

Treatment for Teens With Substance Use Disorders Lacking



Treatment options are lacking for teens with substance use disorders, experts say. Addiction treatment resources are expensive, hard to find, and often not effective, they tell *U.S. News & World Report*.

"There is no other disorder or disease that is as undertreated in adolescents as substance use disorders," said Samuel Ball, President and CEO of CASAColumbia, an organization that researches addiction and treatments. "These can turn into life-or-death situations." He added, "There really aren't places for kids to go. As a parent you want your children to be treated in a highly reputable health care system that has [specialists] providing treatment that has been shown to be effective – kind of like what you would expect to see if your kid has cancer."

Many parents, desperate for help, go online and find expensive facilities, in many cases far from home. Insurance companies' policies on addiction treatment varies in terms of how much they will pay, whether they will pay for repeat treatments, and how long they will approve treatment.

It can be difficult to receive insurance reimbursement for addiction treatment, according to Jim Myers of Children's Hospital Colorado. "If we have a child with a mental health diagnosis who also has substance abuse problems, often the insurance company will use the substance abuse instance to deny authorization," he said.

Hospitals may be reluctant to provide addiction treatment for teens because it is expensive to provide, and they can lose money. Staff at the Hazelden Betty Ford Center, the nation's largest nonprofit addiction treatment provider, includes a health insurance negotiator, nursing staff for admissions, a primary care doctor, child psychiatrists and psychologists, an addiction counselor, among others. Outpatient treatment can cost \$10,000, while residential treatment can range from \$20,000 to \$32,000.

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Parents interesting in knowing how to speak with their children about addiciton should [click here](#).