



# How The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Can Support Alcohol Addiction Treatment

Alcohol addiction or alcoholism is an issue of concern in the U.S. This is a disease that affects people from all walks of life regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic factors. Although experts are still trying to unearth what predisposes someone to alcoholism, it's clear that there's no single cause to pinpoint.

What is clear is that alcohol addiction is a real disease that can cause changes to the brain as well as various health issues. The former causes an individual to lose control of their actions while the latter can cause considerable distress.

Alcoholism can show up in a variety of ways and the disease's severity, the frequency of drinking, and the type of alcohol consumed all vary from one person to another. Some people binge drink, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol at a go then stay sober for a while and others spend all day drinking heavily.

Alcohol addiction is typically characterized by heavy reliance on drinking where a person is unable to remain sober for an extended period. Regardless, overdrinking can lead to both short and long term physical and psychological consequences. These range from increased blood pressure, lowered inhibitions, digestive issues, and trouble concentrating to more serious problems like cancer, liver cirrhosis, memory loss, and heart disease among others.

## Alcohol Addiction Treatment

According to one study conducted by the Open Society Foundation, there are approximately 23.5 million people affected by alcohol addiction in the U.S. Out of these only 2.6 million get the treatment they require to attain and maintain sobriety.

This brings up a major issue in the fight against alcoholism. Even though a lot of people need – and would benefit – from treatment, very few seek it out. There are several reasons for this including:

- Some people feel that they don't require treatment.
- Some lack adequate funds to check into a rehab facility.
- Others have no one to care for their kids or pets should they go for rehab.
- Yet others fear losing their jobs and becoming financially unstable if they choose to go to rehab for a while.

Despite the presence of [different alcohol addiction treatment programs](#), these barriers to treatment present a considerable challenge.

The good thing is that they don't have to. Thanks to a variety of federal laws like the [FMLA](#), those struggling to overcome alcoholism can get the treatment they need and still keep their jobs.

## What is the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

The Family and Medical Leave Act is a federal law that was passed and signed in 1993 by President Clinton. According to the act, eligible employees are provided with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period. During these 12 weeks, the employee's health benefits have to be maintained.

The main goal of the law is to provide stability and access to employer-provided healthcare during times of personal or family health crisis. This way employees of covered employers could seek out treatment for their health issues without worrying about losing their jobs.

Employees can receive up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the FMLA for different reasons including:

- The birth of a baby and taking care of that newborn within the first year of its birth.
- To care for a severely ill immediate family member like a parent, child, or spouse.
- The placement of a foster child and to take care of that child within the first year of placement with the employee's family.
- For a serious health condition that affects the employee's ability to carry out the tasks required of their position.

## Who is Eligible for the FMLA – Family and Medical Leave Act

If an employee is struggling with alcoholism, they need help to turn their lives around and work towards sobriety. The 12-week unpaid leave provides an ideal time to check themselves into an alcohol treatment program and start their journey to recovery. However, employees can only take paid leave through the FMLA if they:

- Work for an employer who is covered under the act.
- Have worked for their employer for at least 12 months.
- Have completed at least 1250 hours of work for their employer during the 12 months preceding the medical leave.
- Work in a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

A lot of people wonder whether their employers are covered. According to the U.S Department of Labor, covered employers include:

1. Public agencies i.e. any local, state, or federal government agency.
2. Local education agencies i.e. any public or private elementary or secondary schools.
3. Private-sector employers with 50 or more employees working 20 or more weeks during the current or previous calendar year.

## Is Alcohol Addiction Treatment Covered Under FMLA?

Employees dealing with alcoholism who wish to receive treatment for their addiction might worry that their employer might not allow them to take this leave. However, alcohol addiction is a serious disease with far-reaching health implications. Under the FMLA, alcoholism qualifies as a serious medical condition especially if the employer meets the criteria for admission into an inpatient rehab facility or if the conditions for receiving continuing treatment are met.

Workers need to note that the FMLA only allows unpaid leave to receive treatment for addiction by a healthcare provider. It does not give leeway for employees to miss work as a result of their alcohol abuse. If that occurs, the act doesn't protect such workers from any action their employer decides to take.

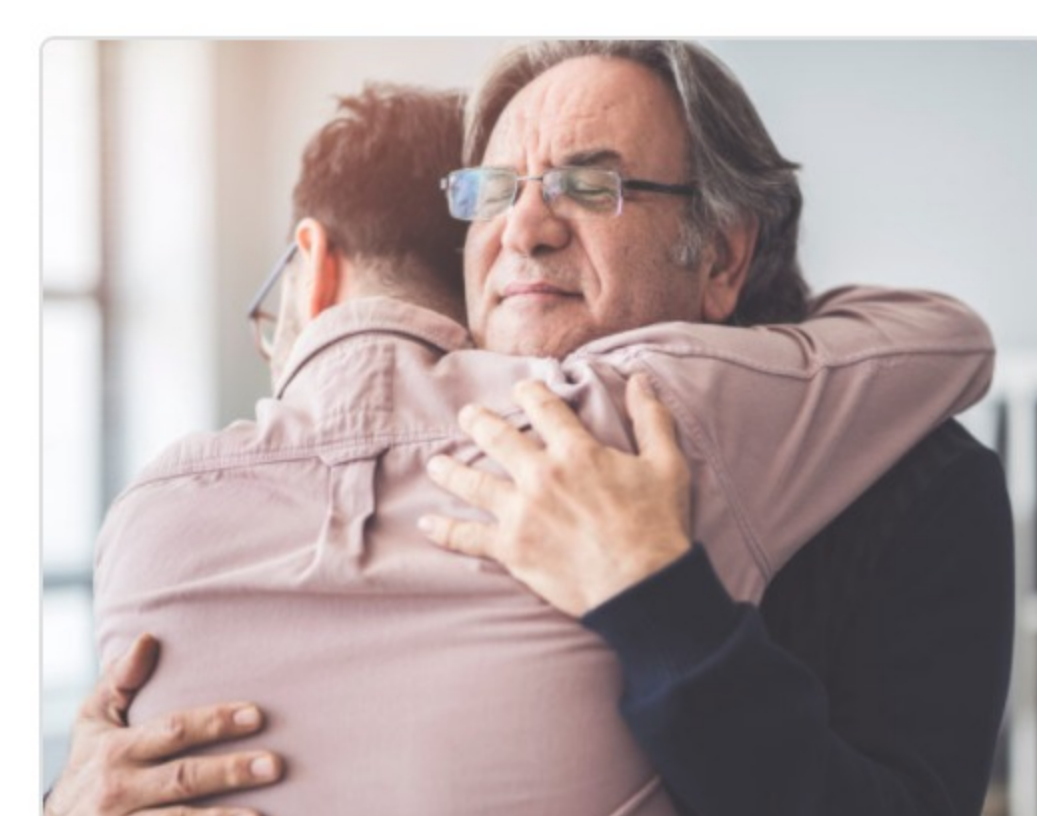
## Don't Wait. Get Alcohol Addiction Help Today.

Alcoholism tends to get worse the more an individual drinks. It can feel impossible to break free of the chains of this addiction but it is possible. Here at the [Robert Alexander Center for Recovery](#), we are committed to helping those with alcohol addiction to put their lives back together. We have a conducive environment, qualified and licensed staff as well as years of experience to draw from.

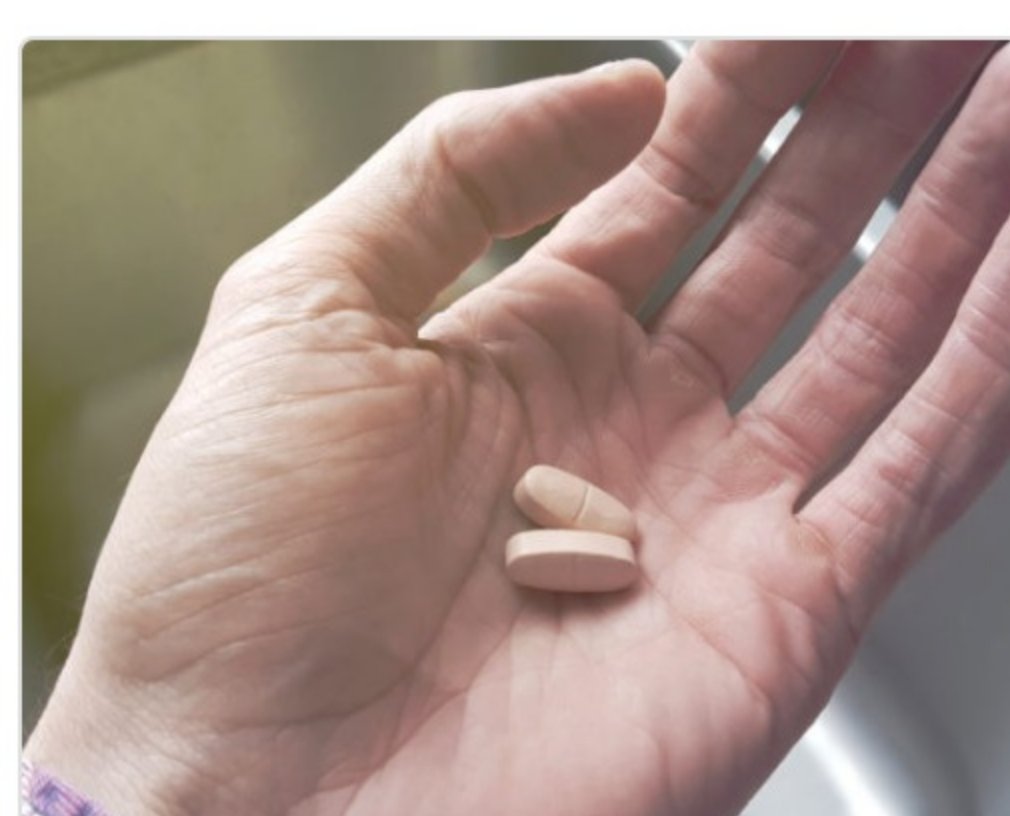
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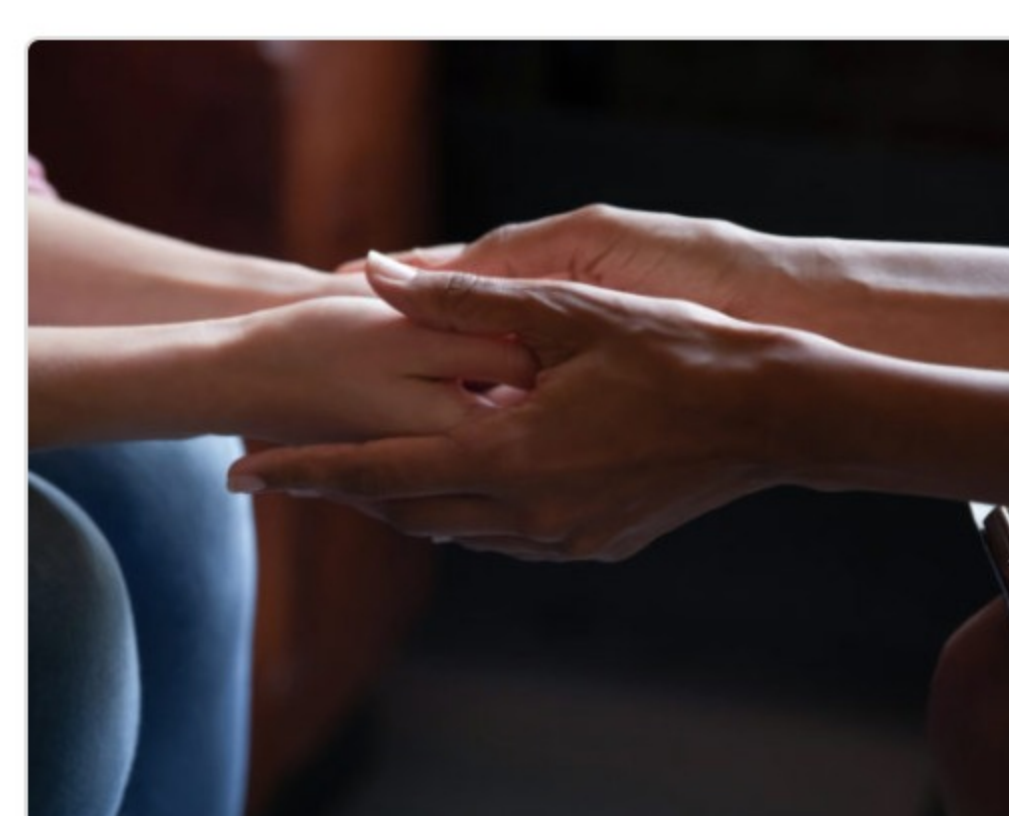
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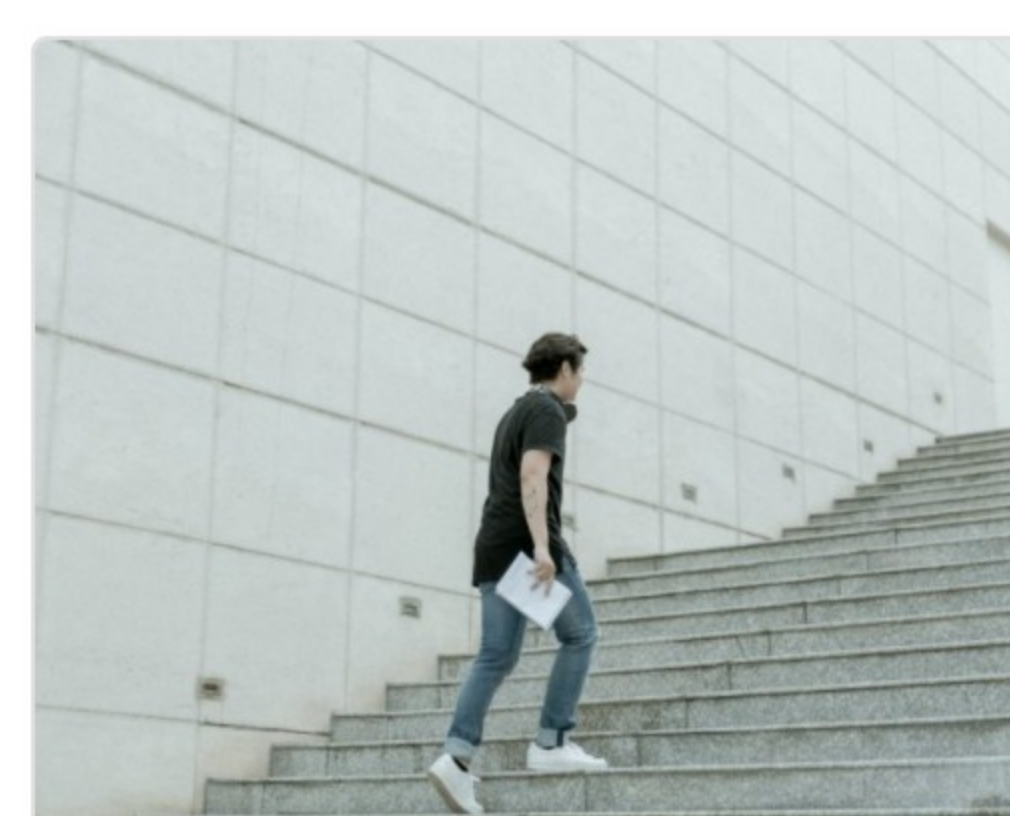
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The Robert Alexander Center for Recovery is a brand new, state of the art addiction treatment center in Kentucky, offering evidence-based treatment for substance abuse.



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