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The Voice of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Addiction Medicine

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American Society of Addiction Medicine Releases National Practice Guideline for the Use of Medications in the Treatment of Addiction Involving Opioid Use

CHEVY CHASE, MD, JUNE 2, 2015 – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) announces the release of its National Practice Guideline for the Use of Medications in the Treatment of Addiction Involving Opioid Use (*Practice Guideline*). The *Practice Guideline* will assist clinicians prescribing pharmacotherapies to patients with addiction related to opioid use. It addresses knowledge gaps about the benefits of treatment medications and their role in recovery, while guiding evidence-based coverage standards by payers.

The *Practice Guideline* is a timely resource as the United States is currently experiencing an opioid epidemic. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 2.1 million Americans live with pain reliever opioid addiction disease, while 467,000 Americans live with heroin opioid addiction disease. Overdose deaths are now comparable to the number of deaths caused by motor vehicle crashes, and the societal costs of opioid misuse is estimated to be above \$55 billion per year.

Medications are both clinical and cost-effective interventions. While the effectiveness of medications has been researched and documented, their utilization is low and coverage varies dramatically. Less than 30% of treatment programs offer medications and less than half of eligible patients in those programs receive medications.

According to Dr. Jeffrey Goldsmith, ASAM President, “Opioid addiction is a chronic, life-threatening disease with significant medical, emotional, criminal justice and societal costs. This guideline is the first to address all the available medications to treat opioid addiction. It will help save lives.”

ASAM worked with Treatment Research Institute (TRI) to develop the *Practice Guideline* using the RAND/UCLA Appropriateness Method (RAM), a consensus process that combines scientific evidence with clinical knowledge. A Guideline Committee, made up of experts from multiple disciplines, including addiction medicine, psychiatry, obstetrics/gynecology and internal medicine, participated in the consensus process and helped write the guideline. Dr. Kyle Kampman chaired the Guideline Committee and served as TRI’s Principal Investigator. “The *Practice Guideline* is the most current document of its kind combining review of existing guidelines, current literature and a systematic process for developing practice recommendations.”

ASAM has been working on a number of quality improvement initiatives. The *Practice Guideline* builds upon several other recent ASAM clinical documents, including the "Standards of Care: For the Addiction Specialist Physician" and "Performance Measures for the Addiction Specialist Physician."

According to Dr. Margaret Jarvis, chair of the Quality Improvement Council, ASAM's guideline oversight committee, "The *Practice Guideline* is an invaluable document for the addiction medicine field. It will assure a more uniform delivery of quality patient care. We are making a copy of the full guideline available now but are planning publication and a summary article for the *Journal of Addiction Medicine* and the release of derivative products and educational activities later this summer and fall. We want the *Practice Guideline* to be widely used and accepted."

The National Practice Guideline for the Use of Medications in the Treatment of Addiction Involving Opioid Use can be accessed [HERE](#), on ASAM's website www.asam.org .

The [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) is a national medical specialty society of over 3,200 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](#).