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**Media Contact**

Rebecca Reid

410-212-3843

[rreid@schmidtpa.com](mailto:rreid@schmidtpa.com)

## **ASAM Commends Congress for Strengthening Addiction Treatment Workforce**

*The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (H.R. 1865) Expands Funding for an  
Addiction Treatment Workforce That Is Currently Insufficient Given Addiction Epidemic in US*

**ROCKVILLE, MD.** – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) commended Congress for expanding funding to strengthen the nation’s addiction treatment workforce in a bipartisan, end-of-year appropriations package that passed today. The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (H.R. 1865) includes significant funding for policies that bolster the addiction treatment workforce to help increase access to care for people living with addiction.

Specifically, ASAM applauded lawmakers for appropriating **\$26.7 million to establish the Mental and Substance Use Disorders Workforce Training Demonstration**, as authorized in the 21st Century Cures Act. This program will provide grants to institutions that provide training opportunities for medical residents and fellows to practice psychiatry and addiction medicine, as well as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and others to provide mental and substance use disorders services, in underserved, community-based settings that integrate primary care with mental and substance use disorders prevention and treatment services. In addition, the legislation appropriated **\$12 million to establish the Loan Repayment Program for Substance Use Disorder Treatment Workforce**, as authorized in last year’s landmark opioid legislation, the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. This program will provide student loan relief to addiction treatment professionals who commit to working in designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas or in counties where the average overdose death rate is higher than the national average.

ASAM has long advocated for increased funding that would substantially strengthen the ability of America’s addiction treatment professionals to provide quality, evidence-based care to patients who need it. According to the 2017 final [report](#) of The President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, there are about 4,400 actively practicing certified addiction specialist physicians (addiction medicine and addiction psychiatry) in the US. This falls well below the 6,000 addiction specialists needed based on a 2009 estimate, and even that number is now insufficient given the current addiction and overdose crisis.



**ASAM** American Society of  
Addiction Medicine

Finally, ASAM applauded other positive steps taken by the legislation, which includes appropriating **\$1.5 billion for State Opioid Response (SOR) Grants** for carrying out activities pertaining to opioids and stimulants and provisions to raise the minimum age of sale for tobacco products from 18 to 21. ASAM will continue to advocate for strategic and multifaceted solutions to drive the development of a more accessible, effective, robust, and comprehensive national addiction prevention and treatment infrastructure.

### **About ASAM**

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), founded in 1954, is a professional medical society representing over 6,000 physicians, clinicians and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction. For more information, visit [www.ASAM.org](http://www.ASAM.org).

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