



ASAM

The Voice of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Addiction Medicine

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American Society of Addiction Medicine releases new treatment criteria, modernizing care for addictive disorders

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) today released the third edition (2013) of *The ASAM Criteria*. The new text modernizes standards for treatment of addiction and co-occurring conditions, in line with major advancements in the understanding of the disease of addiction over the past decade.

ASAM also announced its plans associated with two products that complement *The ASAM Criteria*: *The ASAM-TRI Quality Review* and *The ASAM Criteria Software*. Together these products will further unify the addiction field around a single set of criteria for treatment.

The most widely used criteria by treatment professionals, *The ASAM Criteria*, is a comprehensive set of guidelines that describes the continuum of addiction health services. The criteria take professionals through the process of assessment, service planning, placement, continued stay and transfer/discharge of patients. The ASAM-TRI Quality Review, an intended joint project of ASAM and the Treatment Research Institute (TRI), will provide an independent, expert evaluation of treatment programs.

"Individuals with addiction often receive care that is outdated, inappropriate or does not meet their needs. In addition, it has not been possible for patients, their families and referral sources to easily find out about the content or quality of care provided by treatment programs before the patient enters the program," said TRI CEO A. Thomas McLellan, PhD. "The ASAM-TRI Quality Review will use *The ASAM Criteria* to provide consumers and clinicians with clear and relevant information about the quality of addiction treatment programs."

The new edition of *The ASAM Criteria*, published by The Change Companies[®], is now offered in a user-friendly design – in book and web versions – that guides treatment providers from initial assessment through long-term disease management. There is also forthcoming software, funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), designed to be used in tandem with the book.

"The software is an interactive guide that shows the viewer exactly how to conduct a person-centered process from beginning assessment through long-term disease management," said David Gastfriend, MD, Chief Architect of *The ASAM Criteria Software*. "With this software, the

field finally has a validated, in-depth, and consistent means for assessing every patient by every intake counselor across the country.”

The ASAM Criteria Software has completed successful beta testing by health officials in Norway and in multiple sites in Milwaukee County here in the U.S. and is now initiating a broad U.S. demonstration phase.

New content in *The ASAM Criteria* includes sections on gambling and tobacco use disorders. Also added are special sections on treatment in the criminal justice system, older adults, parents receiving treatment concurrently with their children, pregnant women and patients in safety-sensitive occupations. New perspectives on the role of the physician in addiction treatment and a new ASAM definition of addiction also are included. The new edition is also compatible with the update of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition*, which was released earlier this year.

“We wanted criteria that increased access to care and that stretched resources to give people with addiction all the care they need,” said *The ASAM Criteria* Chief Editor, David Mee-Lee, MD. “The goal of the criteria is to unify the addiction field around a single set of criteria that will provide individualized, patient-centered care.”

The latest edition of *The ASAM Criteria* supports the mission of healthcare reform to contain costs while improving quality of care and providing measurable outcomes. The criteria give treatment professionals a step-by-step guide through the continuum of care suited to each patient’s needs, which will result in improved utilization of services and outcomes. Receiving care that works will naturally be more cost-effective.

“Addiction treatment needs to conform to evidence-based principles, for reasons of better patient outcomes and greater efficiency,” said Stuart Gitlow, MD, president of ASAM. “The ASAM-TRI Quality Review would ensure consumers get the best evidence-based quality care, and *The ASAM Criteria* can unify what has been a fragmented system and encourage effective and efficient use of resources.”

The development of the criteria is overseen by the Steering Committee of the Coalition for National Clinical Criteria, whose members are representative of major stakeholders in the addiction field, including NASADAD, NAATP, NAADAC, NCADD, managed behavioral health, the Department of Defense and Veterans Health. Since their creation in 1991, the criteria have been revised in 1996 and 2001, and have become required, in some form, in over 30 states.

The [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) is a national medical specialty society representing 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.

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