

Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc.

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ACT 53

Do you have a child aged 12 to 17 with an alcohol or drug problem? If he or she refuses treatment, there is another option. The legal system can require your child to enter drug and alcohol treatment. To get the process started, call BCDAC, Inc. at 215-444-2730 and mention Act 53.

What is Act 53?

Act 53 is a law in the state of Pennsylvania that allows a parent/legal guardian to obtain a drug and alcohol assessment for their child - and, if warranted, compel the child to enter treatment. The criteria is as follows:

- The parent/legal guardian believes their child has a drug or alcohol problem;
- There is evidence that their child has had a drug or alcohol problem within the last 30 days – please provide specific date(s);
- The child is unwilling to participate in a treatment program;
- The child must be a resident of Bucks County; and
- The child must be between the ages of 12 and 17

If the criteria are met, BCDAC, Inc. will guide the parent/legal guardian through the Act 53 process.

Procedure

The Act 53 hearing and assessment process can be completed within a week.

- The first step is for a parent or legal guardian to call BCDAC's Approval of Care Department for guidance and resources. Information on how to access Act 53 will be provided, along with direction on how to complete applications and the court hearings to be conducted.
- If a petition is filed with the court, the court will review the petition to determine if a hearing should be scheduled.
- At the initial hearing, the court will decide whether or not an evaluation will be ordered.
- If an evaluation is ordered, it will take place that same day at the Justice Center by credentialed staff from St. Luke's Penn Foundation Recovery Center.
- After the evaluation is completed, a hearing will be held to determine whether involuntary commitment will be ordered.
- If the child is found in need of treatment, arrangements will be made for the child's treatment to begin as soon as possible.
- Parents/legal guardians are responsible for court-related fees, including a \$110.00 Sherriff fee (cash or money order) and \$26.00 filing fee (paid to the Clerk of Courts; cash, check, money order or credit card). Funding for legal representation for the child will be covered through BCDAC, Inc. Parents/legal guardians are responsible for their own legal representation, if necessary.
- Treatment costs are covered through either the parent/guardian's private insurance, Medical Assistance or County funding. Guidance on funding process will be provided to the family by the Program Specialist.

Questions?

Contact Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc. at 215-444-2730, M-F 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

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