



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

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In Letter to House E&C Committee, American Society of Addiction Medicine Outlines Promising Legislation to Combat America's Opioid Overdose Epidemic

ROCKVILLE, MD (May 9, 2018) – Today the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) submitted a letter to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce as it considers legislation to address the opioid misuse, addiction, and overdose epidemic. The letter, submitted to Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) and Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ), urges the Committee to approve bills that expand the provision of evidence-based treatment, strengthen America's addiction treatment infrastructure, and bolster the nation's addiction treatment workforce.

“We commend this Committee and its leadership for dedicating significant time and resources to addressing the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic, which has contributed to the 64,000 drug overdose deaths in 2016 alone and an estimated \$500 billion-plus economic cost—a fraction of the total cost to society,” said Kelly Clark, MD, MBA, DFAPA, DFASAM, president of ASAM. “Turning the tide on the current crisis and preventing future crises related to substance misuse and addiction require a new approach to the delivery of substance use prevention, addiction treatment, and recovery support services. Considering all the lives we have lost and all the lives we still risk losing, the time for transformational change is now.”

ASAM expressed its strong support for legislation that would expand access to evidence-based treatment for individuals living with addiction, including:

- The ***Reinforcing Evidence-Based Standards Under Law in Treating Substance Abuse (RESULTS) Act*** (H.R. 5272), as introduced, which would require grant, loan, and other recipients of funds from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for mental health or substance use disorder prevention or treatment to use evidence-based practices;
- The ***Addiction Treatment Access Improvement Act*** (H.R. 3692); the ***Enhancing Access to Addiction Treatment Act of 2018*** (S. 2711); and the ***Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Act*** (H.R. 5102) which together would make strategic investments to incentivize clinicians to work in programs and practices that specialize in the treatment of substance use disorder and addiction; and

- The **Medicaid Reentry Act** (H.R. 4005), which would grant states new flexibility to restart benefits for Medicaid-eligible incarcerated individuals 30 days prior to release. This legislation would better facilitate uninterrupted, evidence-based treatment for individuals during a transition when they are at heightened risk of overdose and death.

Additionally, ASAM expressed support for the *Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act* (H.R. 3545) with enhanced protections and a limited repeal of the IMD Medicaid exclusion for residential treatment programs that can deliver services consistent with the [ASAM Criteria](#) or other nationally-recognized criteria and provide evidence-based substance use disorder treatment, including access to essential medications for the treatment of addiction. Currently, the law prohibits federal Medicaid financing for care provided to most patients in mental health and substance use disorder residential treatment facilities larger than 16 beds.

ASAM submitted the letter as the Committee considers legislation that could become part of a comprehensive opioid package. After the health subcommittee voted on April 25 to advance more than 50 bills designed to address the opioid-use epidemic, the full Energy and Commerce Committee is scheduled to continue the markup process today, May 9, and again on Thursday, May 17.

“We urge the Committee to include these bipartisan bills in its opioid legislative package, as they provide critical tools and resources to help addiction professionals combat this ongoing public health emergency. We look forward to working with Congress as the legislative process moves forward,” said Dr. Clark.

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About ASAM

The American Society of Addiction Medicine, founded in 1954, is a professional society representing over 5,000 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.