



Enter here. Start anew.

CITYGATE[™]
NETWORK

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Welcome to
Stopping the Revolving Door

Presenter:

Betsy Johnson

Policy Advisor

Treatment Advocacy Center

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**Fighting for the lives of people
with severe mental illness in a
system stacked against them**

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Introduction



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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**



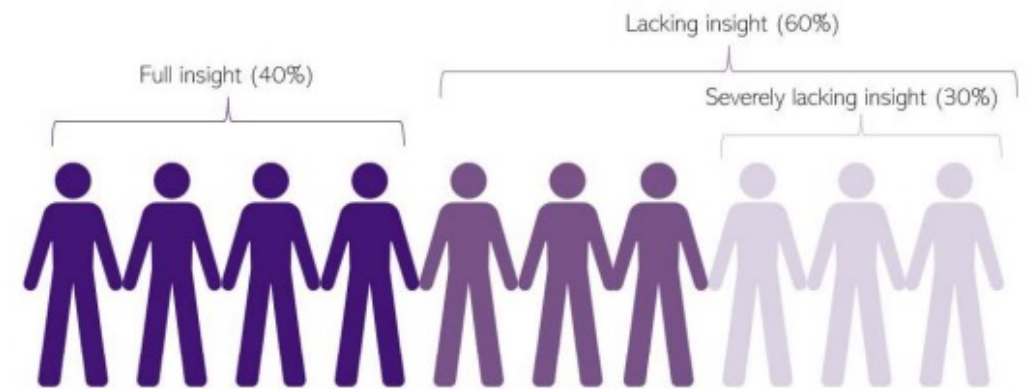
Anosognosia

- Also called lack of insight.
- Symptom of SMI that prevents people from knowing that they are experiencing delusions or hallucinations.
- The most common reason for not seeking or maintaining treatment among people with SMI.



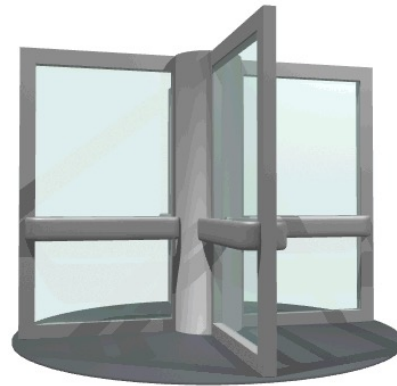
[Video Link:](#)
[Anosognosia](#)

Anosognosia in Schizophrenia



Amador, X., et al. (1994). Awareness of illness in schizophrenia and schizoaffective and mood disorders. Arch Gen Psychiatry, 51

Anosognosia and Non-adherence



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Kendra's Law



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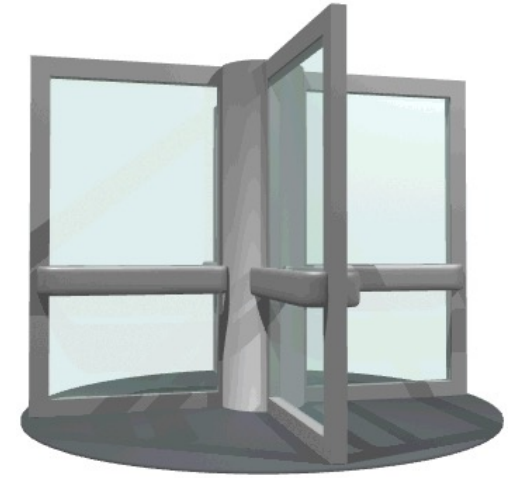
What is Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)?

- Collaboration between civil court and mental health system
- A lesser restrictive form of civil commitment
- Involuntary
- Means of leveraging the power of the court to influence behavior (black robe effect)
- Strategy for intervening early to address non-adherence



Who is a good candidate for AOT?

- 18 years old or older
- Diagnosed with a serious mental illness
- Unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision
- History of lack of compliance with treatment often due to anosognosia
- Unlikely to voluntarily participate in treatment
- Needs treatment to prevent relapse or deterioration which would likely result in harm to self or others
- Able to understand what is required by court order



How does AOT work?

- Petition is filed in civil court.
- Hearing is held.
- Due process rights are protected.
- Clear and convincing evidence standard is met.
- AOT is ordered.
- Needed treatment and services are provided.
- Adherence is monitored.
- Person becomes engaged with treatment and order is dismissed.



Black Robe Effect

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



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Consequences of non-adherence

- Frequency of periodic court check-ins
- Time in program extended
- Transported for evaluation
- Rehospitalization, if needed



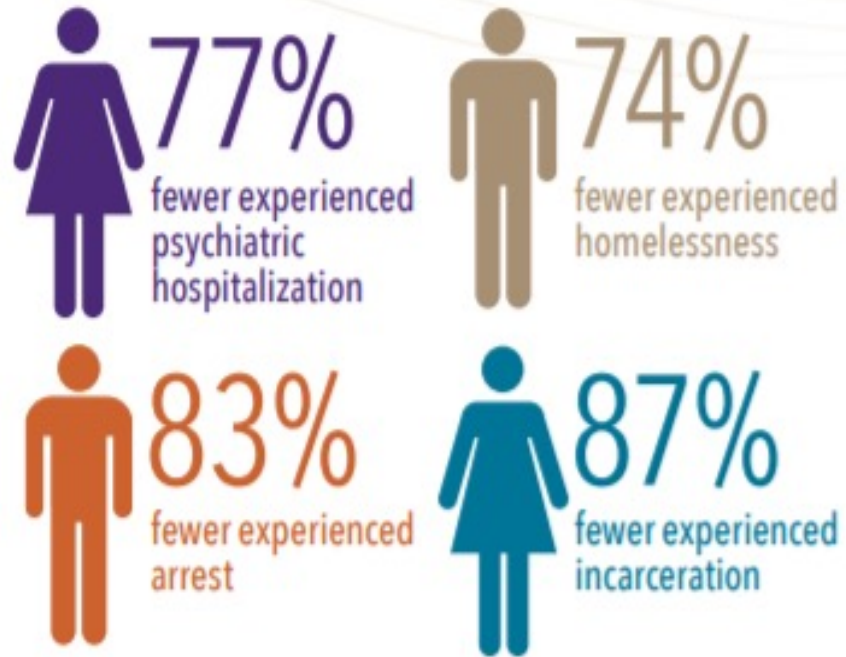
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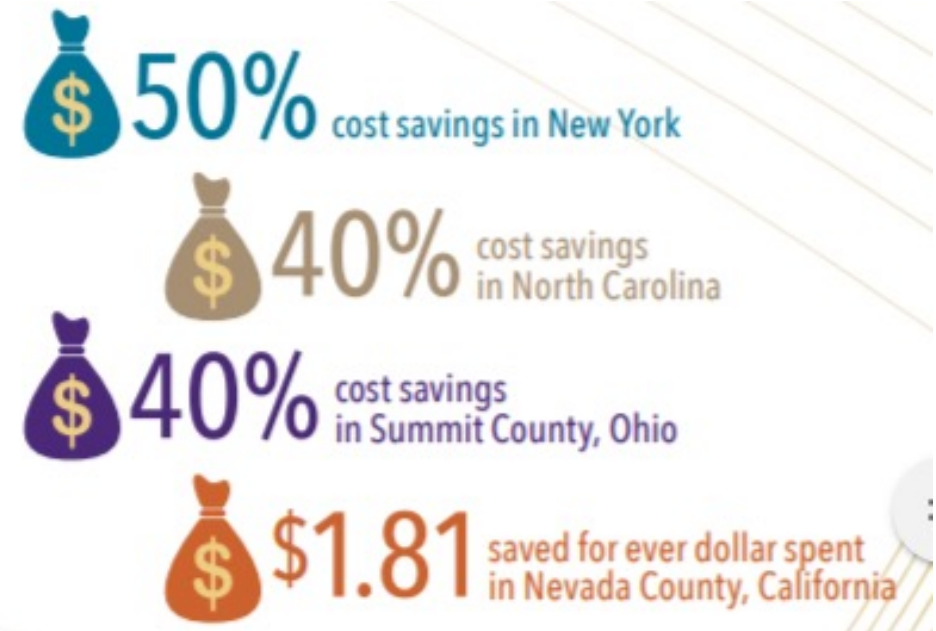
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AOT is effective



...and saves money

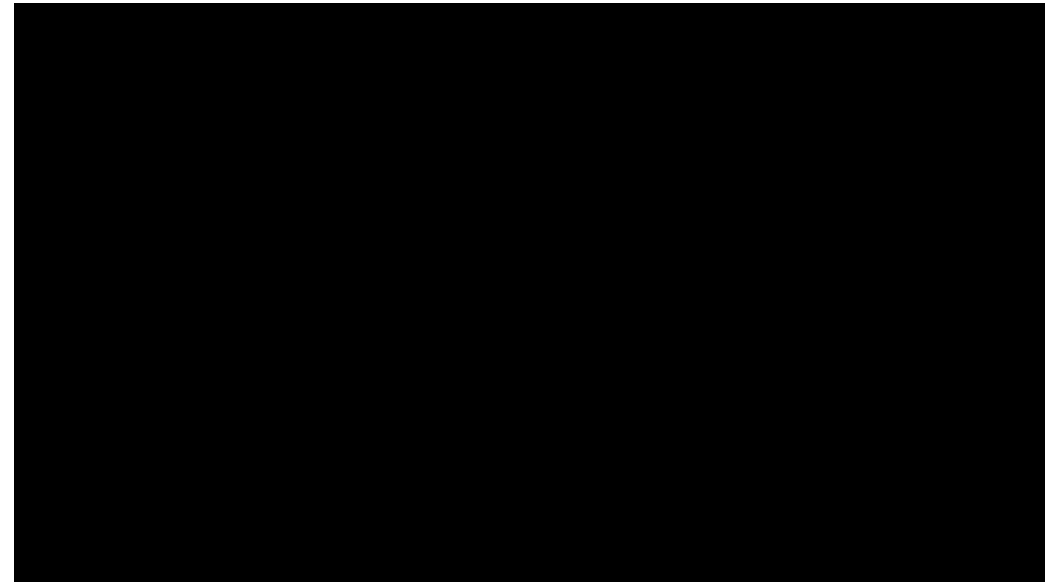
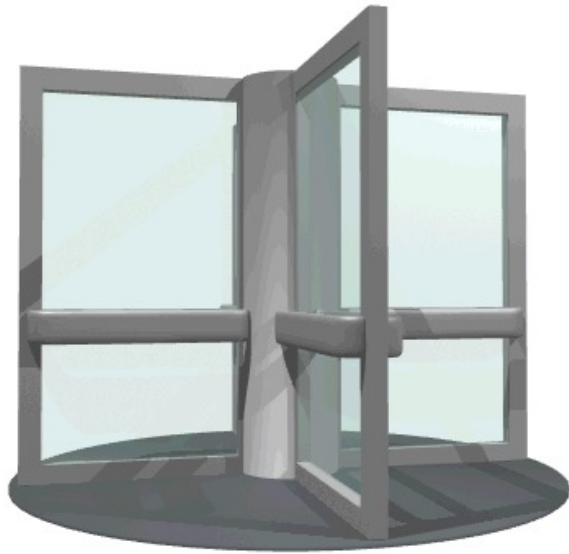


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AOT – Stopping the Revolving Door



[Video Link: Stopping the Revolving Door](#)



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AOT Recap

- ✓ AOT is involuntary (unlike MH Courts)
- ✓ Civil court order
- ✓ Least restrictive setting
- ✓ Full due process protections afforded
- ✓ Quicker return to community
- ✓ Needed treatment provided
- ✓ Adherence monitored
- ✓ System able to intervene quickly
- ✓ Black robe effect - degree of judicial involvement varies
- ✓ Participant and treatment system held accountable



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Three Paths

Step Down:

Upon discharge from the hospital

Step Up:

Directly from the community to prevent hospitalization or incarceration

Step Over:

As diversion from jail, including as alternative to competency restoration



Dismiss Upon Civil Commitment with AOT



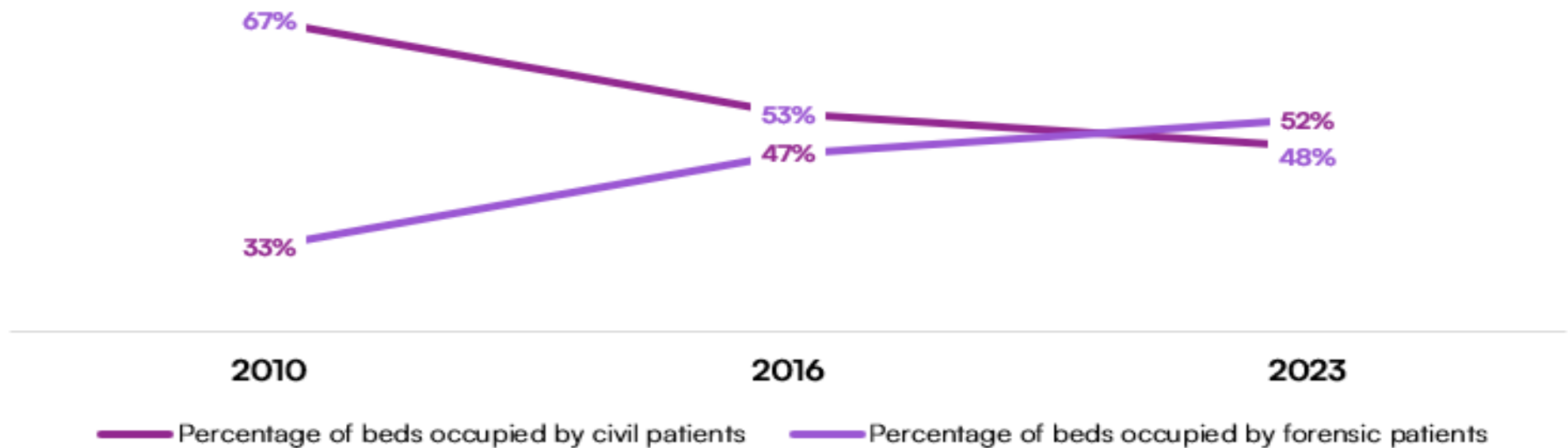
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Competency Restoration Crisis



Consequences

- Fewer state hospital beds for patients who are NOT criminally involved but may be at risk of harm to self or others.
- Patients wait in jail for months for a bed to open in state hospital.
- Increased risk for victimization, additional charges, self-harm, or suicide.



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Benefits of dismissal upon civil commitment with AOT

- Increases access to care
- Improves outcomes
- Improves safety
- Saves money



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Pathway of dismiss upon civil commitment with AOT

All the following apply:

- Has SMI.
- Meets criteria for civil commitment/AOT.
- Unlikely to be restored to competency in time.
- Is not a public safety risk, if treated.
- Understands what is expected under order.

Hospitalization,
if needed.

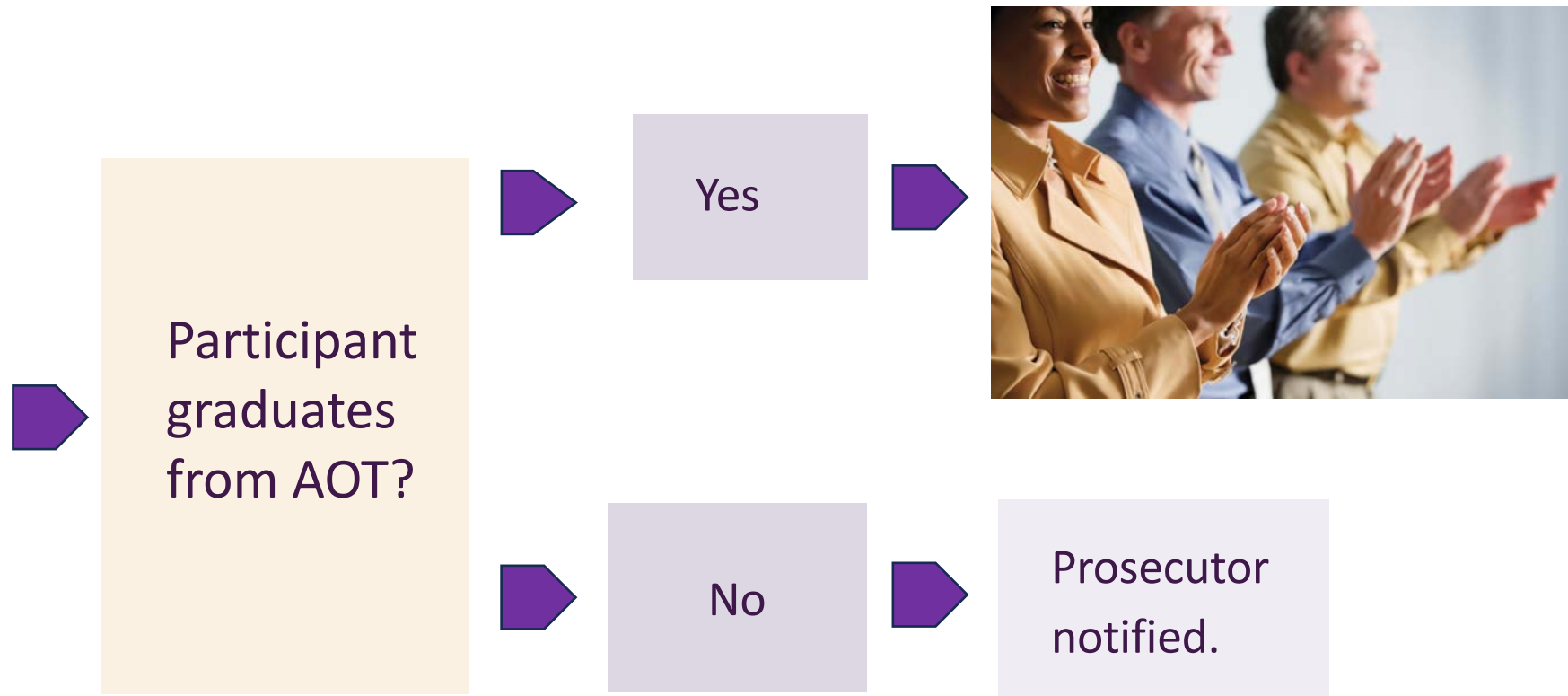
Prosecutor
willing to
dismiss upon
civil
commitment
with AOT.

Petition for
civil
commitment
with AOT filed
by prosecutor,
court,
hospital, or
mental health
system.

Civil
commitment
with AOT is
ordered.
Criminal case
is dismissed.



Pathway of dismiss upon civil commitment with AOT





Resources

IMPLEMENTING ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS, BUILDING BLOCKS AND TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING RESULTS

OCTOBER 2019
Treatment Advocacy Center:
Brian Stettin, JD, Policy Director
Amy Lukes, MSSA, Project Manager
John Snook, JD, Executive Director
Betsy Johnson, Policy Advisor

Northeast Ohio Medical University:
Mark R. Munetz, MD, Margaret Clark Morgan Endowed Chair of Psychiatry |
Deb Hrouda, PhD, Director of Practice Implementation and Evaluation



Treatment Advocacy Center OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Research Summary
July 2022

Assisted Outpatient Treatment: Improving Outcomes and Saving Money

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 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. AOT aims to motivate and assist individuals with serious mental illness to engage in treatment and ensure that the mental health system is attentive to their needs.

How does it work?
A judge usually orders AOT upon discharge from a hospital or jail, but in many states, a judge can order it for individuals who are living in the community if they have a recent history of cycling in and out of the hospital or jail. The AOT participant is court-ordered to follow an individualized treatment plan in the community for a specific period and the local mental health system monitors adherence to the treatment plan. If the AOT participant does not adhere to treatment, the court has several options including modifying the treatment plan, ordering the participant to appear in court, and ordering the participant to be evaluated for possible hospitalization. Once the participant demonstrates voluntary engagement in treatment, the court dismisses the AOT order or allows it to expire and care continues.

Is AOT effective?
Studies show that AOT can dramatically improve treatment outcomes and substantially reduce the likelihood of repeat hospitalization and criminal justice involvement for its target population.

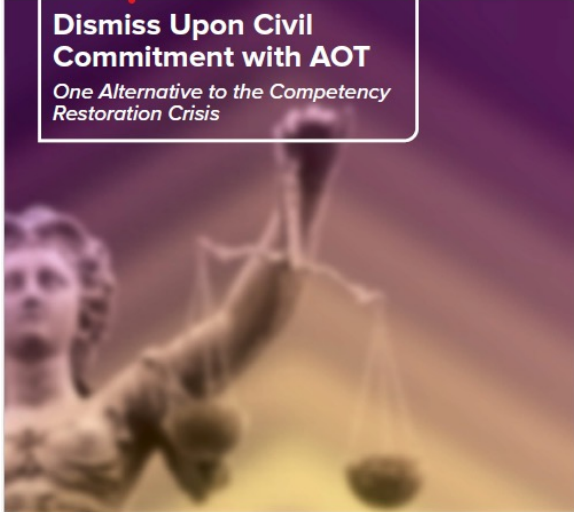
AOT RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Hospitalizations DOWN 77% In New York¹
- Length of hospital stays DOWN 43% In Florida²
- Incidence of arrests DOWN 83% In New York³
- Incarceration rates DOWN 87% In New York⁴
- Homeless nights DOWN 49% among AOT participants Nationwide⁵
- Violent behavior DOWN 47% In New York⁶
- Victimization rates DOWN 52% In North Carolina⁷
- 40% Cost Savings In Summit County, Ohio⁸
- Illegal substance use DOWN Nationwide⁹
- 92% satisfied with AOT services Nationwide¹⁰

1 Assisted Outpatient Treatment: Improving Outcomes and Saving Money • [TreatmentAdvocacyCenter.org](https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org)

Treatment Advocacy Center

Dismiss Upon Civil Commitment with AOT
One Alternative to the Competency Restoration Crisis



A HANDBOOK FOR ADVOCATES AND IMPLEMENTERS
March 2024

www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/aot-programs-by-state

Questions?



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Contact Betsy

johnsonb@treatmentadvocacycenter.org

TreatmentAdvocacyCenter.org



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Don't forget to do the



evaluation!

