

Zoom Cast 2020: Speaker Series Moderators



Janet Hays, human rights advocate, is the founder of Healing Minds NOLA - a nonprofit organization dedicated to exploring and creating alternatives to incarceration, homelessness and death for people with neuropsychiatric disorders. Through partnership building and collaboration, Ms. Hays leads her community on initiatives to remove legal barriers to treatment and care for serious mental illness. Current efforts include co-chairing an "Alternatives to Jail" criminal justice group, assisting parishes with implementing Louisiana's under-utilized assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) law, educational seminars, legislative and policy work.



Eric Smith is an individual diagnosed with SMI. Eric devotes his life to advocating for policies and other resources to help meet societal, family, and individual needs associated with SMI. Eric has been a featured speaker at assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) conferences in Las Vegas, the Texas State Capitol Building, and Ohio. He has also been interviewed on National Public Radio (NPR) about AOT and Kendra's Law. He helped shape portions of Treatment Advocacy Center's AOT white paper from a consumer perspective, as he was part of the team who produced this paper at Northeast Ohio Medical University. Eric met with a member of the US Congressional Mental Health Caucus in Washington, DC to champion additional support for AOT, and he continues to be engaged in related dialogue with other elected members of the US government. Eric's support for AOT and his love of advocacy can be seen in a video of him being interviewed within the official training modules for AOT as part of the American Psychiatric Association's SMI Adviser.

Eric is a habitual Honors student who graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a B.A. in Psychology, and he is currently a graduate student in pursuit of becoming a professional advocate and mental health expert. Eric's journey as it relates to AOT has been highlighted in the documentary *Stopping the Revolving Door – A Civil Approach to Treating Severe Mental Illness*. Eric's journey as it relates more broadly to SMI was written about in the book *Bedlam*, authored by Peabody Award-winning Kenneth Paul Rosenberg, MD.