



## ASAM Advocacy News

### ASAM Mission

Increase access to and improve the quality of addictions treatment.

Educate physicians, medical and osteopathic students, and the public.

Promote research and prevention.

Establish addiction medicine as a specialty recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties.

### ASAM advocates for parity in:

1. Training, credentialing and privileging
2. Access to treatment
3. Payment for treatment

### In the News

**President Obama Nominates ONDCP Director.** Seattle Police Chief R. Gil Kerlikowske has been nominated to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Mr. Kerlikowske brings 36 years of law enforcement experience to this position. Prior to this nomination, ASAM sent a letter to President Obama's ONDCP transition team leaders advocating for the selection of an ONDCP Director who has an orientation toward treatment. No announcements have been made regarding nominations for ONDCP's Deputy Directors of Demand Reduction or Supply Reduction.

**Stimulus Bill Contains Healthcare-Related Provisions.** Some of the health care-related provisions in the latest version include: increases in Medicaid FMAP payments to states, COBRA subsidies and other health insurance assistance programs, funding for clinical comparative effectiveness research and funding toward adoption and use of health information technology. ASAM and other advocates lobbied for an increase in federal funds for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services agency, the only division within the US Public Health Service that did not receive emergency funding. President Obama signed the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on Tuesday, February 17, 2009.

**President Signs SCHIP Into Law.** On Wednesday, February 4, 2009, President Obama signed into law a bill that reauthorized the government-funded State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). In addition to extending children's health insurance to an additional 4 million children, this law also extends mental health and addiction parity to the SCHIP program. While the Congressional Budget Office estimates that this expanded coverage will cost the government an additional \$32.8 billion, a 62 cent-per-pack increase in the cigarette tax should offset most of this.

**Parity Regulations Under Development.** Three federal agencies (the Departments of Labor, Treasury and Health and Human Services) share the

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responsibility for developing the rules and regulations that will determine how the parity law is implemented. While the process has been slowed down by the delay in nominations at these agencies, Labor Secretary-nominee, Rep. Hilda Solis, has committed to the swift development of patient-friendly parity regulations once she's confirmed. The Department of Labor has the lead in this regulatory process.

## Upcoming Events

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**American Medical Association (AMA) National Advocacy Conference.** Washington, DC, March 10-11, 2009. [[Registration and information](#)]

**Cover the Uninsured Week.** A project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. March 22-28, 2009. [[Information on how to get involved.](#)]

**American Psychiatric Association (APA) Annual Meeting.** San Francisco, California, May 16-21, 2009. [[Registration and information](#)]

**National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP) Annual Conference.** West Palm Beach, Florida, May 17-20, 2009. [[Registration and information](#)]

Have events that you'd like to see posted in this newsletter? Please send your suggestions to [advocacy@asam.org](mailto:advocacy@asam.org).

## Special Notes

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**New to Grassroots Advocacy?** If you've never lobbied Congress or otherwise advocated for a cause, it can seem like an intimidating endeavor. ASAM's government relations department is here to help you for your first time or your fiftieth. Did you know ASAM hosts an advocacy website [[ASAM Advocacy Website](#)]? On it, you'll find:

- information about ASAM **advocacy events**
- updates on current federal and state **legislation of interest**
- an **advocacy toolkit** complete with: an advocacy tutorial, instructions on how to contact Congress and what to say, a glossary of advocacy terms (what does "mark-up mean, what happens when a bill is "hot-lined", etc), and relevant support materials and reports.
- the latest edition of **ASAM's Advocacy e-newsletter**

- ASAM public policy statements

## What Are Your Addiction Policy Issues?

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ASAM's leadership needs your feedback to help determine ASAM's legislative policy priorities. Please send your responses to [advocacy@asam.org](mailto:advocacy@asam.org) and indicate what federal (and/or state) healthcare policies are priorities for you.

\*\*In your email, please provide as much detail about the policy and the problems/solutions associated with it, as possible. Thank you!

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## American Society of Addiction Medicine

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