



## Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Court launches Assisted Outpatient Treatment program in San Miguel, Mora and Guadalupe counties**

LAS VEGAS – Courts may order outpatient behavioral health treatment for certain people under a new program serving San Miguel, Mora and Guadalupe counties.

The Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program offers help to people who repeatedly have failed to follow voluntary treatment for mental health disorders and been jailed or hospitalized. Family members, behavioral health providers and others can ask a district court to require qualifying individuals ages 18 and older to participate in community-based treatment. Decisions are made through a [civil legal process](#) that protects a person's due process rights.

"Assisted outpatient treatment offers an additional tool for helping people with severe mental illness," said Supreme Court Chief Justice David K. Thomson.

Currently, state law provides a civil procedure for the involuntary hospitalization of people with mental illness who are likely to harm themselves or others. AOT offers an alternative to hospitalization by providing assistance in a less restrictive community setting but under the supervision of a court.

"People with untreated behavioral health disorders may repeatedly end up in hospital emergency rooms and in the criminal justice system. Assisted outpatient treatment can help break that cycle by providing the supervised intervention needed for people who have struggled with voluntary treatment," said Fourth Judicial District Chief Judge Flora Gallegos.

### **How AOT works**

A behavioral health provider prepares a treatment plan for an individual that includes input from the AOT participant, family and friends. A court-led team, which includes the AOT program's behavioral health provider, helps individuals obtain treatment and possible other services such as housing and food assistance. The court holds the program participant and the behavioral health provider accountable to ensure the participant adheres to the treatment plan.

The Fourth Judicial District Court implemented its AOT program in late September and will officially launch it at a public event on Friday, Nov. 14, at 10 a.m. at the district courthouse in Las Vegas, 496 West National Avenue.

### **Courts as problem solvers**

“The Assisted Outpatient Treatment program illustrates how courts work collaboratively with partners in our communities to find solutions for people in need,” said Karl Reifsteck, director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Courts currently operate three other AOT programs: in the First Judicial District of Santa Fe, Los Alamos and Rio Arriba counties; the Second Judicial District in Bernalillo County; and the Third Judicial District in Doña Ana County.

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Supreme Court  
Chief Justice  
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AOC Director Karl  
Reifsteck