
Paying for alcohol and drug treatments services

Summary

- In Victoria, the state government funds non-government organisations to deliver alcohol and drug treatment services for free or at a reduced cost to eligible Medicare card holders.
 - Private alcohol and drug treatment services can be accessed directly, but this usually means you will have to pay for the services in full.
 - Check with the provider about their costs before signing up to a program.
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In Australia alcohol and drug treatment services are provided by a mix of government, non-government and private sector providers. In Victoria the government does not directly provide alcohol and drug treatment services but funds non-government organisations to deliver these services for free or at a reduced costs to eligible Medicare card holders.

Government-funded services

The range of alcohol and drug treatment services funded by the Victorian Government are delivered via seven treatment functions:

- **intake and assessment** – where the person is assessed to work out their treatment needs
- **care and recovery coordination** – for people who need help with more than just a substance-abuse problem, such as homelessness or domestic violence
- **counselling** – where ‘talk therapies’ are used to help the person
- **withdrawal** (non-residential and residential) – where the person is supported to stop taking drugs abruptly
- **residential rehabilitation** – where the person stays at a facility away from home while they recover from their alcohol or drug problem
- **therapeutic day rehabilitation** – where a person attends over a period of weeks, a structured day program providing counselling and a range of other supports designed to build life skills and promote general wellbeing, such as financial management and nutrition
- **pharmacotherapy** – where medication is use to help the person stop their illicit drug use. If you need help with an alcohol or drug problem you will first be assessed through the intake and assessment process. From there, you will be directed to the most appropriate service.

Costs for government-funded services

Non-live-in (‘non-residential’) services funded by the Department of Health and Human Services do not generally charge a fee for Victorians.

Residential (live-in) withdrawal, residential rehabilitation and some other programs charge a small fee drawn from your Centrelink, disability or other government benefit. This fee varies across services.

Pharmacotherapy services are delivered at a small cost. Pharmacies charge a dosing fee (usually between \$3 and \$7 per day). Pharmacotherapy prescribers (local doctors or addiction medicine specialists) may bulk-bill or charge a fee. If you have a concession card (such as a healthcare card) you are entitled to reduced fees.

Accessing private services directly

Private alcohol and drug treatment services are also available. First check with the [**Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Authority**](#) that the practitioner you plan to use is qualified to deliver this kind of service.

The costs associated with accessing private treatment services may vary depending on the program and the organisation delivering them. Ask the provider to explain all costs associated with the service before you sign up to

ensure that you understand all fees and costs. For general information on your rights as a consumer of services visit the **Consumer Affairs website**.

Some aspects of private programs might be claimable on **Medicare**, so check with the provider directly. If you have private health insurance, ask your insurer about programs that are part or fully covered by your plan.

Where to get help

- **Your doctor**
- **DirectLine**, call **1800 888 236**

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