

**Title**

Characterizing substance abuse programs that treat adolescents

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**Source**

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**Abstract**

Few systematic studies have examined the characteristics of substance abuse treatment programs serving adolescents. An expert panel recently identified nine key elements of effective adolescent substance abuse treatment. We measured the percentage of treatment programs in the United States with at least 10 adolescent clients on a given day that reported these elements using data from the 2003 National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services. This first look into the characteristics of facilities serving significant numbers of adolescents indicates that many facilities may be lacking in components considered important. The most significant measured potential areas for improvement occurred in the areas of including mental health as well as medical issues in comprehensive assessments and developing curricula to meet the developmental and cultural needs of clients. On a more encouraging note, many facilities were conducting discharge planning and providing aftercare, although the specifics of these services were not determined.