**The Ten Warning Flags of an Untrustworthy Rehab Facility**

**Warning Flag #1: No Accreditation or Lack of Doctors on Site**

Any rehab website that does not have the “Accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations Gold Seal” displayed on the homepage of their website. Anyone can just put a logo on a website, but the Joint Commission is the official nonprofit organization that evaluates healthcare providers on their compliance with federal regulations. The best facilities have the most doctors on site, not the least amount or sometimes no doctors at all on site. Website names using a person's first name: like Joe's Rehab (think of Joe's Garage) are the easy ones to spot that should raise a warning flag. The tough ones are the sites that look really nice but you have a hard time finding testimonials, reviews, or accreditation prominently displayed on their home page.

**Warning Flag #2: Having A “Miracle Cure”**

Any rehab website that says they have book or pill that can cure alcoholism or drug addiction, or some natural herb that has no reported side effects – especially if they just so happen to sell any of those miracle cures on their website! Any rehab that claims to have their own "secret treatment" or to "reveal the secrets of addiction," or anything with the word "secret" in it anywhere. Any medical detox treatment that claims to get you off drugs or alcohol while you lose 50 pounds all at the same time!  Any rehab that will treat you by not treating you, using their special non-treatment solution! Forget anything with the word "solution" in it, because there is no one-size-fits-all solution for addiction.

**Warning Flag #3: Guarantees**

Any rehab website that claims "guaranteed success" or "sober life" with ads claiming you can "get sober for life in 30 days," or that promises you that you'll stay clean and sober forever, or even that if you relapse, you can return for free or get your money back! They will often have a very small legal disclaimer in the fine print explaining why they really don't guarantee lifetime sobriety or your money back!

Legitimate treatment centers don't ever guarantee 100% success, just like legitimate doctors don't guarantee an operation will be a complete success before they agree to operate on a patient. No legitimate treatment center can ever guarantee "permanent addiction recovery." No legitimate detox center would ever claim their program has absolutely "no withdrawal symptoms." These kinds of claims are completely unfounded and have no basis in modern addiction medicine.

**Warning Flag #4: Being The “Very Best” or #1 Rehab**

Any rehab website that makes unsubstantiated claims like any of the following: "Rated #1 Rehab in the World",  "#1 addiction treatment center,” "best rehab in the country,"  or any other claim that is not backed by factual evidence.  Be especially wary of the higher end or luxury facilities that might claim that some magazine or online publication says they’re the best. But when you go check that source out to see what rating or evaluation process was used you can find no supporting documentation backing up their claim. Most of the time they actually provide no criteria whatsoever for how their publication made its determination of who they claim is the best or #1 rehab.

Follow Mark Twain's advice and remember there are three kinds of lies: “lies, damned lies, and statistics.” Similarly, some facilities websites will spend more time talking about the size of their campus rather than what their treatment programs involve, but don’t get distracted by those claims. It doesn’t matter whether a rehab is located on one acre, twelve acres, or a hundred and twenty – the size of the property has no relationship to the quality of the treatment.

**Warning Flag #5: Misleading Advertising**

Any rehab website that says one thing in their ads but doesn’t follow through on their website. Maybe the advertisements claim the facility offers “affordable luxury” treatment, or maybe the ad you saw on Google talked about exactly what you searched for, but when you got to their website you couldn’t find any information. Misleading advertising like this can be extremely frustrating, and companies that use these practices should be avoided at all costs. After all, like anything else in life, there is no such thing as an “affordable luxury” rehab facility.

Even worse are the facilities that try and pass themselves off as Alcoholics Anonymous affiliates by making their websites look like the official AA site, with only a small disclaimer at the bottom saying that the page is “unofficial” in the hopes that most people will won't realize they aren't looking at the real AA website. Always read the fine print!

Then there are places that advertise based solely on price "very affordable, low rates, cheap", "treatment 100% covered by insurance", etc... Remember you are trying to save someone's life (possibly your own). Take out the word "rehab" and replace it with another lifesaving treatment "heart surgery"; and see how silly it sounds "cheap heart surgery" when your only concern is the price.

**Warning Flag #6: “Alternative” Medicine**

Any rehab website that claims to have an instant fix or rapid detox (or the newest gimmick: “ultra-rapid” detox) for alcohol or drugs that will work in the long run. A lot of times these type of facilities advertise themselves as being an alternative to traditional rehabs and claim they have some new form of treatment, but all they are offering you is an option to take a drug to get off the drug you are currently taking. You can't say you are clean or drug-free if you simply swap one drug for another!

**Warning Flag #7: Being All Over The Map… Literally**

Any rehab website that claims to have locations nationwide, but it turns out they only have one facility. They do this by setting up multiple mailing locations with PO boxes or shared offices that will show up in Google Maps, ensuring that they’ll be in your search results, even though their actual facility is nowhere near you.

**Warning Flag #8: Anonymous, Cookie-Cutter Testimonials**

Any rehab websites that have reviews/testimonials that are one sentence long and only have a person's first name without any location next to it. If a hospital supposedly saved your loved one’s life, wouldn’t you write more than “Thanks for saving my daughter. Regards, Bob”. Wouldn't a legitimate testimonial take the time to at least write a paragraph, – or at least more than one sentence – to express their gratitude for saving their child's life?

Do not be misled and base your decision upon reading reviews on websites like ripoffreport.com, pissedconsumer.com, consumerreviewreports.org. These type of sites will let just about anyone post a negative review and may even charge the company money to have those reviews taken down. Reviews on those kinds of sites often aren’t genuine and people should not take them seriously.

**Warning Flag #9: All That Glitters Is Not Gold**

Any rehab website that focuses on how luxurious and opulent their facilities are in their ads saying you will feel like your in paradise, etc... Just because a facility may look like something out of Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous and has a gigantic mansion, doesn’t mean their rehab treatment is any better than an average-looking facility.

Luxury-style facilities, naturally, will look better than average, because their treatment plans cost more money – but if the facility looks like a Hollywood celebrity could have been the former owner, exercise caution. Luxury rehabs that look like the same palatial homes you would see in Architectural Digest magazine, look that way simply to justify charging their patients sky high prices . . . sometimes well over 100K a month!

**Warning Flag #10: Hidden Halfway Houses**

Any facility that is a halfway house in disguise. Halfway houses are the flip side of the coin from high-end rehab facilities. They are usually meant more as places for people who have finished an intensive rehab program to slowly reintegrate back into society, but some of the less reputable ones will readily claim to offer full rehab services in order to make extra money. Halfway houses websites will usually have the word “house” in their name, or emphasize their affordability in their advertising.

**\*We recommend bookmarking this page or printing it out to use as a reference when comparing rehab websites for you or your loved one.**

**Contact the National Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Information Center (NASAIC) anytime toll-free at**[**(800) 784-6776**](tel:18007846776)**or through our**[**online form**](http://www.addictioncareoptions.com/ten-warning-flags-untrustworthy-rehab-facility#mail-form)**, and we will recommend the leading drug and alcohol rehab centers for you or your loved one.**