

Assist

Ventura County's Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program

What is Assist?

Assist is a program that provides Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), sometimes referred to as "Laura's Law." AOT is outpatient mental health services intended for adults who are suffering from serious mental illness, yet are reluctant to accept the treatment they clearly need.

First and foremost, Assist employs a client-centered approach to outreach and engagement in the hope of gaining their voluntary acceptance of mental health services, however, there is the *potential* for court-ordered treatment when circumstances warrant. It is the goal of the Assist program to promote wellness and recovery in the least restrictive environment and reduce the cycle of hospitalizations and incarcerations that commonly are associated with a reluctance to accept mental health treatment.

Who can make referrals?

Referral sources are limited to:

1. Parents
2. Spouses
3. Siblings
4. Children who is 18 years or older
5. Adults who reside with the individual
6. The director of agency/facility providing residential mental health treatment
7. The director of a hospital in which the individual is hospitalized
8. A licensed, outpatient, mental health treatment provider treating the individual
9. A peace officer, parole officer, or probation officer assigned to supervise the individual

How to make a referral?

Contact VCBH's Assist program and ask for an "Assist screening":

- Regular business hours: **(805) 981-4233**
- After hours and weekend crisis number: **(866) 998-2243**

What are the criteria?

Participants must meet the following AOT criteria:

1. 18 years of age or older
2. Suffering from a serious mental illness
3. Unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision
4. Non-compliant treatment history where at least one of the following is true:
 - A. Two psychiatric hospitalizations within the last 36 months; OR received mental health services in correctional facility
 - B. One incident of violent behavior within the last 48 months, including threats of violence against others or self due to mental health symptoms
5. Voluntary treatment and services offered and declined
6. The person's condition is substantially deteriorating
7. Participation in the AOT program would be the least restrictive environment
8. AOT treatment would prevent a relapse or deterioration as defined in W&IC 5150
9. The person will likely benefit from AOT