



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs Visits Pennsylvania's First Licensed Recovery House, Stresses Importance of Becoming Licensed

Monroe, PA – Today, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) visited Pennsylvania's first licensed recovery house, We Have a Choice Justin's House for Men, to highlight the importance of becoming licensed. Beginning June 9, 2022, DDAP will have the authority to impose fines on operators of unlicensed recovery houses that receive public funding.

"The Wolf Administration is dedicated to ensuring that Pennsylvanians are supported through all phases of their recovery journey," said Special Assistant to the DDAP Secretary, Steve Ross. "Without recovery housing standards or protections, there are unknown numbers of substandard facilities exploiting this vulnerable population. These regulations are a significant step in ensuring safe, supportive housing for Pennsylvanians in recovery from substance use disorder."

The purpose of the licensure program is to help empower sustained recovery for individuals with substance use disorder by ensuring a network of safe drug and alcohol recovery houses across the commonwealth. Individuals can find a listing of licensed recovery houses using the [D&A Facility Locator](#).

We Have a Choice Recovery House was the first recovery house in Pennsylvania to obtain a recovery house license from DDAP. The home provides stable housing for up to eight men who are in the early stages of recovery from a substance use disorder. We Have a Choice offers supportive living and daily structure to residents including life skills development, recovery support services, peer support, job search, resume building, and support with community organizations.

"It is of utmost importance to break the stigma of what recovery houses are perceived to be by licensing and regulating them so that the public can be assured that anyone with a substance use disorder has a safe place to live and receive vital life-saving services," said Kenneth Ramirez, Executive Co-Director of We Have a Choice Recovery House. "We all 'Have a Choice' to live and recover today, and that's what we're all about here."

The recovery house law requires that DDAP impose fines, up to \$1,000 per day, on unlicensed recovery houses that are “funded, in whole or in part, by a department or a Federal, other State or county agency.” DDAP may begin to issue these fines on June 9, 2022, 180 days after publication of the final regulations in the [Pennsylvania Code & Bulletin](#) on December 11, 2021.

Under the recovery house law, recovery houses must obtain a license from DDAP if:

1. They are receiving federal or state funding,
2. They are receiving referrals from publicly-funded facilities, and/or
3. They are receiving referrals for individuals whose substance use disorder (SUD) treatment is funded with federal or state funding.

The recovery house licensing regulations contain a number of provisions designed to protect residents in the areas of health and safety, finances, and resident rights, some of which include staff training on administering naloxone, CPR, first aid, and requirement of naloxone on the premises; nondiscriminatory practices based on age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression; and documentation of all financial transactions with residents and establishment of a written agreement before assisting in any management of resident funds.

Recovery houses can find more information regarding the application process on the [DDAP website](#). DDAP is offering a free one-day training workshop designed to answer the various questions associated with the application process. Participation in the workshop results in a decrease in the amount of time it takes to approve applications, resulting in the license being issued sooner to those applicants who participate. To register for the workshop please email RA-licensureapps@pa.gov or call 717-783-8675.

Individuals seeking treatment or substance use supports for themselves or a loved one can always call the toll-free PA Get Help Now helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). The free, confidential hotline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staffed by trained professionals. A [live chat option](#) is also available online or via text message at 717-216-0905 for those seeking help who may not be comfortable speaking to a helpline operator.

MEDIA CONTACT: Stephany Dugan, ra-dapressoffice@pa.gov

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