



**COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ASAM LOBBY DAY
OCTOBER 23, 2013**

During your meetings, staff and Members of Congress may ask some questions that are difficult to answer. While we cannot anticipate every possible question, please find below some of the common questions/issues that may arise. **Remember, it is always OK to say you do not know and someone from the ASAM government relations staff will follow up.**

Sample Commonly Asked Questions/Issues

Question: *In principle, we are opposed to all insurance mandates. As a result we cannot help with the parity regulatory request.*

Answer:

- We appreciate your concern over mandates that can drive up the cost of health care. The parity law was enacted on a bipartisan basis and does not force an employer to provide addiction benefits – it simply requires these benefits be provided on par with medical benefits if they ARE offered under a plan. In addition, the Congressional Budget Office found that the law would only raise premiums 0.4%; not only is parity not expensive for employers - providing a good addiction benefit has been shown to reduce emergency department visits, decrease disability claims and increase workplace productivity.

QUESTION: *What is ASAM's position on medical marijuana and why?*

ANSWER:

- See ASAM policy statement.

QUESTION: *What should Congress do about prescription drug abuse?*

ANSWER:

- Refer to ASAM policy statement for ASAM-endorsed positions such as mandatory prescriber education. ASAM also supports rescheduling and re-labeling of certain opiate products. Ask the MOC to join the House Prescription Drug Abuse Caucus.

QUESTION: *Do you think employers should have to continue to pay for treatment for people like Charlie Sheen and Lindsay Lohan who repeatedly relapse?*

ANSWER:

- The investment in addiction treatment is profound. Treating an individual saves \$7 for every \$1 invested. With treatment, people can and do recover.

QUESTION: *How do you think Congress should fix the Medicare physician fee schedule (aka the SGR or "doc fix")?*

ANSWER:

- As a physician, I would like Congress to find a long-term solution, but this is not my area of expertise. I'd like to talk to you today about... [and pivot back to ASAM talking points such as implementation of parity].