

Picking a Sober Home What to Ask

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How sober homes answer these questions could determine if they are right for you or a loved one.

1. Are you certified by the Florida Association of Recovery Residences? FARR certifies sober homes that meet 38 standards for recovery, housing, administration, training, finance and good-neighbor practices. Certified homes can be found at farronline.org

NATIONWIDE LICENSED SOBER LIVING - go to www.narronline.org

2. Is the residence coed? Experts agree that newly recovered addicts, especially women, are vulnerable. Dating and relationships in early sobriety can take the focus off recovery.

3. What will happen if I relapse? FARR recommends that sober homes devise individual relapse protocols that include contacts and alternative housing arrangements.

4. Have there been any overdoses or deaths? Is staff trained in CPR?

5. How often do you drug test? Are tests random? What kind of tests? How much do they cost?

6. Do you bill insurance? Sober homes are not licensed to offer medical care and cannot bill insurance for services, including rent.

7. How much is rent? How is it paid? What is included in rent? What is the refund policy? Are there rules about pocket change and money transfers? Experts warn insured residents to be leery of free rent, gift cards, cellphones, gym

memberships and other inducements if linked to attendance at an intensive outpatient program (IOP) or the provision of urine samples.

8. Do you have an ownership interest or receive referral fees from an intensive outpatient program (IOP) or lab?

9. Have there been any complaints filed against the sober home or its employees, including code violations?

10. How much training, education and clean time do you require of employees, including house managers?

11. Are properties and vehicles that transport clients insured? Are clients allowed to drive vehicles?

12. Are there 12-step meetings on property? Do you provide transportation to meetings? The grocery store? Is there public transportation within walking distance?

13. What are your policies regarding guests and furloughs?

14. What is your cellphone policy?

15. What is the maximum occupancy? How many to a room? How many bathrooms?