



## 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 Signs Mental Health and Addiction Parity Bill.** On Friday, October 3, 2008, President Bush signed the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 into law. Earlier in the week, both the US House and the US Senate approved this legislation as part of a larger financial rescue package. In summary, this “parity” bill would require group health plans that currently offer coverage for drug and alcohol addiction and mental illness to provide the same level of coverage as is offered for medical and surgical benefits. For a summary of this bill, visit [Thomas.gov](#), a legislative search engine provided by the Library of Congress.

**California Governor Repeals UPPL Law.** Introduced by CA Assembly Member Paul Krekorian in February of 2007, AB 1461 prohibits insurers from including alcohol and drug exclusions in health insurance policies. Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed this bill twice before finally signing it on Tuesday, September 30, 2008.

**Submit Questions for October 7 Presidential Debate.** WebMD has partnered with the Commission on Presidential Debates to gather questions from consumers concerned with the future of health care in our country. Visit WebMD’s [Ask The Presidential Candidates](#) blog site today to submit your questions.

### Advocacy Efforts at the State Level

**Contact ASAM:**  
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Donald J. Kurth,  
MD, FASAM  
Chair, Legislative  
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**MA Governor Signs Parity Bill.** On August 5, 2008, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed the mental health parity bill, no. 4423, into law. This bill requires Massachusetts health insurers to cover mental health and substance use disorders in the same way they treat other medical conditions.

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## Upcoming Events

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

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## Special Notes


**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**

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## What Are Your Addiction Policy Issues?

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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