



NAATP Guide to Treatment Program Selection

Choosing an appropriate treatment provider can be a daunting task, especially when already facing the many challenges associated with a Substance Use Disorder (SUD). The following information is intended to assist the consumer in this process as well as to inform the payer and policy-maker.

The NAATP approach to identifying appropriate addiction treatment is premised on four principles:

1. Addiction treatment is **health care** and must be chosen as such

Do not be swayed by the photography and marketing of luxury amenities rather than necessary core health care service.

2. There are **knowable Indicia of quality** in addiction treatment

Indicia include descriptions of evidence-based practices, professionally credentialed staff, and accreditation. A visit and tour of the facility will reveal much.

3. **Transparency** of treatment center information is essential

The deeper you look, the more useful information you should find including location, years of operations, outcomes data (but not "guarantees"), depth of clinical information, inquiries into consumer medical history, and in-network insurance information.

4. A treatment program should pledge compliance and accountability to a **Code of Ethics**

Has the program adopted the NAATP Code of Ethics or similar comprehensive criteria to which it holds itself accountable, including an accountability system.

Identification of Potential Treatment Centers

When seeking treatment for SUD, NAATP encourages potential patients and their families to approach it as they would other medical conditions. If available, a recommendation from a family doctor or other medical professional is ideal. Alternately, you can talk with your insurance company for in-network providers.

In the absence of these options, we encourage you to look at the following online sources:

- [NAATP's Addiction Industry Directory](#), which Exclusively lists NAATP Members, and allows you to search by many criteria including accreditation, service types and location.
- The two Major National Accrediting Organizations also offer search features for providers they accredit. These can be found on [CARF International](#), and [The Joint Commission's](#) websites.

Listed on one of these sites does not, by itself, ensure quality. We encourage you to conduct your own due diligence before choosing a provider, even if identified through a reputable resource.

WARNING: Do not rely on internet based commercial directories, generic websites, sites that offer free treatment placement by calling an 800 number (including TV ads), or websites that offer unsolicited referrals. Be wary of sites that provide “Top Ten Treatment” lists, unverifiable treatment center rankings, or present themselves as informational resources while offering to help locate treatment.

What to Look For

Look for programs that are **Members of The National Association, that are Accredited by CARF or The Joint Commission**, and are state licensed for all levels of care they provide. The state licensing authority and Accrediting body will have record of complaints filed against a facility, and violations. Many of these resources are available online.

Look for programs that seek **in depth patient medical-history to assess appropriateness of fit**. This information is critical in identifying appropriate level of care, or patient needs that would be better addressed at alternate facilities. Be wary of providers only interested in financial information, or that do not seek in-depth medical history.

Look for a center that is **“in network” with your insurance**. If not, ask what expenses you will incur.

Look for programs that use **evidence-based addiction treatment practices** ranging from Medication to 12-Step Facilitation.

Look for providers that have detailed information about **staff qualifications and service types**. While ancillary services, spa amenities, and destination locations are attractive, evidence based clinical services, and professional credentialed staff are far more important for successful outcomes.

More information is better. Look for facilities that have bios for their staff including medical and clinical personnel. They should show their **location, and provide detailed information about their assessment, treatment planning, and clinical services**. The harder you look, the better a program should look. Be wary of providers that offer generic answers you want to hear, and seek companies that provide comprehensive information.

Look for providers who offer detailed information about **patient financial responsibility, and billing practices**. While free sounds good, medical services have associated patient responsibilities through deductibles and copay. Be wary of facilities offering no out of pocket cost with insurance.

Red Flags

Be wary of generic websites, call directories, or websites offering treatment placement. Many of these make referrals based on business relationships instead of a patient’s best interest. Be wary if the person you talk with will not provide direct contact information for a facility or claims to represent a network of providers.

Be wary of providers that talk in general terms about programming, or provide big concept ideas about recovery without specific information.

If a provider offers free travel, no-out of pocket cost, help obtaining insurance, or any other substantive gift or incentive, this is a sign of potential insurance fraud, and may be an illegal inducement. Ask about licensed housing, or residences, and fees associated with housing. Some treatment providers present as being residential or in-patient treatment, while offering outpatient services with unlicensed housing. If seeking sober living, ask how fees are assessed, and how clinical and housing services coordinate care. Free housing may be an illegal inducement and can be a sign of unethical operation.

Questions To Ask Potential Treatment Center:

- Are you State licensed, and for what levels of care?
- Are you accredited? If so, by who? What services have been accredited?
- Are you a member of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers?
- How long has the facility been in operation?
- Do you have a medical director on staff? Are they certified by the American Society of addiction Medicine?
- What qualifications do your clinicians have? Are group and individual counseling sessions provided by Masters level staff? Do clinicians have specialized training in treating SUD?
- What are the facilities placement criteria?
- Can the facility treat the specific needs of the patient? Are they licensed and qualified to do so? Under what conditions will a patient be discharged or referred to alternate care?
- What is your procedure for referring to other treatment providers?
- Does the facility treat other medical and mental health conditions? Is it credentialed to do so?
- What evidence-based practices are used?
- How often are drug screens conducted? Does the facility follow ASAM guidelines for drug testing?
- Does the facility provide family counseling? How, and are there additional costs associated?
- What types of support services are provided after treatment? Does the provider have an alumni program? What types of discharge planning are used?
- Is the facility in-network with your insurance? What out of pocket costs will be assessed? How are these costs calculated?

- If seeking a recovery residence (sober living home):
- What level of oversight is provided in the home?

- What are staff qualifications?

- Are staff on site and awake 24-7?

- How do housing and clinical components interact?

- Are licensed staff available 24-7?

For more information, contact:

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