

## Recovery is...

Recovery from substance use disorders is a highly individualized process that requires abstinence from all mood altering substances, except those that are appropriately prescribed and taken. This process also includes the pursuit of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical well-being.

## A Recovery House is...

- A safe place where someone in recovery can live
- A place where residents live together as a community
- A home or an apartment for which expenses may be shared by other recovering housemates; residents pay their own rent and cover their own expenses, except in those instances where financial assistance is available (contact the local Drug & Alcohol Office for details or discuss with the house manager)
- A supportive environment where an individual can continue their recovery efforts and build life skills
- A good transition for those who have begun their process of recovery, but are not ready to live on their own

## A Recovery House is NOT...

- A form of treatment; a Recovery House does not provide detox, inpatient or outpatient drug and alcohol counseling
- Usually funded through medical insurance or treatment dollars
- Licensed by the State

***Because Recovery Houses are not licensed by the state of Pennsylvania, there are no standards by which such a residence MUST operate.***

Therefore, there are many types of houses available. How an individual chooses a house that is right for him or her may depend on what that particular individual needs. Houses range from those that are more highly structured to those that are less structured. Some houses have staff to supervise residents and there are those houses where residents self-govern. When deciding what recovery house to choose, an individual must be aware of where he or she is in his or her recovery and how much support will be needed. It is also important to determine the quality of the house to assure that it will serve the individual's best interests and promote recovery.

## The Following are Guidelines/ Questions to Consider When Choosing a Recovery House...

- Is the house clean and in good repair? Are there smoke detectors and fire extinguishers present? Is the neighborhood one in which you feel comfortable?
- Are there any local ordinance violations on record with the local planning/ municipal office?
- Are there safeguards and rules that ensure the safety and protection of residents? Are these reviewed at the time the lease is signed and are they posted in a common place?

- Does the residence have a house manager/staff or do the residents govern themselves? What is the level of supervision?
- Is there a separate rental agreement for each person living in the house and is it signed by the landlord/owner and the resident?
- Does the rental agreement clearly show the amount of any deposit, the amount of rent, the rent payment schedule, and the refund policies?
- Are there any sliding scale fees or financial assistance available?
- What is included in the rent? Food/ household expenses/utilities/use of washer & dryer? Is the house furnished?
- Who is responsible for repairs and maintenance of the house?
- Are residents required to be clean and sober? Is there a zero tolerance policy for the use of alcohol or abused drugs? Is there drug testing?
- Is regular attendance at NA, AA or other support group meetings required?
- Are referrals made to support services such as counseling, mental health or GED services? Are these services easily accessible?
- Are there restrictions on prescribed medications?
- Is this a single sex or a co-ed facility?

- Are children permitted to live in the house with their parent?
- What are the visitation policies? Is there a blackout period?
- Is there adequate access to public transportation? Are personal vehicles permitted on the premises?
- Does the house have a good reputation with referring drug and alcohol counselors or prior house residents? Are current or prior residents willing to talk about their experiences living in the house?

***Although there are a variety of recovery houses that offer a spectrum of supports and services, potential residents must be aware of the following issues...***

- Individuals are responsible for determining the quality and reputation of the house in which they are seeking residence
- Few rules and little supervision may be an indicator of a house to avoid
- Be sure to ask the questions mentioned under the guidelines. Choose the Recovery House that is best suited to your needs.

listed in the [blue pages](#) of your local telephone directory

Or

**The Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs**  
(717) 783-8200

[www.health.state.pa.us/bdap](http://www.health.state.pa.us/bdap)



## CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO PENNSYLVANIA RECOVERY HOUSES



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

2007

**Governor Edward G. Rendell**  
**Calvin B. Johnson, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Secretary of Health



For additional information, call your County Drug and Alcohol Office