

Responses from Oganés Nardos, Program Director, Morro Bay Recovery (3-8-21)

1. What specific license is required to operate this facility? What period of time is the license valid for (i.e. renewable annually or long term?)

To operate a residential substance abuse treatment center a license and a certificate is required from the Department of Health Care Services of the State of California. Initial licenses and certificates are valid for 3 years renewed every 3 years. License and certificate could be obtained only after zoning and fire clearance as well as DHCS's field visit inspections to check and approve the program and the facility. Same is for the renewals.

2. I understand that this is a supportive housing facility – a place where clients will go following detox – but does not include detox services, is this correct?

Residential treatment consists of counseling and psycho-social therapy for individuals undergoing substance abuse treatment. Facility does not provide detox services; however, facility staff monitors individuals taking medication as a part of the treatment for medical or psychiatric reasons prescribed by physician treating in order to assure that medication will be taken on time and in dosages prescribed. Monitoring and documenting is the only service provided by the facility.

3. Is sober living also another term used for this proposed operation?

It is not a sober living. Residential treatment is more structured due to patients undergoing psycho-social treatment with 24 hours supervision by licensed, certified and trained personnel.

4. What information is required to get a license? Does the state do background checks on the operators (i.e. you, the property owners and the staff?) What type of offense would result in a disapproval from you and/or the state licensing agency?

To obtain a license and a certificate for operation State of California requires program policies and procedures to be in accordance with the State of California rules and regulations regarding substance abuse treatment, that staff providing treatment to be licensed and/or certified in the State of California, that all service providers are First Aid/CPR certified and TB tested. The DHCS licensing department performs background checks on the owners and operators and the facility is obligated to perform background check for every employee. License and certificate will be denied if owners or the staff has been involved in malpractice or medical and/or financial fraud of any type. Any other offense is courtesy of the department, and I am not familiar with the listing of approved and disapproved offenses to tell the truth.

5. Does the State require background checks for the potential clients? Are there any criminal offenses that would result in the State, or you as an operator, denying the potential client entry into the program?

State of California doesn't require checks on clients; however, every provider is obligated to have a policy on offenses or conditions not accepted by the provider. In our case we don't accept clients with a history of arson, killing or attempt to kill, sexual predators and drug traffickers of a large number of illegal substances. As far as conditions, we don't accept anybody in need of nursing nor severe forms of mental illnesses.

6. How often does the State inspect the facilities?

During the initial licensing phase facility will be inspected for a minimum of 2 times by the State. Facility will be inspected before every renewal at least 1 time by the State. Random inspections will be performed unnoticed as a result of any complaint by the State. In addition, the federal Joint Commission will conduct initial and periodic checks to assure the safety and security of the patients.

7. Are there other local agencies that will have a role in the program for this facility? I.e. County mental health, or other governmental or non-profit organizations?

Facility is obligated to have a local network consisting of emergency services, medical and mental health providers, self-help recovery groups and any other public or government entities providing social and/or recreational services.

8. Do you have information on the number of programs you have set up similar to what you will be doing for this program?

I was a part of setting up 3 substance abuse programs in the State of California, 1 in the State of Nevada and I am the executive director of Absolute Control Transitional Counseling Center, Inc. and the program director of Court Ordered Programs in Los Angeles County.

9. Where do the clients come from? Are they referrals from Detox facilities or another source? Will they be local or from anyplace, including out of state?

Most of the referrals are coming from emergency services locally and in the State of California. Out of state patients are referred by insurance companies as a part of being in network for providers if there is a shortage in the state of origin. In addition, a phone number and a website will be implemented to contact us for individuals looking for help.

10. Are any clients people released from prison with the requirement that they enter a supportive housing program?

Prison population released from incarceration, better known as Parolees, is not considered as potential clients simply because to be admitted to our program the patient has to have a current substance abuse problem in accordance with the ASAM criteria for the State of California. With other words, we do not provide social rehabilitation program of any type for anti-social behavior only.

11. What is the success rate of the clients in this type of facility?

Facilities providing residential substance abuse treatment have a very high rate of success (70-75%) as a harm reduction and as a path to a recovery process from dependency by keeping addicts and alcoholics away from an imminent danger and directing to a new lifestyle. As a total abstinence tool, residential treatment success rates are around 15-30% considering all patients, and 55-65% among the patients completing the program.