ASAM Level of Care Certification FAQs

General FAQ

What is ASAM Level of Care certification?

> ASAM Level of Care certification, delivered in partnership with CARF International (CARF), will be the first program of its kind to independently assess and verify treatment programs' ability to deliver services consistent with Levels of Care described in *The ASAM Criteria*®. After being piloted in early 2019, the certification will become broadly available later in the year.

How does ASAM Level of Care certification relate to other quality assessment programs like accreditation?

> ASAM Level of Care certification is different from, but complementary to accreditation. Accreditation from organizations such as CARF and the Joint Commission is a comprehensive quality review of a program and its service delivery and related business practices.
>
> ASAM Level of Care certification demonstrates a program's capacity to deliver a specific Level of Care, thereby differentiating between the many Levels of Care available for addiction treatment. Certification does not address the quality of service delivery or broader organizational policies and procedures.
>
> Certification is also complementary to programs like the provider rating system being developed by Shatterproof.

What Levels of Care are included in ASAM Level of Care certification?

> ASAM Level of Care certification will be available for Levels 3.1, 3.5, and 3.7 of *The ASAM Criteria*. These levels were selected because they are the most common levels of residential addiction treatment in the field. Certification for other Levels of Care will be developed in the future.

What is the pilot?

> ASAM and CARF opened the certification in early 2019 for a select set of providers to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the ratable elements and certification process. Any program interested in participating in the pilot for ASAM Level of Care certification should contact ASAM by emailing certification@asam.org.

What does this partnership mean for:

> Patients?
>
> When patients and their loved ones see the ASAM Level of Care certification seal on a treatment program's window or website, they will feel secure in knowing that the treatment program is equipped to deliver the evidence-based treatment needed.

Treatment programs?

Treatment programs already capable of delivering the evidence-based care outlined in *The ASAM Criteria* will receive well-deserved recognition for their commitment to helping patients. Treatment programs seeking to improve so that they are capable of offering evidence-based care will be able to turn to ASAM for assistance. ASAM will offer publications and trainings to help treatment programs craft and implement policies and procedures that will help them achieve this goal.

Payors?

ASAM Level of Care certification will help to differentiate between the various levels of residential care that are often grouped together as one. As such, this certification will provide an independent assessment of the services that treatment programs are equipped to provide. Payors may use this information to reduce prior authorization requirements, structure reimbursement models, or create centers of excellence for addiction treatment. Above all, certification will provide a method for ensuring that patients enter treatment programs that are equipped to deliver evidence-based care.

How will certification work?

Providers of residential substance use disorder services will submit applications directly to CARF seeking certification for Level 3.1, 3.5 and/or 3.7. CARF will conduct onsite surveys to evaluate the providers' satisfaction of ratable elements applicable to the applied-for Level(s) of Care and issue an independent certification decision. This independence ensures there will be no conflict of interest when treatment programs operated by ASAM members apply for certification.

To achieve certification, programs must demonstrate during survey that they meet a sufficient number of ratable elements to satisfy the proprietary scoring methodology, including but not limited to the presence of all "defining elements" – those certain ratable elements that are crucial to the operation of all treatment programs or are a hallmark of a particular Level of Care. Once certified, programs must promptly address any deficiencies in a plan of action submitted to CARF and annually attest to continued satisfaction of the applicable ratable elements. To maintain uninterrupted certification beyond the three-year term of certification, programs must timely apply for and successfully complete a recertification survey.

How will certified programs be identified?

After a program is certified, the program may display the ASAM Level of Care certification seal at the facility and in marketing publications, including its website. The program will also be authorized to advertise that it offers the specific ASAM Levels of Care covered by its certification. In addition, certified programs will be identified to the public and searchable on the CARF website.

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CARF & ASAM Partnership FAQ

Why are ASAM and CARF working together?

ASAM and CARF each bring essential core competencies to the partnership. *The ASAM Criteria*, formerly known as *The ASAM Patient Placement Criteria*, is the result of a collaboration that began in the 1980s to define one national set of criteria for providing outcome-oriented and results-based care in the treatment of addiction. Today, *The ASAM Criteria* is the most widely used and comprehensive set of guidelines for placement, continued stay, and transfer/discharge of patients with addiction and co-occurring conditions. Similarly, CARF is the nation's leading accreditation entity for behavioral health provider organizations and has unrivaled experience in the process of developing and implementing accreditation standards and programs.

What is CARF doing?

Programs will submit applications for certification directly to CARF. CARF will review individual provider applications, conduct a site visit, and issue a report and certification decision.

What is ASAM doing?

ASAM will publish the ratable elements for certification, an ASAM Level of Care certification manual, self-assessment workbook, and offer training and other educational resources to help programs prepare for certification. ASAM will have no role in certification decisions.

ASAM Criteria and Clinical FAQ

How does the program relate to other ASAM Criteria activities (e.g. ASAM CONTINUUM™)?

Applicants will not be required to utilize ASAM CONTINUUM but programs that do utilize ASAM CONTINUUM will meet the ratable elements that address patient assessment.

Will it be clear if a program provides medications for addiction treatment?

Certified programs will have procedures that describe how medications prescribed for addiction treatment are accessed by patients in the program.

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Policy FAQ

My program is already an ASAM Level of Care, what does certification mean?

> ASAM Level of Care certification administered by CARF is the only authorized program for certifying a program as an ASAM Level of Care. ASAM does not endorse the validity of any other assertion of a program's operations being in accordance with *The ASAM Criteria*.

My program is already accredited; does my accreditation include certification?

> No. To be issued certification, programs must apply to CARF and successfully demonstrate satisfaction of the ratable elements through an onsite survey.

Do I need to be accredited in order to be certified?

> No. Programs may seek certification regardless of accreditation.

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