Island

Phone 347-396-7374