

Testimony for SB807

March 8, 2022, 1:30pm, Senate Finance Committee

From: Melissa J Mulreany, 10237 Wesleigh Dr., Columbia, MD 21046

Position: FAVORABLE

The availability of evidence based Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) could be a life changing tool for our family and friends with serious mental illness (SMI). My personal experience involved a relative who was unaware of his illness due to anosognosia, a neurological cognitive deficit caused by the mental illness, which prevents recognition of one's illness and the need for treatment. Therefore he refused voluntary treatment.

For twenty years my relative struggled to get and keep a job, but without medications and ongoing psychiatric assistance he was not able to maintain gainful employment or independent living. Had evidence based AOT been available in Maryland to provide treatment, he would not have suffered for so long and been unable to achieve his goals.

After finally getting on medication and psychiatric care, he has gained the ability to understand his illness and the benefits of treatment. He is also able to hold a job now.

Our family could have been spared over twenty years of grief and uncertainty as we struggled to protect him from his self and the ravages of an untreated serious mental illness.

Please support SB807 and its companion House Bill, to add evidence based Assisted Outpatient Treatment to the options available to mental health professionals and give individuals with untreated SMI (and their families) hope for life as a healthier and contributing member of society.