

Tim's Law allows families, mental health providers, law enforcement and others an avenue for helping someone with serious mental illness.

Instead of cycling through the system of state hospitals and jails, Tim's Law gets people with the worst symptoms of mental illness into outpatient treatment.

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Tim's Law

Court Ordered Outpatient Treatment for people with Serious Mental Illness



NAMI Kentucky provides education, support and advocacy for the wellbeing of all individuals affected by mental illness.

— WHAT IS TIM'S LAW?

Tim's Law* allows assisted outpatient treatment (AOT), an evidence based treatment for serious mental illness by which a court orders a patient to follow a treatment plan while living in the community instead of a residential treatment facility or psychiatric hospital.

Tim's Law provides a method for families to get help for their loved ones during the darkest times of their lives. Families and friends of people with mental illness often feel like they have no options and are not receiving enough help from doctors, the legal system, and community mental health centers. The law brings those players together, lets them communicate with each other and with families and then come up with the best overall course of treatment for a person suffering from mental illness.

— HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Tim's Law process begins with a petition** to a Kentucky District Court. The petition must make the case that an individual with serious mental illness will, without treatment:

- Present a threat of danger to him/herself or others
- Suffer severe mental, emotional or physical harm
- Have impaired judgment, reasoning, functioning or capacity to recognize reality
- Have a substantially diminished ability to make informed decisions regarding his/her need for sustained medical treatment

— **EVEN IF** the person meets those criteria, they must also have a symptom called *anosognosia*; a lack of insight into one's own illness. The person also must have been hospitalized twice in the last year.

— GETTING PEOPLE THE TREATMENT THEY NEED

After the petition and a hearing, Kentucky District Court judges can order an individual into outpatient treatment.

The treatment plan must be a collaborative effort involving (at least) the individual's attorney, mental health providers and a case manager to oversee the plan.

— **WITH** comprehensive, thought-out treatment, people with the most severe symptoms of mental illness can access outpatient mental health services instead of constantly being hospitalized.

**Tim's Law is in the Kentucky Revised Statutes at KRS §202A.081 et. seq.*

***Anyone may take out a petition under Tim's Law, but it must be truthful because the petitioner does so under threat of perjury.*