



ASAM

The Voice of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Addiction Medicine

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Alexis Geier Horan, ageier@asam.org, 202-276-7873

American Society of Addiction Medicine releases standards of care for addiction specialist physicians *Standards apply to any physician treating addiction*

CHEVY CHASE, MD, FEBRUARY 20, 2014 – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) announces its release of the Standards of Care for the Addiction Specialist Physician. Drafted by a diverse panel of addiction treatment providers, researchers and academicians and clinical outcomes experts, this document enumerates the essential treatment standards that should be met by a physician who manages or oversees the care of a patient with addiction and related disorders.

“Addiction is a medical disease and should be treated as such. Until now, there have never been standards of care that apply to the physician treating addiction,” offers Dr. Stuart Gitlow, ASAM’s President. “We hope this consensus document raises the bar for what physicians are expected to do when they treat an addicted patient.”

Nearly 1 in 10 Americans suffer from a substance use disorder and the related consequences of the disease. Many state and federal lawmakers have declared that addiction is at epidemic levels nationwide and that treatment is a necessary component of any demand reduction strategy. According to Dr. Michael Miller, chair of the multi-specialty work group that oversaw the Standards development, “Standards play an important role in guiding improved physician performance and improved patient outcomes. Patients should expect that the physicians treating their disease are following protocols that yield thorough, effective care.”

ASAM has begun working on the development of performance measures that will gauge whether or not these standards have been met. As in other areas of healthcare, there is a growing demand for quality improvement tools that reinforce high quality care. “Disseminating standards of care is only a first step toward improving addiction treatment outcomes,” comments Dr. Margaret Jarvis, chair of the Standards Expert Panel. “ASAM looks forward to a collaborative effort among addiction physician specialty and primary care associations and boards, and the federal agencies that help advance addiction treatment, to encourage the wide adoption of these standards in everyday practice.”

The Standards of Care for Addiction Specialist Physicians can be accessed [HERE](#), on our website www.asam.org.

*Endorsed by the American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine.
Supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.*

The [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) is a national medical specialty society of over 3,000 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.