



# ASAM

The Voice of Addiction Medicine  
American Society of Addiction Medicine

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## Physician Groups Band Together to Address America's Opioid Crisis

*ASAM joins AMA-convened task force to engage physicians and curb opioid abuse*

**CHEVY CHASE, MD, Wednesday, July 29** – Opioid misuse is a serious public health problem that has reached crisis levels across the United States, with [44 people dying each day](#) from overdose of opioids, and many more and many more who get addiction. Recognizing the urgency and serious impact of this issue on the health of hundreds of thousands of patients across the country, today the American Medical Association (AMA) Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse announced the first of several national recommendations to address this growing epidemic.

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) is participating in the [AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse](#). In total, the Task Force represents [27 physician organizations including the AMA, American Osteopathic Association, 17 specialty and seven state medical societies as well as the American Dental Association](#) that are committed to identifying the best practices to combat this public health crisis and move swiftly to implement those practices across the country.

“The help of every clinician in every treatment setting is needed to help bring an end to this public health epidemic,” said ASAM’s representative on the AMA Task Force, Richard Soper, MD, JD, FASAM. “ASAM thanks the AMA for convening this broad stakeholder group to work together on a comprehensive public health approach to end opioid misuse in America.”

The task force’s initial focus will be on efforts that urge physicians to register for and use state-based prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) as part of the decision-making process when considering treatment options. When PDMPs are fully-funded, contain relevant clinical information and are available at the point of care, they have been shown to be an effective tool to help physicians identify patients who may be misusing opioids, and to implement treatment strategies including referral for those in need of further care.

“PDMPs vary greatly in efficacy and functionality from state to state,” said AMA Board Chair-Elect Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA. “Alone, they will not end this crisis, but they can provide helpful clinical information, and because they are available in nearly every state, PDMPs can be effective in turning the tide to end opioid abuse in the right direction.”

The AMA has long advocated in support of important initiatives aimed at addressing prescription drug misuse and diversion. This includes continued work with the administration and Congress toward

developing balanced approaches to end prescription opioid misuse, as well as supporting congressional and state efforts to modernize and fully fund PDMPs.

The new initiative will seek to significantly enhance physicians' education on safe, effective and evidence-based prescribing. This includes a new resource [web page](#) that houses vital information on PDMPs and their effectiveness for physician practices, as well as, a robust national marketing, social and communications campaign to significantly raise awareness of the steps that physicians can take to combat this epidemic and ensure they are aware of all options available to them for appropriate prescribing.

"The sad truth is that every death related to opioid misuse could have been prevented with effective treatment," said Dr. Soper. "In forming this Task Force, the AMA takes a leadership role in combating the devastating consequences associated with disease of addiction."

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#### **About the American Society of Addiction Medicine**

*The [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) is a national medical specialty society of over 3,400 physicians and associated professionals. Its mission is to increase access to and improve the quality of addiction treatment, to educate physicians, and other health care providers and the public, to support research and prevention, to promote the appropriate role of the physician in the care of patients with addictive disorders, and to establish Addiction Medicine as a specialty recognized by professional organizations, governments, physicians, purchasers and consumers of health care services and the general public. ASAM was founded in 1954, and has had a seat in the American Medical Association House of Delegates since 1988. Follow ASAM on Twitter [@ASAMorg](#).*

*For more information about the American Society of Addiction Medicine please visit [www.asam.org/](http://www.asam.org/).*

#### **About the AMA**

*The American Medical Association is the premier national organization dedicated to empowering the nation's physicians to continually provide safer, higher quality, and more efficient care to patients and communities. For more than 165 years the AMA has been unwavering in its commitment to using its unique position and knowledge to shape a healthier future for America.*