



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2025

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**ASAM Calls for Policies to Establish the Financial Sustainability of
Addiction Treatment Services**

ASAM urges lawmakers to ensure private and public health insurance adequately cover and reimburse for addiction treatment services, among other actions

Rockville, MD – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has released its new [Public Policy Statement on Ensuring the Financial Sustainability of Addiction Treatment Services in the United States](#), which includes policy recommendations to ensure the nation’s addiction treatment infrastructure can meet the growing needs of Americans with a substance use disorder (SUD). Despite persistent high rates of SUD, efforts to connect patients with lifesaving care are hindered by a severe shortage of addiction specialist physicians and insufficient funding from public and private health insurers, among other systemic shortcomings.

The policy statement comes as Congress considers fundamentally altering Medicaid – the largest third-party payer of SUD treatment – by potentially reducing federal funding, imposing work requirements, and/or halting continuance of ACA subsidies. One of ASAM’s leading recommendations is that, instead, Congress can condition federal Medicaid payments to addiction treatment programs on adherence to nationally recognized, evidence-based, SUD-specific standards, and ensure that public and private insurance cover addiction treatment services – including medications and psychosocial care.

“Dangerous insurance coverage gaps and low reimbursement rates have left our country ill-equipped to confront the addiction and overdose crisis,” said Stephen Taylor, MD, MPH, president of ASAM. “As it stands, our addiction treatment infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with the needs of patients, due, in part, to persistent workforce shortages. Policymakers can bolster our national response to this epidemic and save more lives by

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strengthening, not cutting, coverage and reimbursement for lifesaving addiction treatment services in private plans, Medicare, and Medicaid.”

The statement further explores cost barriers and coverage restrictions that make it difficult for patients with SUD to access medically necessary care. For example, ASAM notes that “many patients are subject to prohibitive cost-sharing requirements when they receive addiction treatment,” increasing the likelihood that they will stop that treatment. Given this can contribute to poor health outcomes, ASAM also calls on lawmakers to remove cost-sharing from FDA-approved treatments, along with other measures.

ASAM Recommendations

To ensure that the proper financial and reimbursement infrastructure is in place to support patient access to high-quality addiction treatment services, ASAM recommends a range of actions, including:

1. In lieu of attempts to fundamentally alter federal Medicaid financing, impose work requirements, or halt continuance of ACA subsidies, Congress takes steps to:
 - a. continue to ensure that there are no duplicative payments or “fraud, waste, and abuse” found in Medicaid, as those terms are commonly understood;
 - b. condition federal Medicaid payments to addiction treatment programs on adherence to nationally recognized, evidence-based, SUD-specific standards developed by a nonprofit medical association generally recognized for its expertise in addiction treatment; and
 - c. ensure that private insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare cover and adequately reimburse for addiction treatment services.
2. Payers eliminate cost sharing policies for FDA-approved / cleared pharmacotherapies and devices.
3. Congress fully extend federal mental health and addiction parity protections under the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) to Medicare (including Advantage Plans), Medicaid (fee for service), CHAMPUS, CHAMPVA, and TRICARE.
4. Congress act to incentivize access to quality SUD treatment by increasing Medicaid payment rates for SUD services to 100 percent of the Medicare rate for the same service for healthcare professionals who specialize in SUD treatment.

Read the full statement and policy recommendations [here](#).

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About the American Society of Addiction Medicine

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), founded in 1954, is a professional medical society representing over 8,000 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.