



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine



 **ACMT** American College
of Medical Toxicology



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Addiction Experts to Congress: Strengthen the Addiction Treatment Workforce and Expand Access to Evidence-Based Care

With overdose deaths at record levels, leading medical organizations representing addiction specialists call on Congress to enact bold policies to prevent and treat addiction, promote recovery, and save lives

Rockville, MD – Today, a coalition of medical organizations representing addiction specialists convened a virtual conference to highlight critical federal funding and legislation urgently needed to advance addiction medicine, save lives, and promote recovery amidst the nation’s accelerating drug overdose epidemic. Attendees of the Addiction Medicine Advocacy Conference – hosted by the **American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)** and its national advocacy partners, the **American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT)**, the **American College of Academic Addiction Medicine (ACAAM)**, and the **American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine (AOAAM)** – will meet with Members of Congress and their staff to advance a bold policy agenda designed to strengthen the nation’s addiction treatment workforce, help standardize and mainstream access to addiction medicine and education, and ensure Medicaid coverage for eligible individuals who are incarcerated, up to 30 days before their release from jail or prison.

Since 1999, more than [one million Americans have died](#) from a drug overdose, underscoring the magnitude of loss and the need for policymakers to respond accordingly. With the United States now recording [over 100,000 drug overdose deaths](#) in a 12-month period for the first time ever, the advocates urged Congress to work quickly to support treatment and recovery for Americans with addiction. Specifically, they highlighted the critical need to:

Teach Addiction Medicine

- Request **\$50 million in FY 2023 for HRSA’s Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program**. This program, authorized in the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, provides student loan repayment for addiction treatment professionals who commit to working in underserved or high-risk communities.
- Request **\$38 million in FY 2023 for HRSA’s Mental and Substance Use Disorders Workforce Training Demonstration Program, including at least \$25 million for the Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program**. This training program, authorized in the 21st Century Cures Act, provides grants to institutions that provide training opportunities for addiction medicine and addiction psychiatry fellows, as well as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and others willing to provide addiction treatment in underserved communities.

Standardize and Mainstream Access to Addiction Medicine

- Co-sponsor the (1) **Medication Access and Training Expansion (MATE) Act of 2021 (HR 2067/S 2235)** and (2) **Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act of 2021 (HR 1384/S 445)**. The concurrent passage of these bills would ensure more prescribers of controlled medications receive education on treating and managing patients with substance use disorder (SUD) and can prescribe buprenorphine for opioid use disorder without the need for a separate “x-waiver” license.

Cover Addiction Medicine

- Co-sponsor the **Medicaid Reentry Act (HR 955/S 285)**; this legislation would allow states to restart Medicaid coverage for Medicaid-eligible individuals who are incarcerated, up to 30 days before their release from jail or prison.

There is a major treatment gap for people with SUD. Of the 40.3 million people over 12 with a SUD, [a mere 6.5 percent \(or 2.6 million people\) received any substance use treatment](#) in 2020, according to the most recent data released by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Among individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD), SAMHSA reports a mere one in 10 (11.2 percent) received treatment with medications in 2020, despite the availability of three FDA-approved medications for OUD. Research also shows that [just one in four healthcare professionals in Massachusetts received training on addiction](#) during their medical education, and less than half of the internal, family, and emergency medicine providers believe that OUD is treatable. All of this underscores the need to better teach, cover, and standardize access to addiction medicine in order to close the nation’s tragic treatment gap.

“It is incredibly alarming to see America’s drug poisoning epidemic worsen by the day – especially when we know what needs to be done to treat addiction and save lives,” said **William F. Haning, III, MD, DLFAPA, DFASAM, president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine**. “This crisis won’t end overnight; but with targeted investments in the nation’s healthcare infrastructure – including strengthening the addiction medicine workforce, helping to standardize and mainstream access to addiction medicine and education, and expanding coverage for addiction treatment – we have the opportunity to prevent thousands more from dying.”

“Investing in educating more physicians and healthcare professionals directly impacts recovery in patients suffering from opioid use disorder. Increased access to proven medical treatment and decreasing the stigma associated with this disease is key in the process,” said **Marla Kushner, DO, FSAHM, FACFP, DFASAM, president of the American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine.**

“ACAAM is pleased to partner with other addiction medicine organizations to discuss these important topics with our elected representatives during the Addiction Medicine Advocacy Conference. The importance of continuing to fund the development of the addiction medicine workforce, specifically through fellowship training, will provide a long-term return on its investment. This crisis requires bold action to prepare our workforce and save as many lives as possible. Additionally, the continued funding of HRSA’s Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program will allow evidence-based addiction care to be delivered to those in some of the most underserved communities in the country,” said **Jeanette Tetrault, MD, president of the American College of Academic Addiction Medicine.**

“As medical toxicologists -- doctors who specialize in the care and treatment of poisonings, intoxications, overdoses, and withdrawal -- we are deeply aware of the pain and suffering experienced by individuals dealing with substance use disorders and addiction. This includes the effect on their families and communities, and the challenges in accessing appropriate treatment. With overdose deaths higher than ever and continuing to rise, we must stop this growing crisis. We must have strong national policies and robust funding that will increase access to quality health care, increase the addiction workforce, and improve access to treatment for anyone who needs it,” said **Paul Wax, MD, Executive Director of the American College of Medical Toxicology.**

The advocacy conference featured remarks from Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), outlining the Biden Administration’s priorities in addressing the addiction crisis, as well as updates from leading sponsors of federal legislation that would help strengthen the nation’s addiction treatment infrastructure.

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About the American Society of Addiction Medicine

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), founded in 1954, is a professional medical society representing over 7,000 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.

About the American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine

The American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine (AOAAM) is a subspecialty organization of the American Osteopathic Association dedicated to improving the understanding of addiction as a disease, committed to attaining science-based core competencies in prevention, assessment, and treatment planning by all doctors of osteopathic medicine (DO), with a leadership voice in the osteopathic profession for sound public policy associated with substance use disorders.

About the American College of Academic Addiction Medicine

The American College of Academic Addiction Medicine (ACAAM) is dedicated to training and supporting the next generation of academic addiction medicine leaders needed to meet the ubiquitous health challenges from substance use. Central to this mission is committed action to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion of the academic addiction medicine workforce. Today, ACAAM is the proud academic home for addiction medicine faculty and trainees. Learn more about the organization and its membership opportunities at www.ACAAM.org.

About the American College of Medical Toxicology

The American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) is a professional, nonprofit association of physicians with recognized expertise and board certification in medical toxicology. Our members specialize in the prevention, evaluation, treatment, and monitoring of injury and illness from exposures to drugs and chemicals, as well as biological and radiological agents. ACMT members work in clinical, academic, governmental, and public health settings, and provide poison control center leadership.