

Check a Treatment Program's Claims

A treatment program should be able to explain who will care for you, what it offers and what it costs. Use these questions when you call or compare programs, and keep the answers together.

Check the Program and the People Providing Care

What to check	What it means	How to check it
Program license	A state agency gives the program permission to provide certain services. Requirements vary by state.	Ask for the program's legal name, street address, license number and the agency that issued it. Check that location with the agency.
Accreditation	An outside organization has reviewed the program against its standards. Accreditation is separate from a state license.	If the program says it is accredited, look it up in that organization's directory. Match the location and the services you would use.
Clinician credentials	The qualifications of the person who will assess or treat you.	Ask who you will see and which professional board or organization can confirm their qualifications.

Look Up Accreditation

[Joint Commission: US accredited organizations](https://www.jointcommission.org/) (jointcommission.org)

[CARF: find a provider](https://www.carf.org/) (carf.org)

Use the program's legal name and street address when you search. If you cannot find it, ask the program and the accrediting organization for help. A missing result alone does not tell you whether the program is licensed or safe. Accreditation is one part of choosing care. You still need to ask whether the services fit your needs. Some smaller alcohol-treatment programs offer quality care without accreditation.

Get Clear Answers About the Care

If a program says...	You can ask...
"Personalized care"	Who will assess me? What will you ask about, and how will we choose and adjust my plan together?
"Medical care available"	Who provides medical care, and when are they available? What happens after hours? What would I need to see another provider for?
"Evidence-based treatment"	Which treatments do you offer for my concerns? How will we decide what to try and check whether it is helping?
"We accept your insurance"	Which facility, clinicians and services will send bills? Can I have an estimate that lists each charge? I will also check coverage with my insurance plan.
"Medication support"	Can you provide or arrange the medication care I need? Who prescribes it? Will I get a separate bill for that service?

If You Cannot Get Clear Answers

If a program will not explain its care, qualifications or costs, ask another provider or a clinician you trust to help you compare options. For alcohol treatment, NIAAA warns against programs that shame or punish people or reject all medication for alcohol use disorder. Ask specifically about the treatment you need.

An Example: Checking an Accreditation Badge

Imagine a program's website has an accreditation badge. The directory lists the company, but the address is different from the place you would attend. Your note could say: "Company listed. Need to check this location." Ask the accrediting organization which locations and services are covered.

Keep Your Answers Together

Keep your notes private. Write short notes, then save the PDF and reopen it to check your answers. Use another copy or separate paper if you need more room.

Program and location

Legal name, website, street address and phone number.

What you checked and what you found

Include the date, license or accreditation number, and agency or directory you used. Note anything that did not match.

What you still need to ask

Write your question, who to contact and when you will follow up.

Find and Compare Treatment

[Compare treatment programs](#) (addictionhelp.com)

[Get help finding treatment](#) (addictionhelp.com)

Sources

[SAMHSA: Finding Quality Treatment](#) (samhsa.gov)

[NIAAA: 10 Questions for Alcohol Treatment Programs](#) (alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov)

[Joint Commission: Find Accredited Organizations](#) (jointcommission.org)

[CARF: Find a Provider](#) (carf.org)