Public Policy Statement on Medical Needs of the Public Inebriate

Recognizing that the public inebriate is often a person suffering from chronic late stage effects of alcoholism such as liver disease, damage to the central and peripheral nervous systems, hematological, cardiovascular and pulmonary disorders, the effects of trauma and many other health problems, the American Medical Society on Alcoholism supports cooperative public and voluntary efforts to reach this difficult population with needed medical services. Arrangements for such services should be provided wherever the public inebriate interacts with the social system, including jails and police lockups as well as alcoholism treatment and social service agencies. Services should include mental health care for those who suffer from the multiple disability of alcoholism and mental illness. Health care providers should cooperate in efforts to establish appropriate staff community residences and other programs designed to interrupt the progression of alcoholism in this group.

ASAM also supports research into the drinking patterns and problems of the public inebriate, both male and female, into causal mechanisms and approaches to treatment of their alcohol-related illnesses, and into the effectiveness of models of the provision of alcoholism, general health and mental health services to this population.

Adopted by American Medical Society on Alcoholism [later the American Society of Addiction Medicine] Board of Directors, September 1980

© Copyright 2005. American Society of Addiction Medicine, Inc. All rights reserved. Permission to make digital or hard copies of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for commercial, advertising or promotional purposes, and that copies bear this notice and the full citation on the first page. Republication, systematic reproduction, posting in electronic form on servers, redistribution to lists, or other uses of this material, require prior specific written permission or license from the Society. ASAM Public Policy Statements normally may be referenced in their entirety only, without editing or paraphrasing, and with proper attribution to the Society. Excerpting any statement for any purpose requires specific written permission from the Society. Public Policy statements of ASAM are revised on a regular basis; therefore, those wishing to utilize this document must ensure that it is the most current position of ASAM on the topic addressed.