

# Information Brief

## Focus on Families

### What Questions Quality Alcohol or Other Drug Treatment Programs Should Be Able to Answer

- What is the program's recovery rate? About 67% is the average rate of recovery; claims of 80% or more should be questioned.
- Is their program policy one of total abstinence? There is no such thing as responsible drinking or using.
- What is the ratio of counselors to clients? Ideally, it should be no more than 1-10.
- How many counselors are ex-addicts or program graduates? Although former abusers relate well with adolescents, about half of the counselors should be onetime users and the rest should be state licensed or certified.
- What are the credentials of the staff? An M.D. and a Ph.D. should be available at all times for consultation. Other staff members should include master's degrees in mental health, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors.
- How long is the program? Outpatient care is typically four to six months; inpatient, four to six weeks; and therapeutic communities, six to twenty-four months. Treatment centers that claim a miracle cure should be suspect.
- Is there an aftercare part of the program, conducted either on the premises or through a self-help group such as AA's Twelve Steps? A six-month minimum of aftercare is an essential component of a treatment program.
- Is the program state licensed or approved? Are the in-house academic programs state licensed?
- How many years has the alcohol or drug treatment facility been operating? Ask to see their yearly financial report. If the institution is financially unstable, the possibility exists of its shutting down while your child is in midtreatment - a devastating disruption to treatment and progress.
- Is family therapy part of the program? This is a vital aspect of the recovery process.
- What is the total cost? Total expenses include detoxification, counseling, and aftercare.