



**ASAM** American Society of  
Addiction Medicine

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ASAM Praises Funding for Critical SUD Workforce Programs in FY 2020 House Labor-HHS Appropriations Bill**

*House Bill Would Fully Fund Two New Programs to Train and Expand Addiction Treatment  
Workforce in Underserved Communities*

**Rockville, MD** – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) today praised the House Appropriations Committee for including full funding for two new critical substance use disorder (SUD) workforce programs in its FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

The bill includes \$25 million for the Loan Repayment Program for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Workforce, which was authorized in last year's SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. The program will provide student loan relief to addiction treatment professionals who commit to working in designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas or in counties where the average overdose death rate is higher than the national average. Last month, Representatives **Katherine Clark** (D-MA) and **Hal Rogers** (R-KY) led a bipartisan House letter in support of the program.

The package also includes \$10 million for grants to institutions that provide training opportunities for medical residents and fellows in psychiatry and addiction medicine, as well as nurse practitioners, physician assistants and others who are willing to provide SUD treatment in underserved communities. This program was authorized in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act in 2016. Representatives **Annie Kuster** (D-NH), **Antonio Delgado** (D-NY) and **John Katko** (R-NY) led a bipartisan House letter in support of the program last month.

“We applaud Labor-HHS Subcommittee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro and other Committee members for recognizing the need to invest in the addiction treatment workforce and urge Senate leaders to do the same,” said Paul H. Earley, MD, DFASAM, president of ASAM. “This critical funding – which will help train and deploy qualified treatment professionals to communities hardest hit by the drug overdose crisis – will be a significant step toward closing a substantial SUD treatment gap.”

Both programs will increase the ranks of qualified, well-trained addiction treatment professionals in underserved communities at a time of great need. According to the latest estimates, nearly 21 million Americans needed treatment for SUD in 2017, but only 4 million received any form of SUD treatment or ancillary services. There are currently too few clinicians with the requisite

knowledge and training to prevent, diagnose, and treat the disease of addiction. Furthermore, addiction training is not commonly included in American medical education. Since addiction medicine was only formally recognized as a medical subspecialty in 2016, the field is still catching up with other specialties in terms of available teaching and training opportunities.

Strategic investments are needed now to attract more students and professionals to the addiction medicine subspecialty and deploy qualified treatment professionals to high-need areas.

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### **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](http://www.ASAM.org).