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My doctor and therapist have recommended that I have addiction therapy because they feel I am drinking too much. There are so many options. What should I do?

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Answer: You are not alone in wondering about the best way to get the help you need. Treatment for alcohol problems can take many forms. People often wonder about the most appropriate course of action to take to address their problems. This is frequently caused by myths and mistaken beliefs about what addiction and treatment really are.



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Dr. Susan Holman is medical director for Pavilion International, a non-profit residential center for the treatment of alcoholism and other drug addictions in Lake Lure. She is certified in addiction medicine by the American Society of Addiction Medicine. - **Special to the Citizen-Times**

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Your therapist and doctor are wise to refer you to an addiction specialist who can provide information about alcoholism and substance abuse. In fact, good treatment includes education about these very issues.

Any professional should determine appropriate treatment through a comprehensive evaluation of your substance use problems, a physical and mental health history, and the current level of support for recovery in your home and social environment.

This is important in order to be sure the treatment will have the best chance of working. Research shows that how much treatment (detox, residential, or outpatient) you get and for how long you get it, makes a difference in how effective it will be at achieving sustained recovery. There are many effective self-help programs that help people, but this should not be confused with treatment.

Rational Recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous are examples of effective support programs.

Once you have been assessed for the type of treatment needed, then you will want to look into identifying a quality program that meets your needs. Some questions to consider in evaluating a quality program include:

Do they base treatment on an initial, comprehensive evaluation that is multidisciplinary?

Does the program include individual and group counseling?

Does the program include services and education for the family?

Can the program personnel explain the theoretical basis and research basis for the program?

Does the program take a bio-psycho-social approach and view alcoholism as a chronic disease?

Will your plan of recovery be individualized and how?

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Will the program help you re-integrate through continuing care planning after treatment?

Dr. Susan Holman is medical director for Pavillon International, a non-profit residential center for the treatment of alcoholism and other drug addictions. She is certified in addiction medicine by the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

ASAM certification identifies a physician who has demonstrated the degree of knowledge in the diagnosis and treatment of alcoholism and other drug dependencies commensurate with expertise in the field as defined by ASAM.

Submit your confidential and anonymous questions to Dr. Holman at info@pavillon.org

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