

**FRESNO COUNTY
ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT (AOT)**



**PARTICIPANT
HANDBOOK**

FUNDED BY FRESNO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



Department of
Behavioral Health

Dear _____,

Our local Fresno County Superior Court has found that you have suffered and are suffering from a mental health condition that is now subject to court order, court supervision, and assistance. Part of that supervision and assistance involves a requirement that you participate in a program called **“Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)”** under care of the Fresno County Department of Health. The current term of your supervision under the program expires _____.

The purpose of the AOT Program is to give you the help and tools you deserve to help manage your mental illness, increase your sense of safety in our community and improve your quality of life. Similar programs operating throughout the State of California have found that many people who participate in this program spend less time in the hospital as a result. We hope—and expect—that the same will be true for you.

Our community service provider, Mental Health Systems TURN Behavioral Health Services DART West, will work hard to ensure that you have access to the mental health services you need, including assigning you a case manager and a psychiatrist. If you have other service needs, your case manager will also help you with meeting those needs. Together with the folks at the Fresno County Department of Mental Health who will oversee your progress in the AOT Program and provide regular updates to the court, you have a team of people who are here to help you.

You and your treatment team will develop your treatment plan based on your goals. I encourage you to take an active role in your treatment, including taking your medication as prescribed and meeting regularly with your case manager. The Court will determine the length of time you are in the AOT Program based on the reports from your treatment team. There is wisdom in accepting help when you need it, and as your quality of life improves, the amount of time you are required to remain in the AOT Program will be reduced.

If you have any questions about the AOT Program, please do not hesitate to ask your case manager; their contact information is below. Good luck, we look forward to getting to know you and serving you!

Sincerely,

Judge Gary Orozco

Important contact information:

Agency: _____ phone: _____

Case Manager: _____

phone: _____ AOT Monitor: _____

phone: _____



Department of Behavioral Health

WELCOME to Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT)!

We are glad you are here!

Meet the DART West AOT Treatment Team!

- You
 - Your family or support system
 - Your Case Manager: _____
 - Psychiatrist: _____
 - Judge: _____
 - Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health Clinical Director: _____
 - AOT Program Monitor: _____
- **Our culture** is based on recovery. We believe in respect and non-judgment, and we celebrate individual uniqueness. We care about the interpersonal relationship we develop so we can foster a supportive program setting.
 - **Our staff** is passionate, resourceful, and motivated. They are your partners in recovery and will be with you throughout your journey.
 - **Our goals** are to be a place that helps you thrive. We want you to be the leader of your recovery journey and to create the life you want for yourself.

Program Requirements

While in the AOT Program, the AOT team invites you to be a full and active partner in the program and encourages you to:

- Participate in developing your individualized treatment plan with the treatment team;
- Attend all regularly scheduled court appearances;
- Take medications you are prescribed and report any issues with side effects to your physician or the AOT treatment team;
- Keep all appointments with treatment providers;
- Inform your case manager of any change of address or phone number.
- Notify your case manager if you:
 - Run out of medication
 - Miss an appointment
 - Are bothered by side effects of your medication
 - Are hospitalized
 - Are arrested

Treatment Adherence

As you continue to participate and engage in the AOT Program, the level of monitoring by the court and your treatment team will be reduced, and eventually may be lifted altogether. However, if requirements of your treatment plan are not met, the court may take any of the following actions:

- Extend the length of time that you are in the AOT Program
- Increase the frequency of your court appearances
- Order your treatment plan to be reviewed
- Order you to be picked up and evaluated for hospitalization

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long will I be in the AOT Program?

AOT is generally a maximum of up to 180 days. Your original commitment may be extended up to 60 days by the court at the recommendation of your treatment team. You may request a hearing with the court if it has been more than 60 days since your last hearing.

2. What do I need to do to complete the AOT Program?

This is decided on an individual basis and dependent on you and your treatment team. If you are following through with your treatment plan and have not had any psychiatric complications, the court will determine when your commitment expires based on recommendations from the treatment team.

3. What happens if I am sick or forget an appointment?

You must contact your case manager immediately and provide a reason for missing an appointment. In addition, you must contact the person with whom you had the appointment and request to have it rescheduled as soon as possible.

4. What if I do not want to take the medications that have been prescribed?

Your psychiatrist has prescribed the medication(s) they feel is best to address the symptoms of your mental illness. If you are unable to tolerate the side effects and want to request a change in medications, discuss this with your psychiatrist. Remember, not following through with your doctor's medication recommendations may result in consequences listed above.

5. Am I allowed to speak to the Judge?

Yes, you are encouraged to speak to the judge and respectfully voice any concerns you may have.

6. Is there any cost to participate in the AOT Program?

No. DART West will bill your insurance for the services they provide. You may be responsible for medication co-pays if your insurance requires it.



**Department of
Behavioral Health**

FUNDED BY FRESNO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH