From Gap to Governance

Legal Structuring and Public Financing of Therapeutic Communities in Brazil

Advocacy for effective policies

Policy implementation and enforcement

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500+
Accredited TCs financed

>R$200m
Annual federal financing

61%
Treatment seekers used TCs

>91%
User satisfaction

Background / Rationale

Therapeutic Communities (TCs) are a viable approach to managing alcohol and other drug use disorders. Until the mid-2010s, TCs in Brazil lacked legal recognition, regulatory clarity, and public funding.

Led by the National Confederation of Therapeutic Communities (CONFENACT), co-founded by Cruz Azul no Brasil, civil society mobilized to integrate TCs into national policy.

Methods

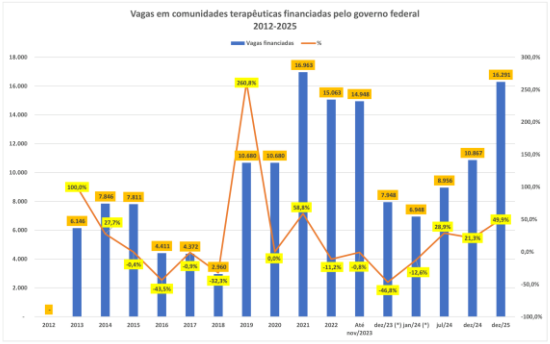
- Legal drafting and technical proposals
- Multi-sector engagement
- Judicial advocacy
- Scientific validation of the implemented framework by Fiocruz and UFMG

Key policy milestones

- 2011 – RDC ANVISA 29/2011
- 2015: CONAD Resolution 01/2015 regulates TCs within SISNAD.
- 2019: Federal Law 13.840 reinforces the framework.
- 2013 and 2021: CEBAS strengthens legitimacy and tax immunity – LC 187/2021.
- 2019 – Justice, by TRF3, affirmed legality of voluntary TC-based care.

Federal financing expanded funded places

Federally funded places in Therapeutic Communities, Brazil, 2012–2025



Dec 2025: 16,291 funded places (contracted)

The chart reinforces the operational dimension of policy implementation: legal recognition was translated into funded places, service capacity, and continuity of care.

Results / Findings

- A federal mechanism now finances 500+ accredited TCs with more than R$200 million annually.
- Fiocruz reported that 61% of treatment seekers used TCs.
- UFMG evaluated 518 TCs (2023–2024) and found >91% user satisfaction.
- The legal and judicial framework increased certainty for users, providers, and government.

Conclusion / Policy Implications

Brazil now operates one of the most structured, publicly funded TC systems globally. The case shows how faith-based civil society—through CONFENACT and Cruz Azul—can shape national alcohol policy through coordinated advocacy, legal reform, implementation, and scientific validation.

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