



The MassINC Polling Group
AOT Now Assisted Outpatient Treatment Survey
Survey of 500 Massachusetts Registered Voters
Field dates: July 18 - 23, 2023

State leaders in Massachusetts are considering a new law to mental health called assisted outpatient treatment. The law would let a court order people with serious mental illness to get treatment in their community. This would happen if they have a history of not following treatment, were recently hospitalized for mental illness, got mental health services while in jail, or if they are a danger to themselves or others. Based on this description, would you favor or oppose such a law? And would you strongly (favor / oppose) or just somewhat?

Strongly favor	42%
Somewhat favor	32%
Somewhat oppose	6%
Strongly oppose	8%
Don't know / refused	11%

ASK IF SUPPORT AOT

What are the main reasons you would support this assisted outpatient treatment measure? **OPEN END, RECORD VERBATIM**

Mental health important issue / everyone deserves help	34%
Safety	24%
Some won't seek help on own / need structure	12%
Supports better access to mental health / resources	13%
Personal / family experience with mental health	8%
Better than sending them to jail / institutionalized	4%
Other	4%
N/A / don't know	4%

ASK IF OPPOSE AOT

What are the main reasons you would oppose this assisted outpatient treatment measure? **OPEN END, RECORD VERBATIM**

Civil rights issue / individual choice	28%
Too much power for courts / government	22%
Safety	21%
Prefer jail / hospital	10%
Cost	4%
Other	11%
N/A / don't know	5%

ASK IF DON'T KNOW / REFUSED ON AOT

What are the main reasons you are undecided about this assisted outpatient treatment measure? **OPEN END, RECORD VERBATIM**

Need more info / do own research	62%
Questions / lack of understanding about the law	17%
Violation of rights	10%
We need better mental health services	8%
Other	5%

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

ROTATE ORDER	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / refused
Untreated serious mental illness is a serious problem in Massachusetts and should be a top priority for our state	53%	32%	7%	4%	5%
Providing court supervised mental health treatment options would help many people in Massachusetts who are homeless get off the streets	31%	40%	10%	8%	11%
Forcing mentally ill people to get treatment is a violation of their civil rights	13%	27%	32%	23%	5%
People suffering from serious mental illness should be required to receive treatment if they are likely to be a danger to themselves or others	61%	26%	5%	5%	3%

ROTATE SUPPORT BATTERY, OPPOSE BATTERIES AND FOLLOW UP BALLOTS.

SUPPORT BATTERY The following are some statements from people who favor the idea of assisted outpatient treatment. For each statement, please indicate how compelling it is as a reason to support the proposal. Please use a scale from 1 to 7, where one is not at all compelling and seven is a very compelling reason to support the measure.

ROTATE ORDER	Not at all Compelling							Very Compelling	Don't know / refused
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Forty-Seven states have an assisted outpatient law on the books, giving mental health professionals and families in those states an additional tool to help treat people suffering from serious mental illness in a community-based setting	9%	6%	4%	11%	15%	19%	32%	4%	
Many people who suffer from serious mental illness are unable to recognize that they have a disorder and need assistance. Without assisted outpatient treatment, family members cannot intervene to get necessary mental health treatment for their loved ones	8%	5%	6%	9%	17%	19%	35%	2%	
Implementing an assisted outpatient treatment law will help improve health outcomes and public safety because the court will be able to supervise severely mentally ill individuals who are a danger to themselves and others to receive mental health treatment	10%	6%	8%	9%	14%	19%	30%	4%	
The laws we currently have in place in Massachusetts are not enough. The state should do more to require seriously mentally ill people to comply with treatment	13%	5%	8%	10%	15%	15%	27%	7%	
Assisted outpatient treatment will save money for Massachusetts by reducing the need for expensive hospitalizations, incarcerations, homeless programs, and other services among severely mentally ill people	13%	7%	8%	9%	14%	17%	29%	3%	

Many of the state's homeless are seriously mentally ill people who lack insight into their illness, repeatedly stop taking medication, or refuse services. Requiring them to receive treatment will help them get off the streets and improve their quality of life

12% 5% 7% 10% 20% 14% 28% 3%

Assisted outpatient treatment helps severely mentally ill people get outpatient treatment in their community, while respecting their personal rights. It does not force people into hospitalization or to take medication

9% 5% 6% 10% 13% 20% 34% 4%

Assisted outpatient treatment promotes continuity of care, breaking the revolving door of repeat hospitalizations, incarceration, homelessness, and even tragic interactions with law enforcement

8% 3% 6% 10% 16% 20% 34% 3%

Assisted Outpatient Treatment will make the current Massachusetts mental health programs far more effective by giving them the tool to actually treat people with mental illness. Currently, lot of patients under these programs are denying treatment and are left on their own

10% 6% 5% 9% 17% 18% 31% 3%

Mental illness requires long term continued treatment to find the right treatment. It is impossible to get long term continued treatment in an inpatient facility, due to lack of inpatient beds in the state. Assisted Outpatient Treatment will provide a way to find the right treatment in the community

8% 4% 4% 10% 18% 18% 35% 3%

Given what you've now (heard / read), would you favor or oppose an assisted outpatient treatment law in Massachusetts? And would you strongly (favor / oppose) it or just somewhat?

Strongly favor	41%
Somewhat favor	36%
Somewhat oppose	8%
Strongly oppose	8%
Don't know / refused	6%

OPPOSE BATTERY The following are some statements from people who oppose the idea of assisted outpatient treatment. For each statement, please indicate how compelling it is as a reason to oppose the proposal. Please use a scale from 1 to 7, where one is not at all compelling and seven is a very compelling reason to oppose the measure.

	Not at all Compelling					Very Compelling		Don't know / refused
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
ROTATE ORDER								
This law would violate an individual's civil rights and deprives severely mentally ill people of the dignity and empowerment to choose their own path. People with serious mental illness have a constitutional right to refuse treatment	24%	12%	15%	10%	10%	10%	13%	4%
Current Massachusetts law, known as the Roger's Guardianship, is sufficient to treat people with serious mental illness	26%	12%	9%	10%	3%	3%	4%	33%
This proposed law does not go far enough to make a difference. There is no provision for forced medication in the proposal, so it won't require mentally ill individuals to take anti-psychotics even if they are prescribed	21%	13%	12%	15%	14%	7%	12%	7%
Assisted outpatient treatment court orders are not effective. They do not lead to increased patient compliance with treatment, can drive people from the mental health system, and do not lead to lower rates of hospitalizations, arrests, or acts of violence	16%	10%	14%	15%	11%	11%	13%	10%
Massachusetts' current mental health programs are already over capacity. We need to have better and additional mental health services before we can implement a law like this or it will just make an already overcrowded system even worse	13%	7%	8%	11%	13%	15%	29%	4%

Given what you've now (heard / read), would you favor or oppose an assisted outpatient treatment law in Massachusetts? And would you strongly (favor / oppose) it or just somewhat?

Strongly favor	35%
Somewhat favor	35%
Somewhat oppose	11%
Strongly oppose	11%
Don't know / refused	7%

Demographics:

Gender:

Men	47%
Women	52%
Some other way	2%

Age:

18-29	19%
30-44	23%
45-59	26%
60+	32%
Don't know / refused	<1%

Race:

White	79%
Non-white	20%
Don't know / refused	1%

Party registration:

Democrat	29%
Republican	9%
Unenrolled / Other	62%

Education:

High School or less	34%
Some college, no degree	26%
College graduate (BA/BS)	23%
Advanced degree	17%

About the poll

These results are based on a survey of 500 Massachusetts registered voters. Responses were collected via text messages, and live interviews via landline and cells phones between July 18 and 23, 2023 using conventional registration-based sampling procedures. The data were weighted to reflect known and estimated population parameters for residents with and without RTA service. The sample was weighted by race, age and gender, education, geography, and political registration for the state as a whole. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 4.4 percentage points for the entire sample, including the design effect. This poll was sponsored by AOT Now.