



**MORE TRAINING NEEDED TO ADDRESS ADDICTION WORKFORCE SHORTAGE**

*Congress Should Fund Authorized Demonstration Program at HRSA in FY20*

<b>Program</b>	<b>Appropriations Bill</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>FY20 Recommendation</b>
Mental and Substance Use Disorder Workforce Training Demonstration Program	Labor-HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)	\$10 million

Treating the 20.7 million Americans with a substance use disorder (SUD) will require training that is too often lacking in our nation’s current addiction workforce.<sup>i</sup> There are only about 4,400 actively practicing certified addiction specialist physicians in the United States – far below the 6,000 that were needed based on an estimate in 2009, long before the peak of the opioid overdose epidemic.<sup>ii</sup> As of February 2019, only 66 of the nation’s 187 accredited medical schools offer addiction medicine fellowships – compared with 276 accredited fellowship programs in sports medicine – and only 40 of those have met the certification criteria set by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.<sup>iii,iv</sup>

Congress recognized the severity of this workforce shortage by authorizing a training demonstration program in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century CURES Act. This program, authorized at \$10 million per year, will award grants to institutions such as medical schools and Federally qualified health centers to support training for medical residents and fellows in psychiatry and addiction medicine, as well as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and others, to provide SUD treatment in underserved communities.

**Funding Recommendation:** ASAM recommends \$10 million in Fiscal Year 2020 to create the Mental and Substance Use Disorder Workforce Training Demonstration Program within the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**Justification:** There are too few physicians and other clinicians with the requisite knowledge and training to prevent, diagnose, and treat addiction—a chronic disease that, like diabetes or heart disease, requires treatment. The President’s Commission on Combating Drug Abuse and the Opioid Epidemic has recommended quickly ramping up the numbers of fellowships to address the opioid crisis – to 125 fellowship slots by 2022.

The 2019 National Drug Control Strategy cites “critical shortages in trained and professional addiction service providers” as a key factor contributing to the treatment gap.

Funding for a new demonstration program at HRSA will be critical for meeting this goal. By 2021, fellowships will be the only pathway for physicians to take the addiction medicine certification exam. “Without an adequate number of fellowships producing at least two new fellows per year, the field will quickly atrophy,” the President’s Commission warned.

**How the Program Works:** Grants will support the following activities:

1. training for medical residents and fellows to practice psychiatry and addiction medicine in underserved, community-based settings that integrate primary care with mental and substance use disorders prevention and treatment services;
2. training for nurse practitioners, physician assistants, health service psychologists, and social workers to provide mental and SUD services in underserved community-based settings that integrate primary care and mental and SUD services; and
3. establishing, maintaining, or improving academic units or programs that:
  - a. provide training for students or faculty, including through clinical experiences and research, to improve the ability to be able to recognize, diagnose, and treat mental and substance use disorders, with a special focus on addiction; or
  - b. develop evidence-based practices or recommendations for the design of academic units or programs, including curriculum content standards.

**Eligibility for Funding:** Grants may be awarded to teaching health centers, Federally qualified health centers, community mental health centers, rural health clinics, schools of medicine or osteopathic medicine, nursing schools, physician assistant training programs, schools of pharmacy, accredited hospitals, and other institutions specified in section 9022 of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act.

**About ASAM:** Founded in 1954, the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) is a professional 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.

**Contact:** Kelly M. Corredor, Senior Director, Advocacy and Government Relations, American Society of Addiction Medicine; [kcorredor@asam.org](mailto:kcorredor@asam.org)

---

<sup>i</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2018). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. SMA 18-5068, NSDUH Series H-53). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

<sup>ii</sup> The President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. (2017).

<sup>iii</sup> Number of Fellowships Growing with ACGME Accreditations. Accessed February 5, 2019. <http://www.acaam.org/first-acgme-accreditations/>

<sup>iv</sup> Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. “Number of Accredited Programs by Academic Year 2018-2019. Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://apps.acgme.org/ads/Public/Reports/Report/3>