

SPOTTING FALSE ADS

FOR SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT

Most providers of substance use treatment try to support their patients and give them high-quality care. But some bad actors are using false advertising to take advantage of people looking for treatment, either for themselves or someone they care about.

EXAMPLES OF BAD ADS



Your search for a treatment center turns up (paid) results masquerading as the center you searched for. In reality, it's for a totally different center or unscrupulous lead generator — a company that creates lists of potential customers for itself or other companies.



The center promises services they either don't have — or aren't proven to be effective in treating substance use disorder.



Treatment center websites show "spa-like" facilities that don't match reality.



They say staff work for them when they don't, or they exaggerate their qualifications or credentials.

HOW TO SPOT



When you call the phone number listed for the center, ask the person on the other end if they actually work for the center, or if they will tell you who they work for. If they say no, that's a red flag.



The facility's physical address is not the same as the address in their ads.



Pictures of the facility don't match what you see in person or on Google Maps.



The treatment center advertised isn't listed in your state health department website or substance use treatment directories.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Check your state and local health department websites or other treatment provider directories online.



Search online for the name of the substance use treatment center plus the words "complaint" or "scam."



Use Google Maps or another map website or app to see what the facility looks like in real life.



Report it to your state attorney general at [ConsumerResources.org](https://www.consumerresources.org)



Report it to the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/ReportFraud)