

October 24, 2018

TO THE HONORABLE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA:

Today I signed House Bill 1233 Printer's Number 4252, which establishes a framework for assisted outpatient treatment in Pennsylvania.

This legislation extends the provision of court-ordered involuntary mental health treatment to include assisted outpatient treatment. The addition of community-based outpatient health treatment as part of the involuntary treatment spectrum is a significant step forward in helping vulnerable individuals access the services that they need.

However, the General Assembly has not proposed to fund these services. As passed, assisted outpatient treatment may only be available to those Pennsylvanians that reside in counties which choose to support them using existing funds. Additionally, concerns have been raised about an individual's rights relative to the length of the look back period that can be used to seek court ordered treatment.

I hope to continue to work with the General Assembly in the future to ensure that individuals with serious mental illnesses are cared for in the least restrictive and most clinically appropriate setting. While additional legislative action needs to be taken to be able to implement a quality treatment alternative, the bill as it stands takes the first steps forward in creating a framework for a community-based infrastructure for outpatient mental health treatment and for that reason I sign this bill into law.

Sincerely,

TOM WOLF
Governor