



**ASAM** American Society of  
Addiction Medicine

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## **ASAM and CARF Launch Transformative Residential Addiction Treatment Certification Nationwide**

*ASAM Level of Care Certification Addresses the Addiction Health Crisis by Establishing Processes for Validation of Treatment Program Capabilities, Building Industry Transparency, and Increasing Patient Confidence in Treatment Services*

**Rockville, MD (June 1, 2020)** – Today CARF International (CARF) and the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) announce that [ASAM Level of Care Certification](#) has launched nationwide. CARF is accepting applications for certification from addiction treatment programs, and ASAM is offering quality improvement resources to treatment programs interested in attaining certification and improving patient care more broadly. The certification will reshape addiction treatment by providing an independent assessment of a treatment program’s ability to deliver services consistent with [The ASAM Criteria](#)<sup>®</sup>. Increasing patient access to evidence-based addiction treatment is critical to overcoming the devastating and deadly challenges of addiction. This certification gives patients, loved ones, payors, and regulators the knowledge that a given treatment program is capable of administering evidence-based addiction treatment that is appropriately matched to a patient’s individual needs.

Leveraging standards defined in *The ASAM Criteria*, this certification identifies a treatment program’s capacity to deliver specific levels of addiction treatment and will encourage standardization of addiction care across the nation. Use of *The ASAM Criteria*, the most widely used and comprehensive set of guidelines for addiction treatment, improves patient outcomes by establishing a continuum of care that reflects the modern understanding of addiction as a chronic disease. As a patient’s condition improves or worsens, they move along the continuum of care to the level most appropriate for their needs. This continuum of care ensures that patients do not “fall through the cracks” as they progress through treatment and recovery.

“CARF is proud to partner with ASAM to launch the ASAM Level of Care Certification. We look forward to seeing the powerful and positive impact the certification will have on standardizing addiction treatment for all patients with substance use disorders,” said Michael W. Johnson, MA, CAP, managing director for Behavioral Health at CARF. “By setting standards for validating capacity to deliver various levels of care in addiction treatment, the certification will benefit all those involved in addiction care, from patients and their families to health professionals and insurers.”

“Three decades ago, a group of committed administrators, addiction clinicians, physicians, researchers, and scientists set out to define one national set of criteria for providing outcome-oriented, results-based care for the treatment of addiction – what is known today as *The ASAM Criteria*,” said Paul H. Earley, MD, DFASAM, president of ASAM and one of the original authors of *The ASAM Criteria*. “With today’s certification announcement, ASAM advances the specialty of addiction medicine significantly by providing addiction treatment programs a way to validate their ability to provide care consistent with ASAM’s nationally recognized best practices.”

ASAM Level of Care Certification will act to improve the quality of addiction treatment in several ways. First, certification equips treatment programs with an independent assessment of their fidelity to the standards found in *The ASAM Criteria*. Treatment programs with the capability to deliver care as outlined in *The ASAM Criteria* will receive well-deserved recognition for their commitment to quality. This means that patients, payors, and regulators alike will be able to use the certification to identify treatment programs that demonstrate their commitment to providing evidence-based addiction treatment.

Second, ASAM offers [several resources](#) to treatment programs that aim to improve quality of care and alignment with *The ASAM Criteria* standards. These resources include a manual, which explains the certification elements in context of *The ASAM Criteria* and describes important patient care considerations, and a workbook that guides treatment programs through a self-assessment of their policies and procedures. Also available is on-demand training content as well as live webinars during which attendees can ask questions and receive assistance with their specific questions and concerns.

Finally, payors and policymakers can use the certification as a helpful tool to support comprehensive implementation of *The ASAM Criteria* in their networks of addiction treatment providers. Proper use of *The ASAM Criteria* promotes evidence-based addiction treatment to improve patient outcomes in the long term, thereby lowering overall healthcare utilization. Payors may use the certification to reduce prior authorization requirements, structure reimbursement models, or create centers of excellence for addiction treatment.

After refinement during a two-step pilot process in 2019 and early 2020, the certification will initially be available to treatment programs within the Level 3 portion of *The ASAM Criteria* continuum of care, specifically residential and inpatient treatment programs at Levels of Care 3.1, 3.5, and 3.7. Over time, certification will expand to cover other levels of care, adolescent programs, and enhanced care settings such as co-occurring enhanced, biomedical enhanced, and withdrawal management services. Each certification is valid for up to three years, at which time treatment programs may reapply to maintain certified status.

For more information on ASAM Level of Care Certification, please visit [www.asamcertification.org](http://www.asamcertification.org) and [www.carf.org/loccertification](http://www.carf.org/loccertification).

Ask questions during a live discussion with Paul H. Earley, MD, DFASAM and Michael W. Johnson, MA, CAP on June 9, 2020 at 2 pm ET. [Register today for ASAM Level of Care Certification: Re-Engineering Treatment One Step at a Time.](#)

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**About ASAM**

The American Society of Addiction Medicine, founded in 1954, is a professional society representing over 6,000 physicians, clinicians, and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction. For more information, visit [www.ASAM.org](http://www.ASAM.org).

### **About CARF**

Founded in 1966 as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human service providers in the areas of aging services; behavioral health; child and youth services; durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies; employment and community services; medical rehabilitation; and opioid treatment programs. The CARF International group of organizations includes CARF, CARF Canada, and CARF Europe, and accredits more than 60,000 programs on five continents. More than 14 million persons of all ages are served annually by CARF-accredited providers. For more information, please visit the CARF International website at [www.carf.org](http://www.carf.org).

### **About *The ASAM Criteria***

*The ASAM Criteria* is the nation's most widely used and comprehensive set of guidelines for placement, continued stay, and transfer/discharge of patients with addiction and co-occurring conditions. Utilized by clinicians and payers across all care settings, the use of *The ASAM Criteria* is required in more than 30 states. Addiction treatment programs use the criteria to conduct a multi-dimensional patient assessment over five broad levels of treatment that are based on the degree of direct medical management provided, the structure, safety and security provided, and the intensity of treatment services provided. *The ASAM Criteria* focuses on six dimensions of patient care to create a holistic, biopsychosocial assessment of an individual. This assessment is used for service planning and treatment across all services and levels of care. Learn more at <https://www.asam.org/resources/the-asam-criteria>.