

# AOT



Voices  
Of  
Impact



Presented by:

Judge Joseph Strelitz

ACA Daniela Chisolm

Isaac Pino

# MEET YOUR PRESENTERS



## JUDGE JOSEPH STRELITZ

*Associate Judge, Probate Court No. 1*

Joseph F. Strelitz is a native of El Paso, Texas. He has served as the Associate Judge/Probate Master for the Honorable Patricia B. Chew, Judge of El Paso County Statutory Probate Court No. 1 since February of 2011. Prior to becoming Probate Master, he practiced probate law for a long, long time. He received his Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Texas at Austin in 1987, but can neither spell nor properly punctuate a sentence to save his life. He received his degree of Juris Doctor from the University of New Mexico, School of Law in 1992. Joseph has been married to Marlyn Strelitz, who has tolerated him for 27 years. They have two wonderful children Jacob (20) and Mia (18), a Bengal Cat (Berkley), and two dogs (Willow and Ollie), who have an affinity for chewing on electrical wires and eating pomegranates and roses. He enjoys hang-gliding, rock-climbing and drag-racing. Just kidding. He labors under the impression that he is very funny, so please be nice to him and laugh at his jokes.

## DANIELA CHISOLM

*Sr. Trial Team Chief, El Paso County Attorney's Office*

Assistant County Attorney, Daniela Chisolm, is a Senior Trial Attorney in the Mental Health Litigation Unit at the El Paso County Attorney's Office. Chisolm represents the State of Texas in the civil court commitment processes. Chisolm is a former defense attorney for those individuals in the court commitment process. She has a unique perspective of being on both sides of the civil commitment laws creating in depth insight to the systemic barriers for both sides in the mental health system. Chisolm trains local, statewide and national mental health stakeholders. Chisolm serves as the Vice President on the Board of Directors for NAMI El Paso. Chisolm is passionate about improving the mental health system.



# MEET YOUR PRESENTERS



## ISAAC PINO

*AOT Graduate*

Isaac Pino is a dedicated advocate for mental health and sobriety, having successfully graduated from the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Program in El Paso, Texas. His journey through the mental health system has been marked by resilience and transformation, demonstrating that it is possible to overcome significant challenges and take control of one's own well-being.

A passionate supporter of the San Francisco 49ers, Isaac channels the same energy and enthusiasm he has for his favorite football team into his mission to help others. With a steadfast commitment to maintaining his sobriety, he has emerged as a beacon of hope for those navigating the complexities of mental health treatment.

Isaac's personal experiences with the ups and downs of the mental health system have equipped him with invaluable insights and empathy. He is now focused on providing peer support, using his story to inspire and empower others. By sharing his journey, he aims to offer practical advice, encouragement, and a reminder that everyone has the potential to take charge of their mental health and achieve their own version of success and stability.



# OBJECTIVES

- AOT LEGAL WALKTHROUGH
- EL PASO AOT PROGRAM
- AOT GRADUATE TESTIMONIALS
- AOT RESOURCES

# WHAT IS AOT?

- Assisted Outpatient Treatment is a tool in the toolbox for civil courts and mental health systems to work collaboratively to help individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) caught in a cycle of repeat hospitalizations, homelessness and incarcerations.
- Individuals who benefit have a history of inconsistent engagement with treatment often due to diminished awareness of the need for treatment.

# NON-ENGAGEMENT



STIGMA



INADEQUATE  
COMMUNITY HEALTH  
SERVICES



LACK OF  
TRANSPORTATION



SIDE EFFECTS OF  
MEDICATIONS



MISTRUST OF  
DOCTORS



ANOSOGNOSIA/LACK  
OF INSIGHT INTO  
ILLNESS

# PATHS TO AOT

PETITION FOR AOT IS FILED IN CIVIL COURT:

01

UPON DISCHARGE FROM  
HOSPITALIZATION

02

DIRECTLY FROM THE COMMUNITY

03

UPON TRANSITION FROM JAIL OR PRISON



# Who's a Good Candidate

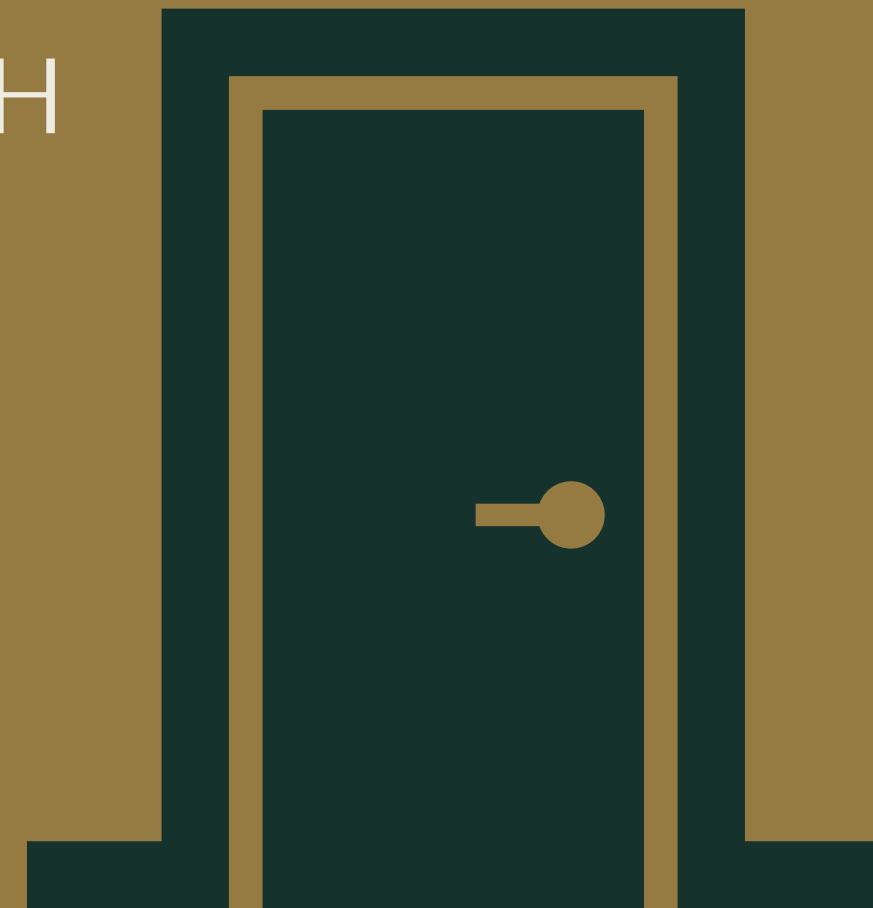
- Meets criteria under the law
- Is 18 years old or older
- Diagnosed with SMI
- Unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision
- History of lack of compliance with treatment
- Unlikely to voluntarily participate in treatment
- Treatment needed to prevent relapse or deterioration





# PARTICIPANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Has a significant intellectual deficit
- Has a primary substance use disorder
- Needed treatment is not available in the community
- Person's location is unknown
- Enjoys being hospitalized
- Pending criminal charge makes person ineligible for MH court



# Black Robe Effect

Judge respected as  
symbol of authority



Judge and treatment  
team act as motivators

Black robe effect works  
on treatment system too!



# WHAT IS AOT



IS NOT

- No contempt of court
- No forcibly administered meds
- No jail or fines

VS

IS

- Judge increases periodic check-ins
- Time in program is extended
- Pick-up order for evaluation is ordered
- If needed, rehospitalization

MH system identifies those who meet criteria

**1**

MH system takes the initiative to file petition

**2**

Safeguard due process rights at all stages

**3**

Maintain clear lines of communication

**4**

Deliver quality treatment and support services

**5**

Monitor program participants

**6**

Intervene early if non-adherent

**7**

Determine when court order no longer needed

**8**

Ensure smooth transition out of program

**9**

# AOT

IT WORKS!!!



**77%**

Fewer experienced psychiatric hospitalization



**74%**

fewer experienced homelessness



**83%**

fewer experienced arrest



**83%**

fewer experienced incarceration



**50%** cost savings in New York



**40%** cost savings in North Carolina



**40%** cost savings in Summit County, OH

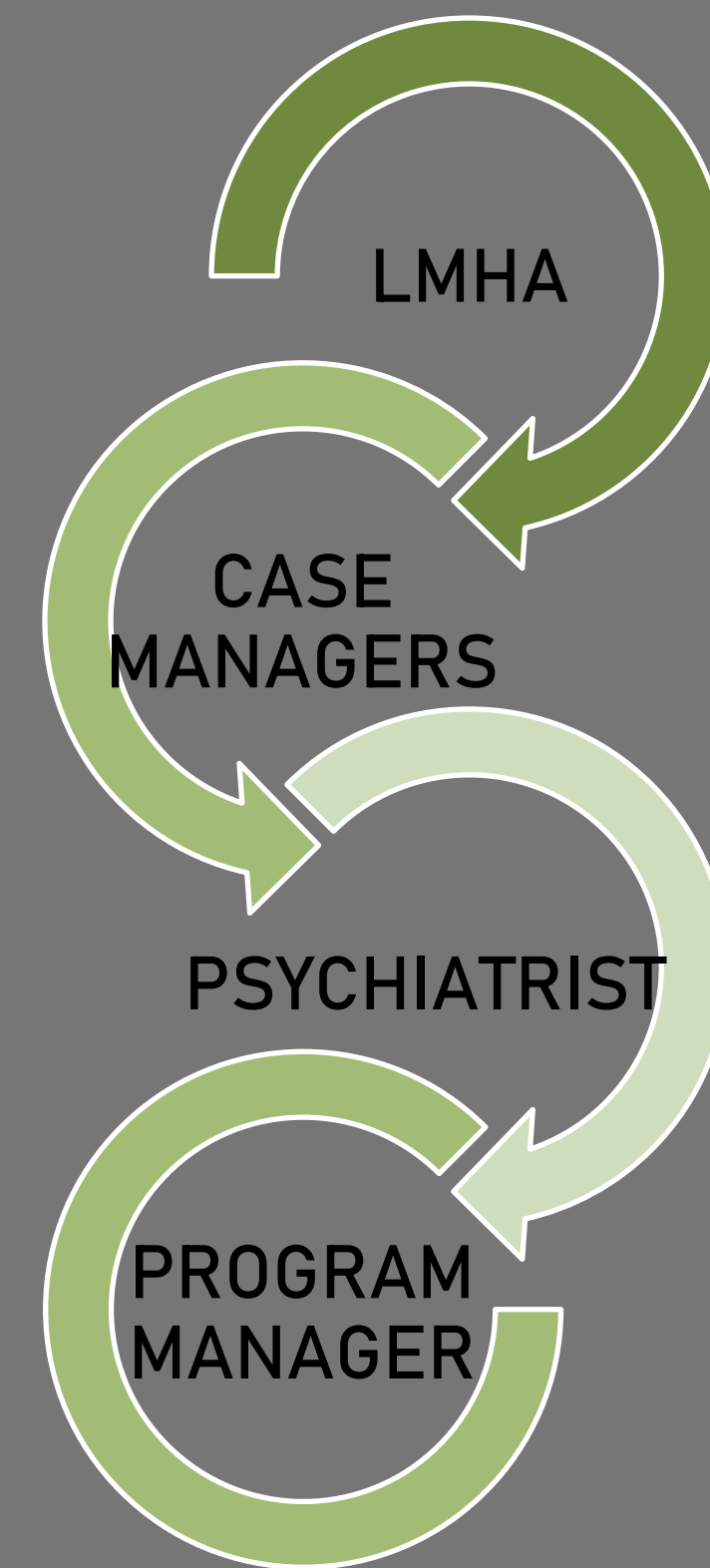
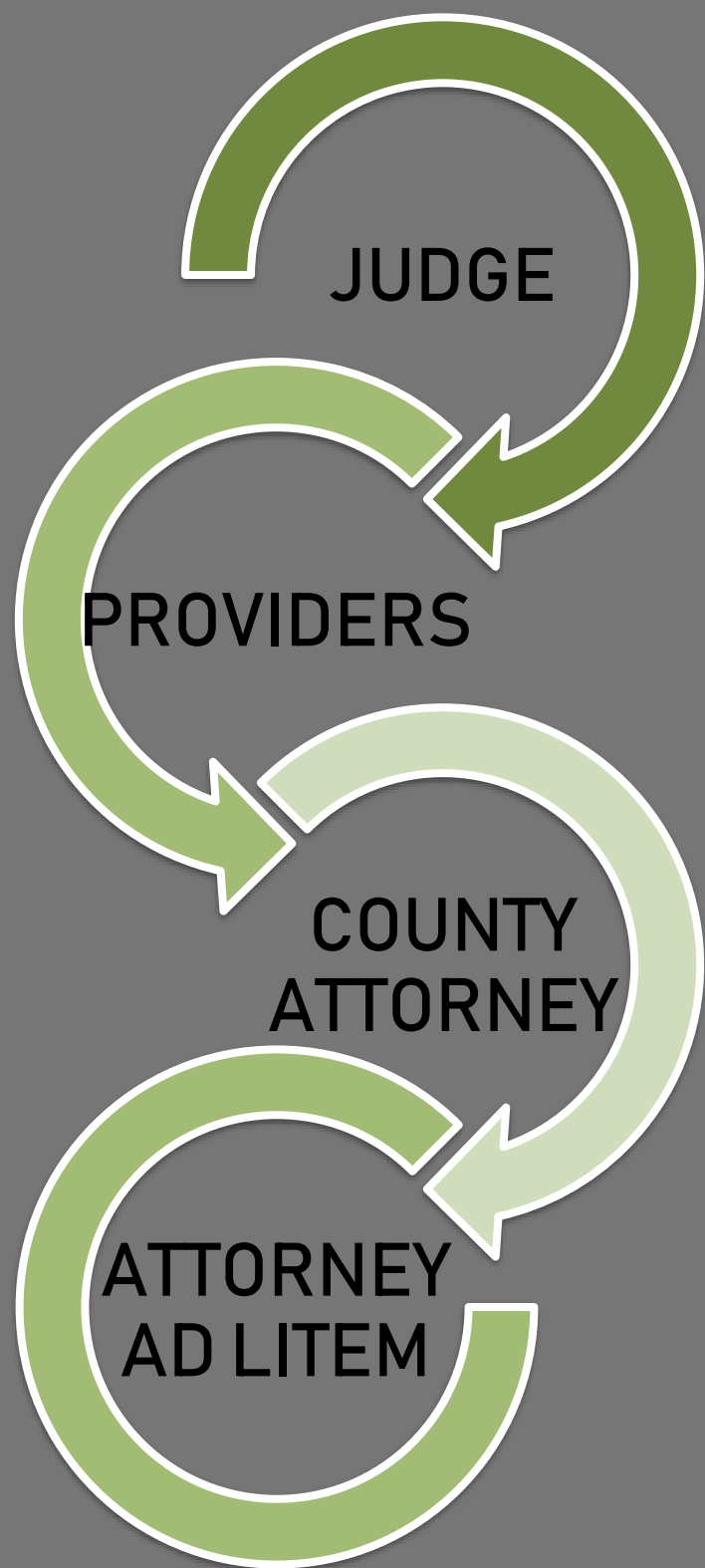


**\$1.81** saved for every dollar spent in Nevada County, CA

AOT  
PROCESS  
in  
El Paso, TX



# Meet the Team



## REFERRALS

- LMHA
- PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS
- COMMUNITY

## CRITERIA MET

- SCREENED BY LMHA

## PETITION

- MOD OUT
- NEW PETITION
- 2 CMES

# The Process

- RENEWED EVERY 90 DAYS FOR 1-2 YEARS
- PERIODIC REVIEW

## COMMITMENT

- AFTER 12-24 MONTHS
- CELEBRATION
- DIPLOMA
- SMILES!!!!

## GRADUATION





# IN THE PROGRAM



PARTICIPANTS SEE THE  
JUDGE WITHIN 1-2 WEEKS

AD LITEM PROVIDED  
CONTACT INFORMATION

FIRST ROUND  
TABLE MEETING

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

# ROUND TABLE ACTION

JUDGE WEARS A ROBE

WELCOMING PARTICIPANT TO PROGRAM

INFORMAL SETTING IN CONFERENCE ROOM

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS ADDRESSED

ENTIRE TEAM PRESENT

SUPPORT IS KEY!!



VERY SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT



# COMMITMENT PROCESS

RENEWAL OF 90-DAY INVOLUNTARY OUT-PATIENT COMMITMENT

OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPANT TO EXPRESS PREFERENCE OR CONTEST HEARING

PARTICIPANT CAN WAIVE RIGHT TO CROSS EXAMINATION

CASE PRESCREENED FOR LEGAL CRITERIA

COURTROOM ENVIRONMENT IS NON ADVERSERIAL



# G R A D U A T I O N

- COMMITMENT NATURALLY EXPIRES
- GRADUATION CEREMONY
- PARTICIPANT MOVED TO LOWER LEVEL OF CARE
- CASE MANAGER KEEPS 30 DAY POST GRAD CONTACT









# ISAAC'S STORY



# Texas Coalition Team



DANIELA CHISOLM



KRISTI TAYLOR

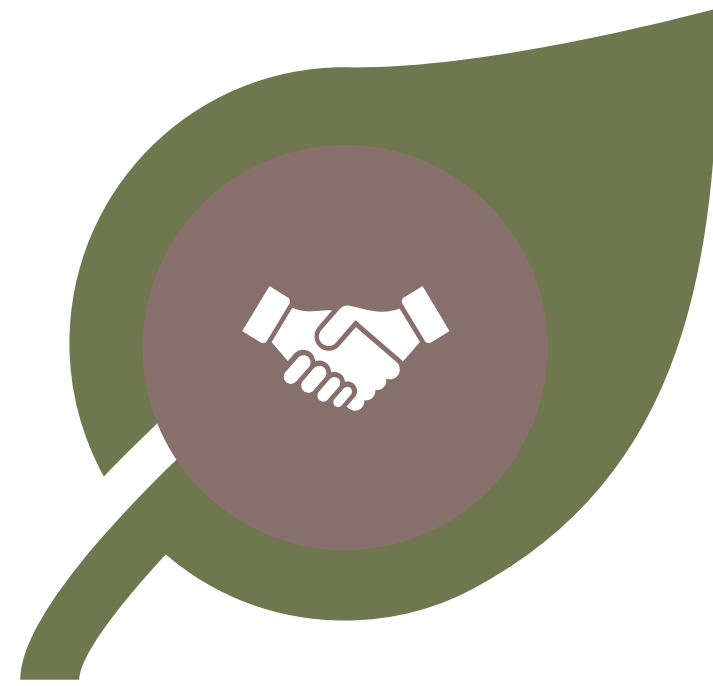




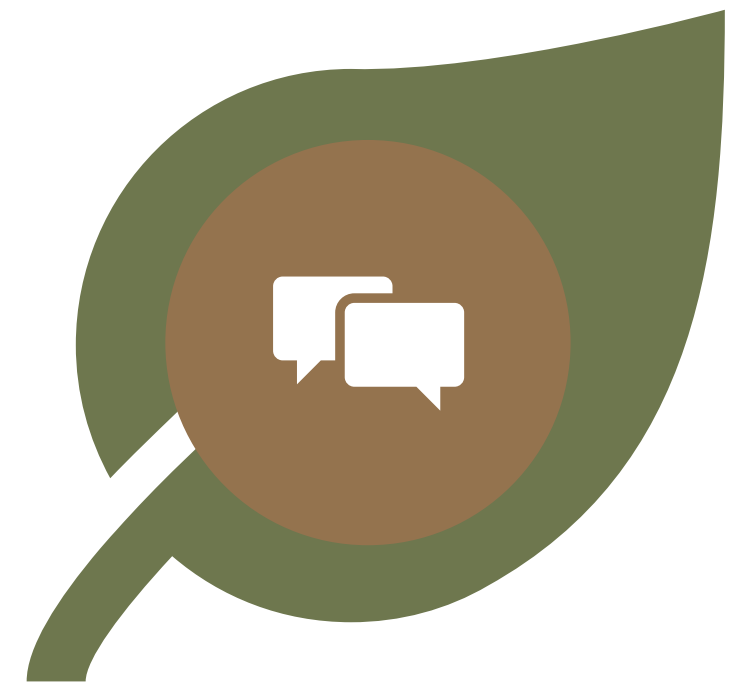
DEVELOPING  
LEGISLATIVE  
PROPOSALS



CREATING NEW  
TOOLS &  
RESOURCES



MENTORSHIP  
PROGRAM



STATEWIDE  
FORM SHARING

**TX COALITION INITIATIVES**





# PARTICIPATING TEXAS COUNTIES

- EL PASO
- TARRANT
- PARKER
- DALLAS
- HIDALGO
- BEXAR
- CAMERON
- STEPHENS
- HARRIS
- FORTBEND
- WEBB
- JOHNSON
- BURNET
- LUBBOCK
- TRAVIS
- HOOD

# AOT RESOURCES

NATIONAL AOT  
SYMPOSIUM

2025 National AOT  
Symposium &  
Learning Collaborative



MARCH  
27-28, 2025

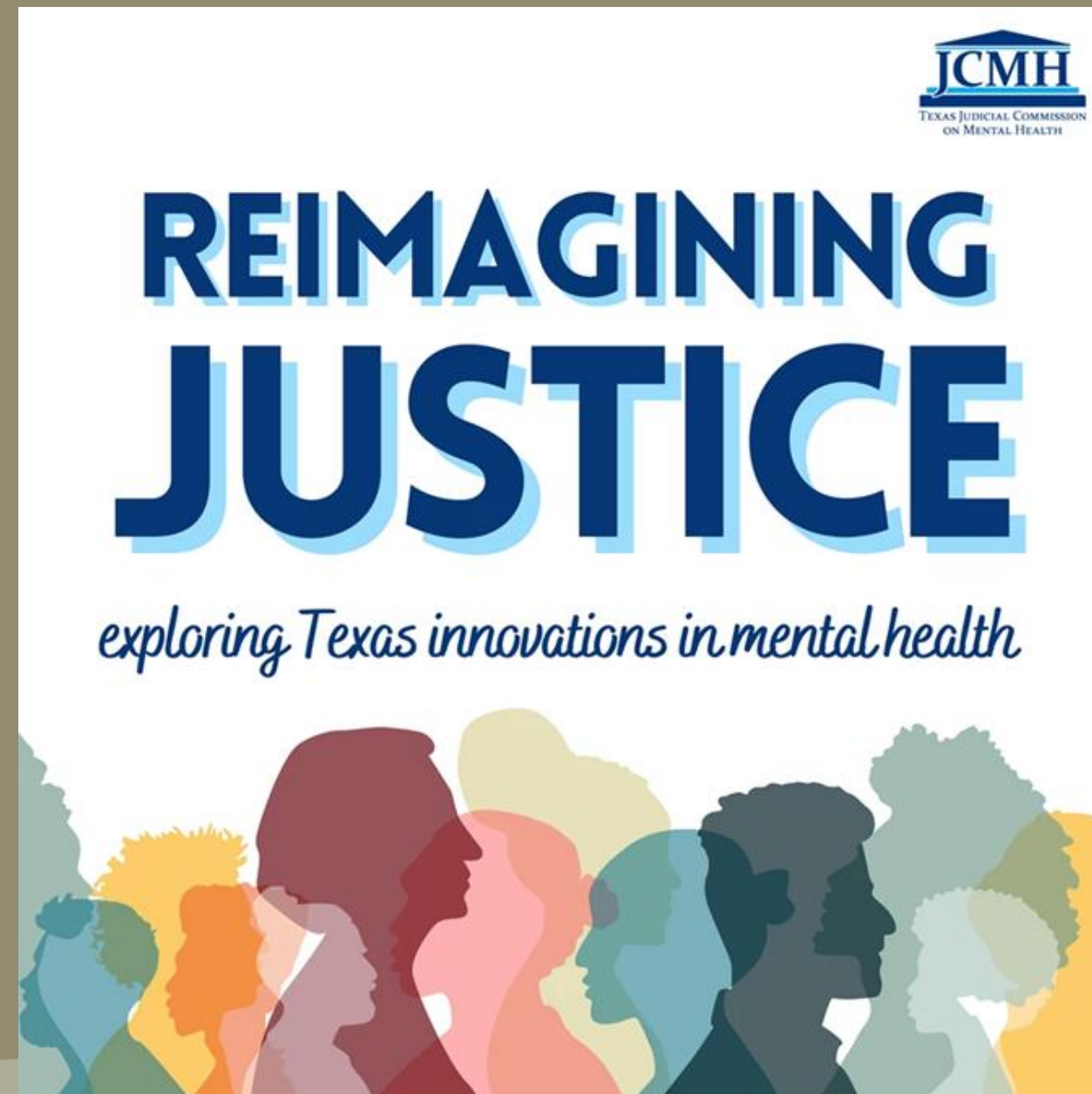
ANNAPOLIS  
MARYLAND

REIMAGINE  
JUSTICE PODCAST

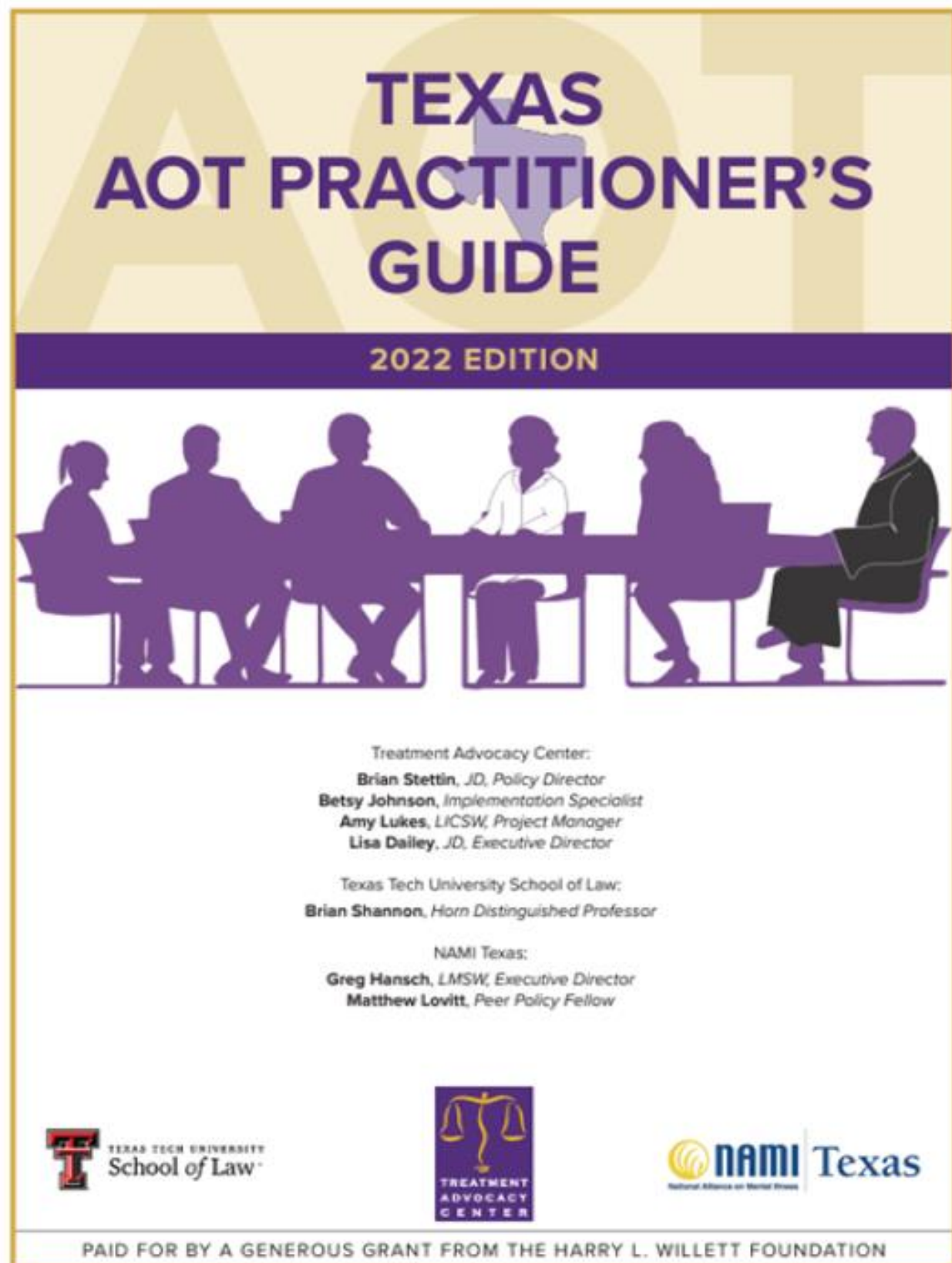
# AOT RESOURCES

NATIONAL AOT  
SYMPOSIUM

REIMAGINE  
JUSTICE PODCAST



# AOT COURTS






**TEXAS  
AOT PRACTITIONER'S  
GUIDE**

2022 EDITION

Treatment Advocacy Center:  
**Brian Stettin, JD, Policy Director**  
**Betsy Johnson, Implementation Specialist**  
**Amy Lukes, LICSW, Project Manager**  
**Lisa Dalley, JD, Executive Director**

Texas Tech University School of Law:  
**Brian Shannon, Horn Distinguished Professor**

NAMI Texas:  
**Greg Hansch, LMSW, Executive Director**  
**Matthew Lovitt, Peer Policy Fellow**

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## IMPLEMENTING ASSISTED OUTPATIENT TREATMENT: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS, BUILDING BLOCKS AND TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING RESULTS

OCTOBER 2019

Treatment Advocacy Center:

**Brian Stettin, JD, Policy Director**  
**Amy Lukes, MSSA, Project Manager**  
**John Snook, JD, Executive Director**  
**Betsy Johnson, Policy Advisor**

Northeast Ohio Medical University:

**Mark R. Munetz, MD, Margaret Clark Morgan Endowed Chair of Psychiatry**  
**Deb Hrouda, PhD, Director of Practice Implementation and Evaluation**



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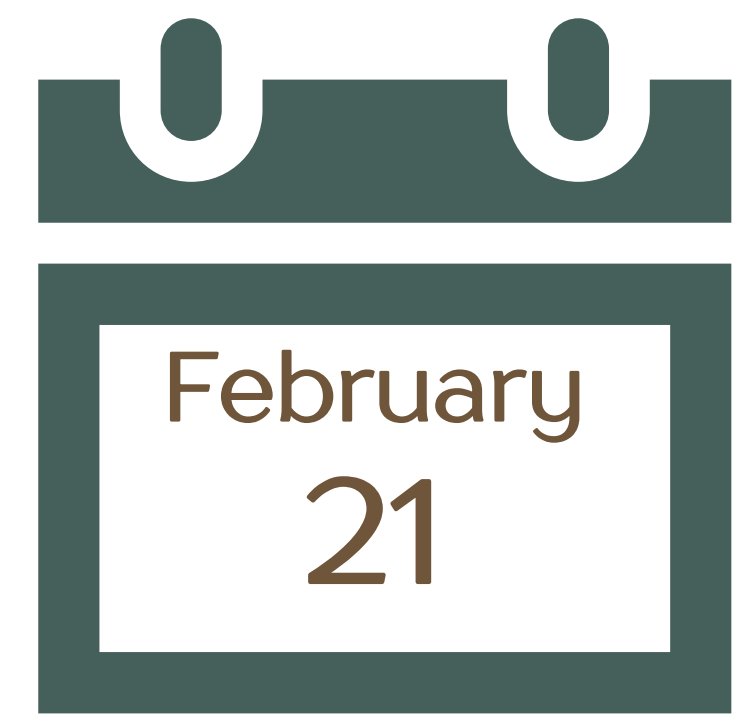
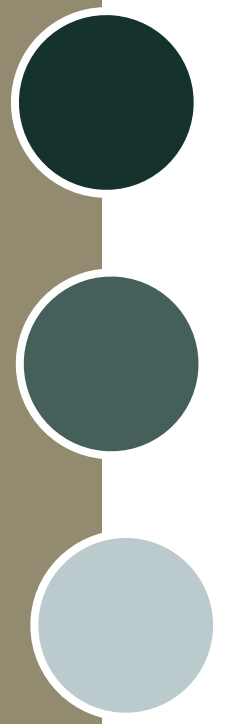
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# 2025

AOT COALITION

FRIDAYS AT  
12:00 PM (CST)



# QUESTIONS?

**JUDGE JOSEPH STRELITZ**

[jstrelitz@epcounty.com](mailto:jstrelitz@epcounty.com)

**DANIELA CHISOLM, *Sr. Trial Attorney***

[d.chisolm@epcountytexas.gov](mailto:d.chisolm@epcountytexas.gov)

**ISAAC PINO, *Graduate***

[victory20@sbcglobal.net](mailto:victory20@sbcglobal.net)



**CHRISTINA  
SANCHEZ**

El Paso County Attorney

320 S. CAMPBELL, STE. 200

EL PASO, TX 79901

Phone: 915-996-1550

Fax: 915-543-3818

