



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ADDICTION MEDICINE

ASAM

## ASAM Advocacy News

Health Care Reform Update

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### 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 Signs FDA Tobacco Regulation Bill.** On June 22, 2009, President Obama enacted bipartisan legislation that gives the federal Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate the sale and marketing of tobacco products. It is hoped that this law will advance public health efforts to significantly reduce addiction to, and disability associated with, tobacco use in America.

**House Committees of Jurisdiction Release Healthcare Reform Bill.** The three House Committees with jurisdiction over health care reform, House Ways and Means, House Energy and Commerce, and House Education and Labor (the Tri-Committees) collaborated on one health care reform bill and released a draft proposal on Friday, June 17. The three Committees held hearings on the "Tri-Committee health care reform bill" the week of June 22, 2009 and will formally consider the legislation after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Congressional recess.

**Senate HELP Introduces "Affordable Health Choices Act."** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee released a draft version of health care reform legislation on June 9, 2009. This bill includes an employer mandate and a public insurance option. The HELP Committee has already begun its mark-up of the bill and will continue consideration of the bill through the early part of July.

**Senate Finance Committee Issues Proposals for Healthcare Reform.** Senators Max Baucus (D-MT) and Charles Grassley (R-IA), Senate Finance Committee Chair and Ranking Member, respectively, issued three separate healthcare reform policy proposals that, together, offer health care reform policy

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alternatives. The first was offered on April 28 and addressed delivery reform. The second, issued on May 12, included policy options for expanding healthcare coverage. The third and final proposal, released on May 20, covers the financing aspect of health care reform. One of the finance options is an increase in the alcohol excise tax. ASAM sent a letter to Senators Baucus and Grassley endorsing this tax increase. A bill incorporating all three proposals is expected to be released following the Congressional July 4 recess.

## Special Notes

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**Visit Your Member of Congress at Home.** Members of Congress will be working in their home districts during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Congressional recess. Be on the look-out for an ASAM Advocacy Alert with instructions on how to contact your Member and messaging regarding the inclusion of addiction treatment in health care reform legislation.

**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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