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USING THIS FORM LETTER.**

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MONTH DAY, YEAR

Dear **INSERT NAME OF INSURER**,

On behalf of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), I am writing to request that **INSERT INSURER NAME** immediately review all policies that bar, limit and/or restrict non-psychiatrist addiction medicine physicians from inclusion in its in-network provider panel. Despite having earned board certification or completed an accredited residency/fellowship program in addiction medicine that identify such physicians as the most trained and experienced physicians in their field, we have heard from non-psychiatrist addiction medicine physicians that they have been excluded from **INSERT INSURER NAME's** provider networks. In light of these troubling revelations, ASAM's Board of Directors adopted [policy](#) recommending that insurers include appropriately credentialed addiction medicine physicians in their in-network provider panels. Accordingly, we urge **INSERT INSURER NAME** to reconsider and appropriately revise all policies that inappropriately exclude non-psychiatrist addiction medicine physicians from in-network participation.

Non-psychiatrist physicians certified by ASAM, the American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and/or the American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM) have earned board certifications that designate them as the most trained and experienced specialists available to provide quality treatment to patients diagnosed with an addiction. Non-psychiatrist physicians who have completed an accredited residency/fellowship program are similarly distinguished in their addiction medicine expertise.

The aforementioned certifications and qualifications are widely recognized by stakeholders in the medical community. The American Medical Association (AMA) has recognized the expertise of addiction specialist physicians and has also resolved to support all physician specialties providing addiction treatment. Many states and

the federal government also recognize these certifications and qualifications as a measure of physician knowledge and skill to treat patients with an addiction.

By providing addiction treatment benefits, insurers obligate themselves to facilitate high quality and readily available addiction treatment. Many mission statements state the guiding principle of ensuring the right treatment at the right time in the right place, all while using resources efficiently, potentially lowering overall health care costs. Excluding non-psychiatrist addiction medicine physicians and limiting provider panels significantly undermines this principle and risks the lives of millions who need treatment.

Given the rapid evolution and transition of the addiction medicine field, we recognize that **INSERT INSURER NAME** may be unaware of the recognition of addiction medicine as a medical subspecialty by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) under the American Board of Preventive Medicine. While the pathway to addiction medicine board certification for non-psychiatrist physicians is now through ABPM, all physicians previously certified by ASAM, ABAM, and AOA should be recognized for their extensive education and experience demonstrated by a rigorous board examination process. Additionally, these highly accomplished physicians are required to maintain continuous certification to promote lifelong learning in their fields. Moreover, physicians who have completed one of the accredited addiction medicine fellowship programs are recognized as having completed the highest level of training in addiction medicine. We believe that it is in the best interest of access to quality patient care that payers invite non-psychiatrist board-certified addiction medicine physicians and those who have completed an accredited residency/fellowship program in addiction medicine to their in-network provider panels.

Stakeholders in the medical community, hospitals, state governments, and payers alike have all recognized the aforementioned board certifications and fellowship program completions as the appropriate qualifications for identifying physicians recognized for their expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of addiction and related health conditions. As millions in the United States struggle with addiction, limiting in-network provider panels to psychiatrists can only accelerate the dramatic increase in the number of drug overdose deaths, add to the number of individuals with untreated addiction, and strain the already limited number of qualified physicians available to provide treatment. To ensure that treatment needs are met for those struggling with addiction, ASAM recommends that **INSERT INSURER NAME** promptly provide for the inclusion in provider networks of non-psychiatrist physicians certified by the ABPM, ASAM, ABAM, or AOA in addiction medicine, as well as physicians who have completed an accredited residency or fellowship in addiction medicine.

To further the dialogue about our concerns, we request a call as soon as possible with the appropriate individuals from your organization. An ASAM staff member will follow-up with your office to schedule a meeting to further discuss this request.

Sincerely,

Paul Earley, MD, DFASAM
President, American Society of Addiction Medicine