

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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April 14, 2017

Supervisor Joan Hartmann, Chair  
Supervisor Das Williams, Vice Chair  
Supervisor Janet Wolf  
Supervisor Peter Adam  
Supervisor Steve Lavagnino

Dear Chair Hartmann and County Board of Supervisors,

I write to urge the continuation of the 3-year Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) pilot program adopted by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors last year by a 4-1 vote of the Board.

While I served on the Board of Supervisors, I was a strong supporter of the AOT pilot program. Now, at the national level, I know AOT is endorsed by SAMHSA as an evidence-based program that reduces involuntary commitments and incarcerations by providing assertive outpatient treatment. AOT is a component of the recently adopted 21<sup>st</sup> Century CURES Act, passed by the U.S. Congress.

AOT allows courts to order certain individuals with the most serious mental illness, who are incapable of recognizing their illness, to comply with treatment while living in the community. AOT was initially proposed in the early 1980's by families of individuals with the most serious mental illnesses as a way to help their loved ones.

These individuals often decompensate, commit suicide; become homeless, wind up in jail; or, on rare occasions, are involved in acts of violence, solely because of their mental illness. Family members and caregivers were not allowed to intervene until 'after' the individual became a risk or danger to his/herself or others. Many felt the law should prevent dangerousness, rather than require it.

Once the family member deteriorated to the point of dangerousness, the only thing police could do was involuntarily commit the individual to inpatient hospitalization.

Families believed that committing someone to receive services on an outpatient basis was kinder, more humane and less expensive than inpatient care. In addition, it could prevent the person from deteriorating in the first place. It is a way to see that services get utilized by those who reject voluntary services and are likely to needlessly decompensate as a result.

I understand the program has had a truly promising start in Santa Barbara County. I fully endorse continuation of this pilot program, and I urge you to continue it, consistent with all rules and regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Carbajal", written in a cursive style.

Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress.