



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

OFFICERS

President

R. Jeffrey Goldsmith, MD, DLFAPA, DFASAM

President-Elect

Kelly Clark, MD, MBA, DFASAM

Vice-President

Mark Kraus, MD, DFASAM

Secretary

Margaret A.E. Jarvis, MD, DFASAM

Treasurer

Brian Hurley, MD, MBA, FASAM

Immediate Past President

Stuart Gitlow, MD, MPH, MBA, DFAPA, FASAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Directors-at-Large

Anthony P. Albanese, MD, DFASAM

Paul H. Earley, MD, DFASAM

Marc Galanter, MD, DFASAM

Petros Levounis, MD, MA, DFASAM

Yngvild K. Olsen, MD, MPH, FASAM

John C. Tanner, DO, DFASAM

Regional Directors

Region I

Jeffery Selzer, MD, DFASAM

Region II

Jeffery Wilkins, MD, DFASAM

Region III

Kenneth Freedman, MD, MS, MBA, FACP,
DFASAM

Region IV

Mark P. Schwartz, MD, DFASAM

Region V

J. Ramsay Farah, MD, MPH, FAAP, FACMP,
DFASAM

Region VI

Gavin Bart, MD, PhD, FACP, DFASAM

Region VII

Howard Wetsman, MD, DFASAM

Region VIII

William F. Haning, III, MD, DFASAM, DFAPA

Region IX

Ronald Lim, MD, DFASAM

Region X

Terry Alley, MD, DFASAM

Ex-Officio

Todd J. Kammerzelt, MD, FASAM

Ilse R. Levin, DO

Surita Rao, MD, FASAM

Scott Teitelbaum, MD, DFASAM

Norman Wetterau, MD, FAAP, DFASAM

Penny S. Mills, MBA, EVP/CEO

FOUNDING PRESIDENT

Ruth Fox, MD

1895-1989

March 20, 2017

The Honorable Richard Briggs
Tennessee State Senate
District 7
301 6th Avenue North
Suite 317 War Memorial Bldg.
Nashville, TN 37243

Re: Support for SB839

Dear Senator Briggs,

On behalf of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), a national medical specialty organization representing more than 4,300 physicians and other clinicians who specialize in the treatment of addiction, and the Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine (TNSAM), we would like to thank you for introducing SB839 to expand health insurance coverage for behavioral health and addiction treatment services and enhance enforcement and oversight of that parity. We offer our strong support for the passage of this bill.

TNSAM and ASAM are dedicated to increasing access and improving quality of addiction treatment for patients in Tennessee and across the country. Ensuring mental health and addiction treatment services are covered at parity with medical and surgical services by payers and health plans is a critical part of our efforts to improve access to care. We believe that SB839 will effectively implement and enforce parity protections by revising requirements for mental health parity with medical health insurance statutes to enforce certain demonstrations of parity and reports from insurers.


Your demonstrated commitment to implementing parity in your state is illustrated in your sponsorship of not just this bill, but three others that also take important steps to bring mental health parity to Tennessee: SB836, 837 and 838. SB836 requires the Department of Commerce and Insurance to implement and enforce, and make an annual report concerning the Department's efforts to implement and enforce, federal and state statutes concerning mental health parity. SB837 requires managed care

organizations participating in the TennCare program to annually report to the Bureau of TennCare information regarding treatment of claims for mental health and addiction benefits in relation to the requirements of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. SB838 requires every health insurance carrier that issues health benefit plans to submit an annual report concerning mental health and substance abuse benefits and claims.

SB839 comprehensively enacts parity by encompassing all of these provisions as well as others. TNSAM and ASAM support the passage of each of these bills as they would be an improvement to expand the state's health insurance coverage for behavioral health and addiction treatment services. We implore the Senate to consider passage of SB839 as it is the most in-depth of the four pieces of legislation that will ensure widespread mental health parity implementation that is maintained through enhanced enforcement and oversight.

TNSAM and ASAM share the state of Tennessee's goal of providing quality and evidence-based behavioral health and addiction treatment services at parity with medical and surgical services. We thank you for introducing this legislation and offer our support for its passage. Please do not hesitate to contact Brad Bachman, Manager of State Government Relations, at (301) 547-4107 or bbachman@asam.org, if TNSAM or ASAM can be of service to you. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Jeffrey Goldsmith MD". The signature is fluid and cursive.

R. Jeffrey Goldsmith, MD, DLFAPA, DFASAM
President, American Society of Addiction Medicine

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Reach". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tom Reach, MD, DFASAM
President, Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine