



ASAM

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Public Policy Statement on Abstinence

In accordance with data currently available, the National Council on Alcoholism and its medical component, the American Medical Society on Alcoholism, take the position that:

- 1. Abstinence from alcohol is necessary for recovery from the disease of alcoholism.**
- 2. Although abstinence is a means of achieving recovery, other factors by which a person's life are enriched are important: improved physical and emotional health, better work performance, more rewarding relationships with the family and society, and increased economic efficiency.**
- 3. As in many other diseases, relapses may take place but must never be thought to indicate that recovery is beyond reach. Any improvement is positive and should be recognized and encouraged as a prelude to recovery.**
- 4. There is a need for responsible research into alternate approaches, carried out with proper controls as well as the judicious publication of results when pertinent.**

However, in the present state of our knowledge, we firmly believe and emphasize that there can be no relaxation from the stated position that no alcoholic may return with safety to any use of alcohol.

Adopted by ASAM Board of Directors (then the American Medical Society on Alcoholism) September 1974

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