These are examples of letters. I encourage you to add your personal views, feelings and/or stories.

Governor Wolf: <https://www.governor.pa.gov/contact/#OnlineForm>

The Bucks County Commissioners: Diane Marseglia: CommEllisMarseglia@buckscounty.org

Robert Harvie: CommHarvie@buckscounty.org and Gene DiGrolamo: CommDiGirolamo@buckscounty.org

Sample Letter:

Recently, treatment of [Kimberly Stringer](https://www.witf.org/2020/06/15/inmates-at-bucks-county-jail-allege-nightmare-conditions-for-suicidal-woman-with-severe-mental-illness/), who was incarcerated on April 14, 2020 after an altercation during a psychotic episode, was brought to light. There was a collective response and call to action for changing the way these individuals, like Kim, who suffer with a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) are treated in the community at large and if they are incarcerated.

I understand there is now a consensus among the Bucks County Commissioners and the President Judge Bateman that it is time to explore implementing a Mental Health Court in Bucks County.

However, Mental Health Court (MHC) can only function properly with support services in place for the mentally ill defendants it proposes to help, services like Assisted Outpatient Treatment or AOT. Without [AOT services](https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/aot/what-is-aot) in conjunction with BHC, these individuals will continue to fall through the judicial system cracks.

[Act 106](https://www.witf.org/2020/02/03/a-new-mental-health-law-passed-with-broad-support-why-arent-counties-using-it/) was passed in Pennsylvania in 2018 and voted into law in 2019. To date it remains unfunded and no counties in PA have adopted it - in fact each county to date has opted out. Bucks County also neglected to take advantage of applying for Government funding for exactly this purpose; in November 2019, the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced a grant opportunity for up to $1 million for each of 4 years to communities to implement an AOT program. ( [https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-20-006](https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-20-006%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)).

Let’s stop treating the mentally ill like criminals and start providing community based support services to prevent interactions with the police. Criminalizing mental illness worsens the health of hundreds of thousands of people and complicates their recovery by creating additional barriers to housing and employment. It burdens law enforcement and correctional systems. In the process, it costs taxpayers countless dollars. Nobody benefits, everybody pays. BHC in conjunction with AOT saves lives and money.

The Common Pleas Judges

You have to email their assistants/clerks

The Honorable Judge Bateman is the President Judge and the one I believe will ultimately have to decide about Mental Health Court

His contact information is:  rmvellner@buckscounty.org  Ms. Vellner

Honorable Judge Yeager,  jmdrabic@buckscounty.org , Ms. Drabic

Honorable Judge Bowman,  dmfaino@buckscounty.org Ms. Faino

Honorable Judge Liller, shallen@buckscounty.org Ms. Allen

Honorable Judge Finley, kebingel@buckscounty.org

Hello

I hope you can forward my email to Judge name. It pertains to his upcoming conversation with the Bucks County Commissioners and implementing Mental/Behavioral Health Court in Bucks County.

Dear Honorable Judge name,

As you begin discussions about implementing a Mental/Behavioral Health Court in Bucks County it’s important to note that Behavioral Health Court (BHC) cannot function properly without support services in place for the mentally ill defendants it proposes to help. Without [AOT services](https://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/aot/what-is-aot) in place in conjunction with BHC, these individuals will continue to fall through the judicial system cracks.

[Act 106](https://www.witf.org/2020/02/03/a-new-mental-health-law-passed-with-broad-support-why-arent-counties-using-it/) was passed in Pennsylvania in 2018 and voted into law in 2019. To date it remains unfunded and no counties in PA have adopted it - in fact each county to date has opted out.

We have to stop treating the mentally ill like criminals. Criminalizing mental illness worsens the health of hundreds of thousands of people and complicates their recovery by creating additional barriers to housing and employment. It burdens law enforcement and correctional systems. In the process, it costs taxpayers countless dollars. Nobody benefits, everybody pays. BHC in conjunction with AOT saves lives and money.