



# American Society of Addiction Medicine

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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND. January 5, 2006: ASAM Board Reviews Avenues to ABMS Certification in Addiction Medicine.

The Board of Directors of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has appointed a Medical Specialty Action Group (MSAG) to develop a knowledge base and make recommendations regarding the recognition of Addiction Medicine as a physician specialty by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). The MSAG held its inaugural meeting December 1-2 at the Hazelden Foundation, Center City, MN.

Certification by an ABMS Member Board is meant to provide assurance to the public that a physician specialist certified by an ABMS Member Board has successfully completed an approved educational program and an evaluation process. Certification requires completion of an accredited training and an examination designed to assess the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to provide quality patient care.

ASAM's President, Elizabeth F. Howell, M.D., FASAM, and MSAG Co-Chairs, Michael Miller, M.D., FASAM, FAPA (ASAM President-Elect) and Kevin Kunz, M.D., MPH, FASAM said that the Board's actions are prompted by ASAM members' increasing concern that too few physicians are trained to diagnose and treat patients with alcohol, nicotine or other drug problems, including problem use of prescription drugs.

Most patients and their families are uncertain about how to identify a physician who can help them with an alcohol or drug problem. ASAM has offered a certifying examination in addiction medicine for over 20 years and has certified 3,841 physicians. This certification examination, developed in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners, is not recognized by the ABMS.

The MSAG will review the ABMS' requirements to establish board certification and the requirements of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for creating programs to train physicians. The Group will prepare a report for the ASAM Board's April 2007 meeting. In addition to outlining the requirements and costs for achieving these goals, the report will present recommendations on the collaboration that will be required with ABMS Member Boards, medical specialty societies and other research, education and healthcare organizations to achieve ABMS board certification in addiction medicine.

The American Society of Addiction Medicine, founded in 1954, and with a seat in the American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates, is an association of over 3,000 physicians whose mission is to increase access to and improve the quality of addiction treatment; educate physicians, other health care providers and the public; support research and prevention; promote the appropriate role of the physician in the care of patients with addiction, and establish addiction medicine as a primary specialty recognized by professional organizations, governments, physicians, purchasers and consumers of health care services, and the general public.

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