

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 12, 2023

Media Contact

Rebecca Reid

410-212-3843

rreid@schmidtpa.com

**ASAM Applauds Senate Committee for Advancing SUPPORT Act Reauthorization
and the Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act**

Rockville, MD – Today, the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) applauded the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee for [advancing](#) the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act (S. 3393). ASAM also applauded the committee for advancing the Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act (S. 644), which is urgently needed to help more Americans with opioid use disorder (OUD) receive methadone through the expertise of addiction specialist physicians and local pharmacies. Ultimately, the legislation passed out of committee today will help strengthen the nation's addiction treatment infrastructure at a time when the country is experiencing a historic overdose crisis.

“Nearly every American knows someone impacted by addiction and has experienced barriers for patients to access the lifesaving care they need,” said Brian Hurley, MD, MBA, president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). “With the Senate HELP Committee voting to reauthorize the SUPPORT Act and advance the Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act, we are adding sorely needed pathways that improve access to evidence-based treatment. We thank the committee for taking the first big step in fifty years toward improving access to methadone treatment, which has long proven to be effective for individuals with opioid use disorder and to save lives.”

Specifically, ASAM commends the Senate HELP Committee for advancing the bipartisan reauthorization of the [Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program](#) (STAR-LRP) for \$50 million per year for the next 5 years, as well as ensuring that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) [Minority Fellowship Program](#) includes those who specialize in addiction medicine. With the [United States facing a serious shortage of addiction medicine specialists](#), it will be critical to implement policies like this to attract healthcare providers to develop expertise in this field and ultimately increase patient access to evidence-based addiction treatment.

ASAM also thanked Senators for voting in favor of the Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act (MOTAA), bipartisan legislation that will allow board-certified addiction medicine physicians and addiction psychiatrists to prescribe methadone and permit pharmacies to dispense methadone to patients with a prescription. Under current regulations, only federally regulated opioid treatment programs (OTPs) are allowed to dispense methadone to patients with OUD outside of

the hospital. MOTAA provides a critical step towards improving access to methadone since most US counties do not have an OTP. Methadone is safe and effective for patients when indicated, dispensed, and consumed properly, and appropriately expanding access to it has the potential to save lives and support recovery for Americans struggling with OUD who would otherwise struggle to access treatment.

There is an urgent need for Congress to advance policies to increase Americans' access to medications for treating OUD. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that [more than 112,000 drug overdose deaths](#) occurred in the U.S. in the 12-month period ending May 2023—an all-time high.

#

About the American Society of Addiction Medicine

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), founded in 1954, is a professional medical society representing over 7,000 physicians, clinicians, and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction. For more information, visit www.ASAM.org.