



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

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October 27, 2017

The Honorable Richard Neal
U.S. House of Representatives
341 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: HR 4097 - Medicare Beneficiary Opioid Addiction Treatment Act

Dear Representative Neal,

On behalf of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), a national medical specialty society representing more than 5,100 physicians and aligned health professionals who specialize in the treatment of addiction, we offer our support for the Medicare Beneficiary Opioid Addiction Treatment Act, which would modify the Medicare Part B program to permit Medicare coverage of methadone as an outpatient treatment for addiction.

Prescription opioid use by Medicare beneficiaries has been on the rise. A recent Department of Health and Human Services Inspector General's report notes one in three Medicare Part D beneficiaries received a prescription opioid in 2016.¹ That same report also estimates that nearly 90,000 beneficiaries are at serious risk for opioid misuse or overdose despite these numbers. Medicare currently limits coverage of methadone for the treatment of addiction to inpatient settings.² This coverage limitation jeopardizes the treatment and recovery potential for Medicare beneficiaries who may benefit from outpatient methadone treatment and is contrary to ASAM's policy recommending all public and private medical insurance provide coverage for the treatment of opioid addiction in both office-based settings and Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs).³

ASAM commends your efforts to address this lack of coverage, and we support this good bill which would provide critical access to outpatient opioid addiction treatment using methadone that is currently inaccessible to Medicare beneficiaries. We are committed to supporting legislation and policies that increase access to evidence-based addiction treatment and we are pleased to include this bill within that strategy. We look forward to working with you to secure its passage



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Sincerely,

Kelly J. Clark, MD, MBA, DFASAM
President, American Society of Addiction Medicine

¹ Office of Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services. (2017, July 13). Opioids in Medicare Part D: Concerns about Extreme Use and Questionable Prescribing. Retrieved October 25, 2017, from <https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-02-17-00250.asp>

² Medicare Coverage of Substance Abuse Services. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE1604.pdf>

³ American Society of Addiction Medicine. Office-Based Opioid Agonist Treatment (OBOT). Rockville, MD: American Society of Addiction Medicine. [https://www.asam.org/advocacy/find-a-policy-statement/view-policy-statement/public-policy-statements/2011/12/15/office-based-opioid-agonist-treatment-\(obot\)](https://www.asam.org/advocacy/find-a-policy-statement/view-policy-statement/public-policy-statements/2011/12/15/office-based-opioid-agonist-treatment-(obot))