



Louisiana Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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March 18, 2020

The Honorable Kirk Talbot
Chair, Senate Committee on Insurance
Louisiana Assembly
PO Box 94183
Baton Rouge

Re: Support for SB213,

Dear Chairman Talbot and members of the Senate Committee on Insurance,

On behalf of the Louisiana Society of Addiction Medicine (LSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Louisiana who specialize in the prevention and treatment of addiction, we would like to take this opportunity to provide our support for SB213, which would require that medical necessity determinations related to substance use disorder (SUD) be made in accordance with the ASAM Criteria by certain insurance policies. With the addiction and overdose crisis significantly impacting Louisiana, LSAM appreciates the effort to expand access to high-quality, evidence-based, and comprehensive addiction treatment services.

LSAM is dedicated to increasing access to and improving the quality of addiction treatment for patients in Louisiana. To that end, we are committed to advocating for a state addiction treatment system that ensures patients with mental health and SUD receive treatment at the right level of care that they need. Every year, millions of Americans enter mental health and addiction treatment, but many are placed into programs that are not appropriate for their needs. Addressing systemic barriers that individuals experience in accessing treatment can help Louisiana decrease costs and improve patient outcomes.

We commend this bill for requiring that certain insurance policies utilize the ASAM Criteria when making medical necessity determinations. The ASAM Criteria is the most widely used and comprehensive set of evidence-based guidelines for placement, continued stay, and transfer or discharge of patients with addiction and co-occurring conditions. Several controlled studies have found that treatment based on the ASAM Criteria is associated with less morbidity, better client functioning, and more efficient service utilization than mismatched treatment. These results support the predictive validity and cost-effectiveness of the use of the ASAM Criteria. They also indicate that the ASAM Criteria have valid clinical decision-making guidelines, good feasibility and reliability through standardized computer assessment instruments, and good concurrent validity in treating patients throughout the multidimensional assessments.

LSAM shares the state of Louisiana's goal of improving administrative infrastructure, as well as SUD patient placement criteria, to combat the addiction and overdose crisis. We offer our support for this bill and strongly recommend the committee favorably report it. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Arwen Podesta at ap@podestapsychiatry.com or at (504) 252-0026, if LSAM and can be of any service to you. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Arwen Podesta MD".

Arwen Podesta, MD, FASAM
President, Louisiana Society of Addiction Medicine

CC:

The Honorable Louie Bernard
The Honorable Stewart Cathey
The Honorable Big Mike Fesi
The Honorable Robert Mills
The Honorable Barrow Peacock
The Honorable Joe Bouie
The Honorable Katrina Jackson
The Honorable Gary Smith