

PChAD Info for Parents

[The Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act \(PChAD\)](#) took effect in Alberta on July 1, 2006 and was amended on July 1, 2012.

What now? What next?

Your child is struggling with an alcohol or drug addiction. You've tried virtually every avenue of treatment; done all you can to help.

Nothing has worked. You feel frustrated, overwhelmed and powerless. And now you fear your child is in danger of harming themselves or someone else. What do you do? Where can you turn? The PChAD program is here to support you.

What is PChAD?

The Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act (PChAD) is an Alberta law that took effect on July 1, 2006 to help children under 18 years of age whose use of alcohol or drugs is likely to cause significant psychological or physical harm to themselves or physical harm to others. The PChAD program allows you, as a legal guardian, to ask the Court for a protection order. This order will mean your child can be taken to a protective safe house for up to 10 days, even if he/she does not want to go.

This 10day period will provide your child with a structured and protective setting in which to begin detoxification, while providing parents an opportunity to get involved in the process. The time spent in the protective safe house also allows counselors a chance to assess your child's substance use and offer treatment recommendations to follow once they have been discharged from the program.

How do I know if PChAD is the right program for my child?

Alberta Health Services (AHS) offers a number of programs to assist children and their families with drug and alcohol-related issues. These services form a continuum from least to most intensive. If your family has tried other options for intervention and voluntary treatment without success, PChAD may be the next step.

PChAD is a specialized, intensive service that is designed to help children who cannot help themselves and who are at risk for harming themselves or others. If you aren't sure if PChAD is the answer, call any AHS Addiction Services office or the Helpline at 1-866-332-2322. We'll provide the information you require to make the right decision for your child.

How do I get my child into the PChAD program?

In order to place your child in the PChAD program:

1. You must attend a pre-application information session with an Addiction Counselor at your local Addiction Services office. Contact information for your nearest office can be found on <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/services.asp?pid=services&rid=1026205> or by contacting Health Link at 1-866-408-5465.
2. You must file an application with the Provincial Court of Alberta. To learn how, call the Provincial Court Services or contact your lawyer.
3. You must notify AHS of the application to the Court by calling the phone number that appears on the Guide for Applicants Seeking Orders under the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act.
4. You must then advise AHS if the protection order was granted. At that time, we will inform you of the location of the protective safe house where your child should be taken.

You may choose to transport your child yourself. If you cannot do this, (for example, because your child is no longer at home, you are unsure of his/her whereabouts, or if you have safety concerns), you may apply for a provision that authorizes the police to apprehend your child and take him/her to a protective safe house. This option may also allow the police to search for your child and enter a place if they believe your child is there. If the police transport your child, it is their responsibility to contact AHS to learn the location of the protective safe house where he/she should be taken.

What will happen to my child?

Under the PChAD legislation, your child can be confined to a protective safe house for up to 10 days. During this time your child will begin to be treated for the effects of detoxification, a practice in which an individual is provided a safe and supportive environment during an acute withdrawal process from the effects of substance abuse.

During the confinement period, your child will also be assessed for substance use and stabilized. Addiction Counselors use the assessment process as a tool to learn more about your child's alcohol and/or a drug use. It includes a review of substance abuse history and the impact of use on the child's major life areas, such as school, family, friends, and health. The information gathered in the assessment is then used to make treatment recommendations for your child once he/she is discharged from the protective safe house.

What are my child's rights under the PChAD act?

If your child is confined in a protective safe house under a PChAD court order, he/she will be given:

- A copy of the protection order
- A request to review form

- A written explanation of their right to ask the Court to review the order, and their right to contact a lawyer.
- A telephone number of the Legal Aid Society of Alberta;

Your child will also receive verbal explanation of:

- The content of the protection order
- Their right to ask the Court to review the order
- Their right to contact a lawyer

It is important to note that your child has a right to appeal the protection order at any time. If he/she makes a request for review, the court may make an order confirming, varying or terminating the original order. The Court can also extend the period of confinement set by the original order by up to an additional 5 days.

What is my role in the process?

Parental support is critical to your child's recovery because young people look to primary relationships as a foundation on which to build a new, non-using life. That's the reason we require you to participate in your child's treatment program while he/she is residing in a protective safe house. The level of participation can vary and will depend upon the needs of your family. We offer services ranging from general information sessions to family counseling. You'll find that getting involved with your child's treatment at an early stage will help lay the groundwork for a more cooperative and constructive recovery process.

Towards the end of the confinement period in the protective safe house, you will be provided with information about treatment recommendations in order to support the transition from the protective safe house to your custody. You will be required to pick up your child at the time of discharge or to make plans to have someone pick up your child when the confinement period ends.

What happens after the ten days?

Our goal over the 10 day period is to engage your family in the treatment process and encourage your involvement in choosing the counseling and/or treatment services you feel will work most effectively for your child once he/she has been discharged.

As your family transitions into voluntary treatment, AHS offers several services to aid in the continuation of your child's recovery process. Your child can join one of many programs, such as a voluntary residential program, a support group for teens or a day treatment program.

If you have questions about the PChAD program, contact any addiction services office or call the Helpline at 1-866-332-2322 (Alberta only).