

Substance Abuse Certification

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. What types of programs need certification?

All alcohol and drug treatment programs and prevention programs require certification by the State. However there are some organizations and programs that are exempt from certification due to having solely a meeting and support design rather than approved treatment or therapeutic composites (i.e. Narcotics Anonymous, Alcohol Anonymous, Transitional Housing and Employee assistance Programs). Also, there are some treatment programs and prevention programs located in hospitals that can apply for exemption from certification by written request because they are accredited according to the Behavioral Health Standards by the Joint Commission.

2. Is the exemption applied for ongoing in hospital systems or does it have to be renewed?

Each approved certification exemption is time limited, as approved by the Administration in writing. Usually, the exemption is for the length of time approved on the hospitals current Joint Commission behavioral health standards accreditation certificate.

3. What must be submitted to OHCQ to evaluate the Hospital's request for certification exemption?

- An application approved by the Administration.
- A copy of the hospitals current Joint Commission accreditation certificate.
- The program service plan as detailed in COMAR 10.47.01.03D.(2) – description of the programs scope, target population, description of medical staff, staff positions with job descriptions, organizational chart, list of services, types of counseling sessions, names of clinical supervisors and counselors, referral services, planning protocol for patient transfer or discharge, family services plan, etc...
- A copy of the current Joint Commission accreditation report.
- A current fire inspection certification.

4. I'm interested in helping people in recovery by providing housing options but I'm not an Alcohol and Drug Counselor. Can I still provide housing assistance to others and not pursue a substance abuse program certification?

The Administration does not certify transitional housing programs or other similar organizations that hold meetings or provide support service to help individuals who show the effects of alcohol and drug abuse. There are specific zoning requirements in each State locality. Contact your local Zoning office for the zoning requirements in your community.

5. My program certification expires soon. What do I have to do to apply for recertification?

Comply with local, federal, State laws and local sanitation, building, fire codes, and zoning requirements. Make certain that you have a current State fire inspection.

A renewal is submitted, only, if you are requesting a recertification of the same program levels of treatment last certified. Complete the current application approved by the Administration and indicate in the "type of certification" section that you wish a renewal of your current certification. Mail the completed application to the Office of Health Care Quality.

In accordance with the provisions of State Government Article 10-226(b) a sufficient application for renewal of the license must be made at least two calendar weeks prior to the expiration of the license if that license is to remain in effect while the unit makes a final decision on its status. Your approval will then remain in effect until such time as a renewal decision is made.

As currently required by COMAR 10.47 (Revised August 2008):

"This application may be used for combinations of certification requests, e.g. a renewal application may also include a change in program location or an addition or deletion of service level. Please check all that apply. However, a separate application must be completed for each physical site".

6. Where do I find the Administrations approved application?

Currently, you can locate the **Substance Abuse Program Application** on the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) or Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA) websites at www.dhmh.state.md.us/ohcq or at www.maryland-adaa.org

7. I'm interested in becoming an Alcohol and Drug Counselor. Where do I find more information?

Although the Office and Health Care Quality will review the credentials and appropriate privileges of staff at substance abuse programs, it does not evaluate issue or verify Alcohol and Drug Counselor approvals. Please contact the State Board of Professional Counselors & Therapists for further information. Explore their website at www.dhmv.state.md.us/bopc for more information.

8. How do I know if a program that is advertising alcohol and drug treatment is approved by the Administration?

When certified, the substance abuse program receives a Certificate of Approval from the Administration. The program is required to post the State Certificate at a conspicuous location within the program for public awareness and information. Request to see the program certificate.

Explore the **Resource Directory** located on the Administrations website. www.maryland-adaa.org The directory is user friendly and search capable. Various information is provided about the Administration's approved substance abuse certified programs.

You may call ADAA or OHCQ should you need further assistance.

9. How do I file a complaint?

To make a complaint about a health care facility or community-based treatment program contact OHCQ Substance Abuse Unit at 877-402-8218 or log on to the OHCQ website at http://www.dhmv.state.md.us/ohcq/regulated_programs/substance_abuse.htm to complete a complaint form.

If your complaint pertains to services provided through OMT – Opioid Maintenance Therapy or OMT.D – Opioid Maintenance Therapy Detoxification (OTP) you may also contact the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA), State Opioid Treatment Authority (S.O.T.A.), Susan Swanton at 410-402-8600.

10. How can I obtain technical assistance?

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA) provides technical assistance to programs that receive any type of public funding through regional technical assistance teams. Contact information for these teams can be found at http://www.maryland-adaa.org/content_documents/MgmtServs/Regionalteams.pdf

11. How do I obtain information about certification and licensing for substance abuse professionals?

Certification and licensing is done by the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists. The Board's Web site is located at: <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/bopc/>

Contact information for the Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists is:
4201 Patterson Ave.
Baltimore, MD. 21215
(410) 764-4732
(410) 358-1610 Fax

12. I am in need of alcohol and/or drug abuse treatment services for myself or my family. How do I find a program?

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration maintains a resource directory with the name, address, phone number and services offered for all DHMH certified programs operating in Maryland. These programs are listed by county on this website ([Resource Directory](#)) or for more specific information you can call the Community Services Division at 410-402-8600.

13. Is treatment available for pregnant women and women with children?

Since 1990, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration has required publicly funded programs to give pregnant women priority for admission to treatment. For treatment options for women see ADAA's [Resource Directory](#) listing and search under "populations" for services for women and/or services for women and children. If you have a specific need for this population that is not addressed in the Resource Directory contact ADAA at 410-402-8600 and request assistance from your regional Technical Services Manager.

14. Where can I get information about specialized addiction training and/or seminars and courses for on going CEU's?

ADAA's Office of Education and Training for Addiction Services (OETAS) offers both. [Click here](#) to learn about upcoming trainings and other OETAS events, or contact OETAS at 410-402-8585 to discuss how to meet your specialized training needs.

15. I am looking for information about alcohol and drug abuse for a paper I am writing for school. Can you tell me where I can find the most recent resources, pamphlets or brochures on the topic?

[Treatment and Prevention Coordinators](#) in your local jurisdiction maintain addiction, prevention and treatment literature resources. The ADAA Web site has a [publications page](#) that has a variety of agency reports, research, newsletters, and other relevant information.

You might also try:

[Office of National Drug Control Policy \(ONDCP\)](#) ONDCP provides information, resources, and links to many public policy and academic research centers concerned with alcohol and drug abuse.

[National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information \(NCADI\)](#) NACADI provides publications, resources, referrals, research and statistics, searchable databases, serves as a gateway to the Centers for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) and Prevention (CSAP), and many other governmental agencies concerned with substance abuse. Publications may be ordered directly from NCADI through their online catalog.

16. I am currently providing substance abuse counseling and would like to become a DHMH Certified Program. How do I go about this process?

The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA) welcomes and encourages the establishment of professional alcohol and drug abuse treatment services and facilities in the State of Maryland. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) conducts all licensing and certification activities through the [Office of Health Care Quality](#) (OHCQ) located at Bland Bryant Building, Spring Grove Hospital Center, 55 Wade Avenue, Catonsville, Maryland 21228, (410) 402-8050.

Separate license and certification is required for each level of care in the alcohol and drug abuse treatment continuum, and each location in which the treatment is to be provided. When requesting certification information of the OHCQ, please state the level of care you plan to have certified. The OHCQ will mail the complete package to you. It provides all of the information required to become a licensed and certified alcohol and drug abuse treatment provider in the State of Maryland in accordance with Health-General Article § 8-404, Annotated Code of Maryland. In the case of programs treating heroin and other narcotic addictions using pharmacotherapy, additional licensing is required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the State Office of Drug Control. The agency's requirements are included in the OHCQ information.

Alcohol and drug abuse treatment services shall only be provided by the following:

Substance abuse treatment programs that are certified by the Department in accordance with Health-General Article § 8-404, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Practitioners appropriately licensed, certified, or otherwise legally authorized under Health Occupations Article, Annotated Code of Maryland:

For whom substance abuse treatment services fall within the practitioner's scope of practice, and
who do not advertise their practice as an alcohol and drug abuse treatment program;

And Entities exempted from certification requirements in accordance with Health-General Article, §8-403(d), Annotated Code of Maryland.

17. I want to be prescribed Suboxone to detox off of heroin.... (or oxycontin, or other opiates). How do I find a doctor who can prescribe Suboxone (which contains the medication called buprenorphine)? What if I don't have any insurance?

1. You can find a doctor at the Buprenorphine Physician Locator on the ADAA website at <http://www.maryland-adaa.org/drsearch/>.
2. If you do not have insurance, contact the [Addiction Coordinator](#) for your county between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM to learn about treatment options available to you. Please note that Baltimore City has a separate program called BSAS ([Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc.](#)), the telephone number is (410) 637-1917. If you have a medical emergency related to substance detox or withdrawal, contact your nearest hospital emergency room for assistance.

18. What should I do with my unused prescriptions in the medicine cabinet, especially ones that can be addictive?

A: The ADAA, the DEA and your local drug and alcohol agencies are very concerned about the diversion of pain medications and other potentially addictive medications that may be in your medicine cabinet. We are seeing an increase of young people who are abusing these pain medications, such as Oxycontin and Vicodin, and obtaining them from family medicine cabinets or purchasing them illegally on the street. You should know that there is a Prescription Drug Monitoring Advisory Council that will be coming up with recommendations to the Governor about the problem of prescription abuse. At this time, however, there are no state laws or regulations about how a citizen should get rid of unwanted medications. Here's what you can do, in the meantime:

1. Ask your local pharmacy if they will take it off your hands.
2. If the pharmacy cannot dispose it for you, here are the recommendations from the Office of National Drug Control Policy on "The Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs." We have also provided the document for your downloading.

Take unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs out of their original containers and throw them in the trash.

Mixing prescription drugs with an undesirable substance, such as used coffee grounds or kitty litter, and putting them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags; will further ensure the drugs are not diverted.

Flush prescription drugs down the toilet **only** if the label or accompanying patient information specifically instructs doing so.

The FDA advises that the following drugs be flushed down the toilet instead of thrown in the trash:

Actiq (fentanyl citrate)
Daytrana Transdermal Patch (methylphenidate)
Duragesic Transdermal System (fentanyl)
OxyContin Tablets (oxycodone)
Avinza Capsules (morphine sulfate)
Baraclude Tablets (entecavir)
Reyataz Capsules (atazanavir sulfate)
Tequin Tablets (gatifloxacin)
Zerit for Oral Solution (stavudine)
Meperidine HCl Tablets
Percocet (Oxycodone and Acetaminophen)
Xyrem (Sodium Oxybate)
Fentora (fentanyl buccal tablet)

19. I've just mailed an application to OHCQ requesting certification as a new program. How long will it take for OHCQ to review and evaluate my application?

At the OHCQ Substance Abuse Unit we strive to review each application for initial certification (new program or new service level) within 90 days. However many factors (*i.e.* , *volume of applications received, staff work schedule, specific office priorities & surveyor assignment responsibilities, the chronological order of other program applications received, immediate assignments, etc..*) impact our ability to adhere to this time frame consistently. The Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) is always available to address your substance abuse program application & certification questions. To make an inquiry, please, contact OHCQ.