



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA

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News Release 2024-44

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL LAUNCHES ONLINE RESOURCE
FOR PEOPLE SUPPORTING THOSE WITH SERIOUS MENTAL-HEALTH OR
SUBSTANCE-ABUSE ISSUES**

*Webpage is Designed to Help Practitioners and Loved Ones with Assisted Community
Treatment Legal Process*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 9, 2024

HONOLULU – The Department of the Attorney General has launched a [webpage](#) for those who seek the department's help with filing assisted community treatment (ACT) petitions in family court, to provide treatment for those with serious mental illnesses or substance abuse that can render them dangerous to themselves or others.

“Assisted community treatment is a holistic legal framework intended to support individuals with severe mental health and substance abuse issues in breaking free from detrimental cyclical patterns in which they episodically become dangerous to themselves or others,” said Special Assistant to the Attorney General Dave Day. “The Department of the Attorney General looks forward to working with practitioners and the people of Hawai'i who seek to help their patients and loved ones through ACT.”

In 2013, the Hawai'i Legislature established the ACT law with the intent of providing support for someone who has a mental illness or drug addiction, who has demonstrated that without such support they will likely become unsafe in the community, and who may have difficulty participating in treatment. ACT is based in the community and is founded upon a family court-ordered treatment plan issued after a petition is filed. An ACT petition may be sought by a concerned parent, grandparent, spouse, sibling, adult child, reciprocal beneficiary, service provider, case manager, outreach worker, or mental health professional.

In 2024, the Legislature provided that the Department of the Attorney General generally shall assist with the preparation and filing of ACT petitions and with the presentation of the case at any related court proceeding, although such assistance may be declined. The department's ACT webpage includes forms and instructions that will facilitate this process, including legal definitions, forms and ways of submitting the necessary information to the department.

“Assisted community treatment is a practice of providing community-based services to support people who have had difficulty engaging with treatment for their serious mental health conditions. ACT can improve a sense of personal engagement in treatment, support recovery in the community, and help people who are caught in a revolving cycle of hospitalization, incarceration, and homelessness,” said Michael K. Champion, M.D., Senior Advisor for Mental Health and the Justice System to Governor Josh Green, M.D. “The Department of the Attorney General’s assistance with the ACT petitioning process and court proceedings is an important step in lowering barriers and improving access to needed care.”

“In Hawai‘i, there have been a number of successful ACT cases with individuals suffering from severe mental illness. Having an involved treatment team is critical to the success of each of these cases,” said Deputy Director of Behavioral Health Marian Tsuji. “The Department of Health is working to expand use of the law across the state.”

“Through an ACT order, individuals who do not realize the severity of their own illness, as well as the risk that treatment noncompliance may pose to themselves or others, are given the opportunity to be treated in the least restrictive setting by providers committed to their care,” said Deputy Attorney General Ian Tsuda, one of Hawai‘i’s leading ACT practitioners. “The Department of the Attorney General recognizes that many in Hawai‘i face challenges with such illnesses and are committed to supporting those seeking help for individuals who need this level of care.”

The webpage can be found on the Department of the Attorney General’s website at https://ag.hawaii.gov/act_petition_info/. The webpage can also be accessed from the Department’s webpage in the “Division Links” column or the “Quick Links” pull-down menu.

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