



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2019

Media Contact

Rebecca Reid

410-212-3843

rreid@schmidtpa.com

Addiction Medicine Leaders Deliver Urgent Message to Congress: Comprehensively Address America's Addiction Crisis

*Physician and Other Clinician Advocates Meet with Congress on Capitol Hill to Urge Lawmakers to Deliver
Legislative Solutions Proportionate to the Scale of the Crisis*

ROCKVILLE, Md. – Physician leaders and other clinicians from the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) (ASAM) converged on Capitol Hill today to call on members of Congress to take bold, swift steps to reverse the course of the addiction and overdose crisis in the US by supporting key legislation that would close the gap in teaching, standardizing and covering addiction medicine.

“We have reached a tipping point in the addiction and overdose crisis that touches nearly every community and family in this country,” said Paul H. Earley, MD, president of ASAM. “This seminal moment calls for bold, courageous and bipartisan action from Congress. We know what needs to be done to meet this crisis head on; now it is up to lawmakers to provide the foundation and tools to teach, standardize and cover addiction medicine. By laying this important groundwork, we can begin to stem the tide of overdose deaths that have cut short so many promising lives and left devastated those who felt helpless to save their loved ones.”

ASAM advocates urged Congress to support the following legislation to address America's addiction crisis:

- The **Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act** (H.R. 2569/S.1365). This legislation will provide critical funding and resources now and over the next decade to strengthen our nation's addiction prevention and treatment infrastructure and expand access to evidence-based care. The bill allocates billions of dollars in funding to train health professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of substance use disorder (SUD) and helps standardize addiction treatment by directing the Department of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), to develop model standards for the regulation of SUD treatment services based on Levels of Care standards set forth by ASAM in 2013 or an equally strong set of standards. It also allocates funding to states, local governments, and other institutions to support SUD treatment programs and expanded access to evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.
- The **Opioid Workforce Act of 2019** (H.R. 3431). This legislation will increase the number of residency positions eligible for graduate medical education payments under Medicare for

hospitals that have, or are in the process of establishing, approved residency programs in addiction psychiatry, addiction medicine or pain medicine, with an aggregate increase of 1,000 positions over a five-year period.

- The **Medication Access and Training Expansion (MATE) Act** is legislation designed to ensure all DEA controlled substance prescribers have a baseline knowledge of how to prevent, identify, treat, and manage patients with SUD. The MATE Act will require that all DEA controlled substance prescribers receive one-time training on treating and managing patients with SUD, unless such a prescriber is otherwise qualified. It will also allow accredited medical schools and residency programs, physician assistant schools, and schools of advanced practice nursing to fulfill the training requirement through a comprehensive curriculum that meets the standards laid out in statute, without having to coordinate the development of such education with an outside medical society or state licensing body. Importantly, the legislation's required education also satisfies the DATA 2000 X-waiver training requirement to prescribe certain medications for addiction treatment, as long as a separate DATA 2000 X-waiver is required by law. This legislation is expected to be filed soon.
- The **Humane Correctional Health Care Act** (H.R. 4141 / S. 2305). This legislation will allow states to use federal Medicaid matching funds to cover healthcare services provided to inmates of public institutions under Medicaid.
- The **Community Re-entry through Addiction Treatment to Enhance (CREATE) Opportunities Act** (H.R. 3496 / S. 1983). This legislation will create a new grant program within the Department of Justice for state and local governments to cover and provide evidence-based opioid use disorder (OUD) treatments, including medications for addiction treatment, in their correctional facilities and connect individuals to continued OUD treatment upon release into the community.

Additionally, ASAM advocates are asking Congress to make strategic investments to incentivize and train clinicians to specialize in the prevention and treatment of SUD by fully funding previously authorized programs. This includes allocating **\$25 million** in the fiscal year 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for the **Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Workforce Loan Repayment Program** and **\$10 million** for the **Mental and Substance Use Disorders Workforce Training Demonstration Program**.

"We know it's possible to make inroads and see real progress in preventing addiction and advancing its treatment," concluded Dr. Earley. "And while the cost of addressing every facet of the addiction crisis is substantial, the cost of doing less than what is absolutely necessary is far more. We need the political will of lawmakers to pursue bold, systemic solutions. There is no time left for incremental policy changes – we need to come together as a nation to both implement and fund the programs that will comprehensively address the complex, chronic disease of addiction."

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. ###