



<https://www.ocregister.com/rehab-riviera/>

Journalists from the Southern California News Group have spent months investigating and reporting on the local drug treatment industry. They have interviewed dozens of sources and sifted through thousands of pages of reports and court documents.

The resulting stories show how and why Southern California has become a hub for drug treatment centers, with more than a thousand of them in the greater Los Angeles area.

Some of those centers have admirable intentions and strong records of helping addicts. Others, however, exploit California-specific regulations and sometimes-lax oversight in an attempt to cash in on the lucrative industry, despite the potential danger for those the industry is supposed to help.

Here are the main parts of the investigation and other in-depth coverage of the rehab industry from 2017.

### **Part One: How some Southern California drug rehab centers exploit addiction**

A darker version of the rehab industry is emerging post-Obamacare, built around an illicit world of patient recruiters, fraud-driven clinics and drug-testing mills. Lax regulation and systemic loopholes have allowed unscrupulous operators to create a Wild, Wild West in California.

## **Part Two: The consequences of California's rehab industry**

### **Detox can end in death at some 'non-medical' Southern California rehabs**

Hundreds of rehab centers in California offer “non-medical detox,” meaning people can try to break their drug addiction without medical care. It's a loophole so risky that many other states won't allow it.

### **How a multimillion-dollar empire built around urine drug tests exposes flaws in California's rehab laws**

In California, even someone convicted of fraud or drug dealing or medical malpractice can make money in rehab, often through the vertical integration of insurance payments for urine testing. Our rules are lax, but prosecutors are watching. [Read the story.](#)

### **Are drug rehab centers fueling homelessness in Southern California?**

At least part of Southern California's homeless boom seems to be fueled by the region's 1,100 rehab centers. Some woo out-of-state addicts with free, one-way trips, only to kick them to the streets after their insurance runs out, penniless and still addicted.

## **Part Three: The search for solutions**

### **Are drugs for drug addicts a solution or a crutch?**

Despite widely accepted scientific evidence that medication-assisted treatment excels at keeping addicts alive, abstinence-only remains a bedrock of America's addiction treatment industry. [Read the story.](#)

### **California testing Vermont's model to fight addiction**

The state is spending \$90 million to adapt Vermont's hub-and-spoke system. [Read the story.](#)

### **An industry struggling to get clean**

“Instead of a recovery model, we have a relapse model.”