



**ASAM** American Society of  
Addiction Medicine

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**Amid Historic Overdose Crisis, Addiction Specialists Call on Congress to  
Take Bold Steps to Advance Addiction Medicine**

*Leading medical organizations representing addiction specialists call on Congress to enact critical funding and legislative measures to prevent and treat addiction, promote recovery, and save lives*

**Rockville, MD** – Today, a coalition of medical organizations representing addiction specialists convened a virtual advocacy conference to highlight critical federal funding and legislation urgently needed to advance addiction medicine, save lives, and promote recovery amid the nation’s accelerating drug overdose epidemic. Attendees of the Addiction Medicine Advocacy Conference – hosted by the **American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)** and its national advocacy partners, the **American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT)**, the **American College of Academic Addiction Medicine (ACAAM)**, and the **American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine (AOAAM)** – will meet with Members of Congress and their staff to advance a bold policy agenda designed to strengthen the nation’s addiction treatment workforce, standardize the delivery of addiction medicine education, and ensure Medicaid coverage for eligible individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) who are incarcerated.

With the United States suffering a deadly overdose crisis amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress must work quickly to support treatment and recovery for Americans with SUD. In order to address the crisis, advocates specifically will highlight the critical need to:

- Teach Addiction Medicine
  - Provide **\$25 million** in Fiscal Year 2022 for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)’s **Loan Repayment Program for Substance Use Disorder Treatment Workforce**, authorized under the SUPPORT Act of 2018.
  - Provide **\$30 million** in Fiscal Year 2022 for HRSA’s **Mental and Substance Use Disorders Workforce Training Demonstration Program**.
  - Provide **\$10 million** in Fiscal Year 2022 for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s [Expansion of Practitioner Education Grant Program](#).

- Standardize the Delivery of Addiction Medicine Education
  - Pass the [Medication Access and Training Expansion \(MATE\) Act of 2021 \(H.R. 2067\)](#), legislation designed to ensure DEA-licensed prescribers have a baseline knowledge of how to treat and manage patients with SUD.
- Cover Addiction Medicine
  - Pass the [Medicaid Reentry Act \(H.R. 955/S. 285\)](#), legislation designed to allow states to restart Medicaid coverage for Medicaid-eligible individuals who are incarcerated, up to 30 days before their release from jail or prison.

“While COVID-19 has rightly dominated headlines, the epidemic that existed before the pandemic has only worsened as drug overdose deaths have continued to ravage communities across the country, cutting short a record number of lives last year,” said Paul H. Earley, MD, president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine. “We must address the overwhelming magnitude of this public health crisis with legislation that is commensurate to the need.”

According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), [over 83,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12 months ending in July 2020](#)—the highest total ever recorded. While over 21 million Americans needed treatment for SUD in 2019, [just 4.2 million reported receiving any form of SUD treatment](#) or ancillary services. At the same time, only [1 in 4 healthcare professionals received training on addiction](#) during medical education, further underscoring the severity of the nation’s tragic treatment gap. Congress must take bold action to turn the tide.

“Thanks to bipartisan funding and legislation passed by Congress over the years, the overdose rate was beginning to crest,” continued Earley. “Sadly, the pandemic erased that progress and exacerbated conditions for people with SUD. Our federal lawmakers must seize the opportunity to advance addiction medicine and save lives by quickly funding and passing these critical priorities.”

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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).