



Referral Considerations for Substance Use Disorder Treatment



Introduction | This resource includes information to consider when a person needs more intensive opioid use disorder treatment than can be offered in an office setting.

When to Refer Individuals to an Intensive Substance Use Treatment Program

People in the following situations would benefit from more intensive substance use treatment:

- There is significant psychosocial instability, such as lack of housing and lack of social supports.
- The person needs more frequent contact and support.
- The person is interested in more intensive treatment programming and is willing to participate.

Levels of Services

Substance use disorder treatment services are organized into four broad levels, with varying intensity of care provided at each level. A treatment program may offer more than one level of care:

1. Outpatient services
2. Intensive outpatient/partial hospitalization services
3. Residential inpatient services
4. Medically managed intensive inpatient services

Treatment programs will conduct an in-depth assessment to determine what level of care a person qualifies for.

- To determine the level of care, the program staff follow the [American Society of Addiction Medicine \(ASAM\) Criteria](#)[®].
- For more information about the levels of care, go to this American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) resource: [What are the ASAM Levels of Care?](#)

Treatment Considerations When Recommending a Substance Treatment Program

- Research has consistently shown that medications to treat opioid use disorder improve outcomes.¹
 - Look for programs that offer buprenorphine, methadone, and/or injectable naltrexone.
- Treatment services that offer access to behavioral health providers may be beneficial. People with disability and those with substance use disorder often have co-occurring depression and anxiety.^{2,3}
- Patients with co-occurring mental health conditions may benefit from referral to “dual diagnosis” treatment programs. These programs specialize in treating both mental health conditions and substance use disorders.

Important Consideration

- Two-thirds of addiction treatment programs don't offer methadone or buprenorphine.⁴

Finding an Intensive Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program

How to find Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Support

- Government and not-for-profit groups sponsor online search tools to help people identify local addiction treatment providers and services.
 - [Buprenorphine Provider Locator](#): A federally sponsored locator that identifies providers who are waived to prescribe buprenorphine by location
 - [Addiction Treatment Services Locator](#): A federally sponsored locator that identifies certified and intensive addiction treatment programs by location
 - [Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](#): Links to state and county health department websites that may list addiction treatment providers
 - [Help.Org](#): Find Rehab in Your State: A listing of substance treatment programs and facilities by state with quality ratings, cost of care, and other key metrics
 - [Scholarships for Drug and Alcohol Rehab](#): Information on how people in need can get financial assistance to cover the costs of addiction treatment



For more information visit: Partnering for Better Chronic Pain Management and Safer Opioid Use: A Knowledge Hub for People With Disability and Their Providers | [KnowledgeHub.air.org](https://www.knowledgehub.air.org)

Endnotes

- 1 National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2016, November). Effective treatments for opioid addiction [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/effective-treatments-opioid-addiction>
- 2 Cree, R. A., Okoro, C. A., Zack, M. M., & Carbone, E. (2020). Frequent mental distress among adults, by disability status, disability type and selected characteristics—United States, 2018. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(36), 1238–1243. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7499832/>
- 3 Conner, K. R., Pinquart, M., & Gamble, S. A. (2009). Meta-analysis of depression and substance use among individuals with alcohol use disorders. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 37(2), 127–137. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4864601/>
- 4 Mojtabai, R., Mauro, C., Wall, M. M., Barry, C. L., & Olfson, M. (2019). Medication treatment for opioid use disorders in substance use treatment facilities. *Health Affairs*, 38(1), 14–23.

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