

Looking for Addiction Treatment

Recognizing the need for help for a substance use disorder (SUD) can be intimidating and overwhelming. Educating yourself about SUD and the various level of care is a good first step. Answers to frequently asked questions when considering a treatment program are below.

Common Terms

There are a variety of approaches used in the treatment of individuals with substance use disorder. Understanding these common terms will help you to navigate the SUD system of care.

Assessment: Evaluates your level of addiction and determines the best treatment options for you. Every treatment provider uses an approved assessment tool to determine your level of addiction and the best treatment option for you.

Detoxification: 3-5 days with physician and nurses monitoring you as you withdraw from drugs or alcohol. Medications may be used to alleviate uncomfortable side effects of withdrawal. This can be provided outside of a general hospital, in a residential facility.

Rehabilitation: 10-25 day treatment that consists of many types of group and individual sessions, and materials to educate the patient about the disease of addiction. Also a 1-2 day family program for loved ones about the family disease of addiction and how to support each other in the recovery process.

Residential Treatment: 60 - 180 days made up of a combination of three elements: stabilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration. The length of time in this level of care depends upon an individual's needs.

Outpatient: Weekly sessions that are a combination of Individual, group and family counseling; can include medication-assisted treatment and random drug testing to evaluate compliance with treatment. Outpatient clinics are typically open 6-7 days a week and have evening hours.

Treatment Program Structure

Once an evaluation has been completed and the type of program and services you or your loved one needs has been determined, it is important to find a program that actively works to engage you in treatment. A program should have a menu of services, qualified staff, and a flexible schedule to meet a patient's needs. Ask the following questions to determine if the program will offer all the services you need:

Q. How does the program tailor treatment to the needs of each patient?

Treatment should work towards SUD remission and/or decrease of SUD symptoms. Programs should perform initial and ongoing assessments to evaluate client-specific treatment plans and goals. Clients should be included in treatment plan development.

Q. Does the program allow a person to remain in treatment if the results of drug testing is positive? How many positive results are allowed before the person is recommended for a higher level of care?

In the event that a patient relapses, some treatment providers will increase efforts to engage clients in the program or will reach out to them in the community to re-engage the patient in treatment.

Q. Does the treatment provider provide mental health assessments and/or trauma counseling?

Because SUD is a complex chronic medical condition, effective treatment can require care that addresses physical health and mental health. An assessment can determine if an individual has a mental health disorder that could impact their recovery and that may require specialized treatment.

Q. What does the program's schedule look like?

The program should have regularly scheduled individual and group sessions as well as educational programming.

Q. Where is the program physically located? Is the program certified by the state? Is your therapist licensed?

You or your loved one should evaluate the importance of developing recovery supports within the community in which you live. The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS) certifies SUD treatment programs in the State of New York. Make sure your program carries a seal of NYS approval. Ask your therapist about their qualifications.

Q. What is the background and experience of staff?

Staff in OASAS-certified SUD treatment programs who will have substantial unsupervised contact with patients must undergo a criminal background check. In addition, each program has specific staffing requirements that are set by regulation, including delivery of care by professionalized staff.

Opioid Overdose Prevention

Naloxone is a medication that can prevent an opioid/heroin overdose from becoming fatal.

Q: Are treatment program staff trained in the use of naloxone and do they carry it?

OASAS encourages all staff at OASAS-licensed programs to become trained as overdose responders so that they have access to and can administer naloxone if a suspected opioid overdose occurs.

Q: Does the program train patients/families on the use of naloxone?

New York State has significantly increased access to naloxone and has enacted laws that protect individuals who administer naloxone to an overdosed individual. If you or a loved one suffers from opioid addiction, understanding how to use naloxone and having a naloxone kit available can be a life-saving intervention during a heroin or opioid overdose. To find an opioid overdose training program near you, visit New York State's Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs Directory at this link:

http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/resources/oo_directory/index.htm



Office of Alcoholism and
Substance Abuse Services

Measuring Treatment Success? Outcomes

Evaluation of program structure, standing, or patient response/satisfaction is an on-going process that identifies areas for treatment program improvement. However, qualitative measures are not the sole indicator of a program's success. Consider these questions when looking for a quality substance use disorder treatment program.

Q. What is your success rate?

Each provider's quality assurance process is different. Ask your provider to explain their definition of "success." Ask if the following indicators are included in evaluating client success: average patient length-of-stay, level of family engagement, client perception of growth or positive change, and/or percent of patients able to engage in meaningful activities after treatment.

Q. What is your relapse rate?

This is the amount of people who relapse while in the program or shortly after leaving a program. It is important to note that relapse rates are not the sole indicator of program quality, specifically because SUD is a chronic disease.

Insurance Coverage

New York State and Federal laws require most insurers to provide coverage for SUD services. Contact your insurer to learn what benefits you have, who can request the benefit and how to use that benefit. If coverage for the SUD services you seek are inappropriately denied, legal protections may help you obtain coverage. To learn more about how a program can assist you with obtaining coverage for SUD services, ask the following:

Q. Will the treatment provider appeal a denial of coverage?

There are internal and external appeals processes available in New York State when SUD services are denied based on need. A provider can pursue an appeal of insurance utilization review decisions on your behalf.

Q. If a patient is denied coverage at a program, does that provider offer a referral to a different level of care? Does the provider set up a first appointment at the place a patient is being referred to?

When a specific level of care has been finally determined to be not medically necessary, after appeal, a provider should assist you in finding another level of care that is appropriate to your clinical needs.

Q. Will the program use my insurance carrier's lab for drug testing, blood work?

It is important to check with the program to ask about all coverage including lab costs for toxicology screenings, other clinically necessary lab tests.

If you are in a Hospital Emergency Department, request a referral to a substance use disorder treatment program.

For additional information, go to: <http://oasas.ny.gov/publications/index.cfm?cat=12#results>

Confidentiality

Federal laws and regulations provide enhanced confidentiality protections for people who receive substance use disorder treatment. For this reason, programs and/or insurers cannot release information or respond to inquiries about a patient, without patient consent, or only when another condition exists that waives the requirements of HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2. However, families can always provide information to a program that can assist their loved one.

Asking the following questions can help you understand how and when you will be informed of your loved ones progress in treatment:

Q. Does the treatment provider ask a patient to sign a consent form to allow care providers to speak with family members, guardians or advocates?

This process will ensure families can be updated on their loved ones progress in treatment.

Q. If a patient leaves/is discharged from treatment does the patient/emergency contact receive notification?

This notice allows family members to assist the client in connecting with referral programs or services, and can involve family members in continuing efforts to engage a patient in seeking recovery.

Resources

New York State OASAS: www.oasas.ny.gov - Learn more about getting help, information and support services.

Combat Heroin Website: <http://combatheroin.ny.gov/>

OASAS Treatment /Service Providers Directory: oasas.ny.gov/accesshelp/index.cfm

New York State Department of Financial Services: <http://www.dfs.ny.gov/consumer/consindx.htm>

New York State Office of the Attorney General Healthcare Bureau: <http://www.ag.ny.gov/bureau/health-care-bureau>

For Medicaid Managed Care: NYS Department of Health / Bureau of Managed Care Certification and Surveillance Complaint Unit

1-800-206-8125 / managedcarecomplaint@health.state.ny.us

