



**ASAM** American Society of  
Addiction Medicine

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Media Contact**

Rebecca Reid

410-212-3843

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

**ASAM Applauds Re-Introduction of  
Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act; Looks Forward to  
Complementary Legislation that Prioritizes Education and Training**

*ASAM supports passage of legislation that would fully eliminate the X-waiver, which creates an unnecessary barrier for prescribing buprenorphine for opioid use disorder (OUD), with passage of complementary legislation that would ensure controlled medication prescribers receive baseline education and training on how to treat patients with substance use disorder (SUD)*

**Rockville, MD** – Today the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) (ASAM) commended bipartisan Congressional leaders for re-introducing the [Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment \(MAT\) Act](#), critical legislation that would eliminate the requirement that health care practitioners obtain a waiver and submit to additional oversight from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in order to prescribe buprenorphine for OUD.

The MAT Act is sponsored by Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY), Rep. Antonio Delgado (D-NY), Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH), Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH), Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH), and Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

“Drug overdose deaths have tragically skyrocketed during the pandemic, underscoring the need to remove barriers that prevent many Americans with opioid use disorder from receiving buprenorphine when clinically appropriate,” said Paul H. Earley, MD, president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. “Removing the X-waiver represents one piece of the puzzle towards addressing the country’s addiction and overdose crisis, and we commend Reps. Tonko, Delgado, Gonzalez, Turner, and Senators Hassan and Murkowski for their leadership in re-introducing legislation that would eliminate this outdated requirement. Simultaneously, the nation needs bold, coordinated policies that ensure prescribers of any controlled medication, not just buprenorphine, receive baseline education and training on how to identify and care for Americans with substance use disorder using evidence-based treatments.”

Since the DATA 2000 Act was enacted, healthcare professionals have had to apply for a separate waiver and be subject to additional DEA oversight to prescribe buprenorphine for OUD. Moreover, the law puts

limits on the number of patients with OUD that clinicians can treat with buprenorphine at any one time. While the X-waiver originally served to expand treatment of OUD to office-based practice settings, it now contributes to unnecessary access restrictions and ongoing stigma.

In addition to removing the X-waiver, America's medical workforce must be strengthened when it comes to the treatment of SUD. ASAM continues to advocate for complementary federal legislation and funding that will ensure more clinicians are equipped, through health professional schools, residency programs, and continuing education, with the education and training they need to assist them with providing high-quality, evidence-based care to Americans living with SUD.

With the United States suffering a deadly addiction and overdose crisis prior to and now exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress must work quickly to help save lives and support recovery for Americans with SUD. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, [approximately 83,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12-months ending in July 2020](#)—the highest total ever recorded.

"People with addiction deserve to be treated by professionals who understand the complexity of their disease and are equipped to respond," continued Earley. "Even after the X-waiver is eliminated, healthcare practitioners in all settings must be empowered with a baseline understanding of how to effectively identify and treat patients with substance use disorder through increased education and training. By enhancing clinician knowledge and eliminating administrative barriers, we have the tremendous opportunity to reduce stigma, strengthen the medical workforce, expand access to evidence-based care, and help people lead healthier lives."

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#### **About the American Society of Addiction Medicine**

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), founded in 1954, is a professional medical society representing over 6,600 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).