



**ASAM** American Society of  
Addiction Medicine

## Public Policy Statement on How to Identify a Physician Recognized for Expertness in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Addiction and Related Health Conditions<sup>1</sup>

### A. A physician specialist in Addiction Medicine must:

1. possess a current M.D. or D.O. license.
2. be able to:
  - a. recognize and diagnose addiction as a primary brain illness<sup>2</sup> regardless of the substance or behavior involved and to differentiate it from other problems related to seeking of reward and relief;
  - b. possess sufficient knowledge and communication skills to prescribe a full range of treatment services at the appropriate level of care for patients as well as for their families or significant others; and
  - c. identify, through screening, risky or unhealthy reward use as well as perform brief interventions, and instruct other health professionals on their team in the techniques of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT).
3. demonstrate an empathetic, positive, and hopeful attitude toward the person with addiction as well as toward family members and significant others.
4. possess the skills needed to motivate patients, their families, or significant others to engage with and enter into appropriate treatment for their needs, and to stay in treatment at the appropriate level of care for an adequate duration of service, as indicated and medically necessary according to standard patient placement criteria.
5. be able to recognize, manage and/or seek appropriate consultation to address any medical and psychiatric co-occurring conditions
6. be able to recognize and manage the syndrome of withdrawal when appropriate.
7. Understand the techniques used in the field of addiction by other disciplines, including intervention, counseling, and group therapy, as well as those of mutual help groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Previously titled "How to Identify a Physician Recognized for Expertness in Diagnosis and Treatment of Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence."

<sup>2</sup> See ASAM Public Policy Statement on the Definition of Addiction, Adopted: April 12, 2011.

8. Understand the drug testing technology used in the diagnosis and monitoring of addictive disease treatment including the strengths and limits of various technologies for screening and confirmation and the various matrices to be tested.
9. Understand the neurobiology of addiction, its typology and natural history, and the external reward-based, social, and economic factor that modify its development as well as the appropriate pharmacotherapy in addicted patients including those with comorbid medical and psychiatric disorders.
10. Understand and appropriately use their state's prescription drug monitoring program.

**B. Evidence that the physician possesses expert knowledge and skills in Addiction Medicine:**

1. Certification by the American Society of Addiction Medicine or the American Board of Addiction Medicine
2. Or subspecialty certification in Addiction Medicine by the American Board of Preventive Medicine
3. Or subspecialty certification in Addiction Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
4. Or a Certificate of Added Qualification in Addiction Medicine conferred by the American Osteopathic Association.
5. Or completion of an accredited residency/fellowship in Addiction Medicine or Addiction Psychiatry

*Adopted by the ASAM Board of Directors 2/8/86; revised 1/2010; revised 7/20/2016.*

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American Society of Addiction Medicine

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