

Addiction Medicine

An Overview of Clinical Specialization for Treating Substance Use Disorders



What is Addiction Medicine?

Addiction Medicine describes a medical specialty focused on the evaluation, diagnosis, treatment, and ongoing management of substance use disorders and co-occurring conditions. Board-certified physicians are trained to address addiction at the biological level, ensuring that the physical dimensions of dependency and recovery receive the same clinical rigor as psychological and behavioral care.

“Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual’s life experiences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences. Prevention efforts and treatment approaches for addiction are generally as successful as those for other chronic diseases.”



— [American Society of Addiction Medicine \(ASAM\)](#)

How It Works: The Role of Addiction Medicine in Treatment

- 1) Comprehensive Medical Assessment**
Evaluate substance history, physical health, and co-occurring medical conditions.
- 2) Withdrawal Management**
Provide medically supervised stabilization for a safe, clinically monitored detox.
- 3) Medication Management**
Prescribe and adjust evidence-based medications to reduce cravings and support stability.
- 4) Co-occurring Condition Treatment**
Identify and treat medical and psychiatric conditions intersecting with addiction.
- 5) Integrated Care Coordination**
Collaborate with the clinical team to align medical support with therapeutic progress.

Goals of Addiction Medicine

- Address physiological aspects of substance use
- Safely manage withdrawal and medical stabilization
- Identify and treat co-occurring medical conditions
- Stabilize mental health through medication management
- Coordinate medical care with the broader treatment plan

Therapeutic Benefits

- Reduced risks during withdrawal and stabilization
- Improved readiness for deeper therapeutic work
- Better outcomes for clients with a dual-diagnosis
- Managed cravings through evidence-based care
- Continuous medical oversight throughout treatment


Addiction Medicine at Burning Tree Ranch

Addiction medicine is often positioned as an entry-point to treatment: assess on arrival, manage withdrawal, and clear for residential care. Once stabilization is achieved, medical oversight steps back. This can lead to underserving client co-occurring conditions and ongoing medication needs.

At Burning Tree Ranch, **we believe medical oversight should be continuous.** Our credentialed medical director works alongside our clinical team throughout every phase of treatment, ensuring medical support evolves as clients progress toward lasting behavioral transformation.



“For the chronic relapser, unmanaged co-occurring conditions are often what’s driving the cycle of relapse. Continuous medical oversight is the foundation of our long-term approach.”

 **Dr. Leslie Secrest, MD**
Medical Director, Burning Tree Ranch



Addiction Medicine in a Dual-Diagnosis Treatment Setting

Addiction medicine rarely produces lasting results in isolation for clients with co-occurring conditions. When substance use intersects with mood disorders, anxiety, or trauma, a purely medical approach cannot address the full clinical picture.

At Burning Tree Ranch, addiction medicine is integrated into an individualized dual-diagnosis treatment plan that combines medical management with CBT, EMDR, and psychiatric care to guide clients and families toward lasting, sustainable sobriety.

Dual Diagnosis Defined:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation’s only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at www.BurningTree.com.

Disclaimer: Burning Tree Ranch aims to enhance the quality of life for individuals battling substance use and mental health disorders through well-researched and professionally reviewed content. Our publications focus on the nature of behavioral health conditions, available treatments, and their outcomes. Reviewed by licensed experts, our material is informative but not a replacement for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the guidance of a licensed health provider for any medical or clinical concerns.