

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2023

Media Contact

Rebecca Reid

410-212-3843

rreid@schmidtpa.com

**Addiction Treatment Professionals Rally for Solutions at
2023 Addiction Medicine Advocacy Conference**

Hundreds of advocates from across the US will meet virtually on Capitol Hill to advance an ambitious policy agenda designed to support addiction treatment professionals as they treat patients and save lives

Rockville, MD – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) today kicked off the 2023 Addiction Medicine Advocacy Conference in conjunction with strategic partners including: the American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine, the American College of Academic Addiction Medicine, and the American College of Medical Toxicology. Advocates from across the country are gathering virtually at the US Capitol to educate lawmakers about policy solutions that, if implemented, would greatly help to address the nation’s deadly addiction and overdose crisis.

With the overdose crisis at record levels, advocates will urge Members of Congress to pass policies that strengthen the addiction treatment workforce. Specifically, the advocates will request \$50 million in Fiscal Year 2024 for the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program and \$30 million in Fiscal Year 2024 for HRSA’s Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program.

Recognizing the need to increase access to evidence-based addiction treatment, including methadone, the advocates are also calling on lawmakers to co-sponsor (S. 644/HR. 1359) - the Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act (the “M-OTAA”). If enacted, the M-OTAA would allow Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) clinicians and addiction specialist physicians to prescribe methadone for opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment that can be picked up at pharmacies, subject to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) rules and guidance on supply of methadone for unsupervised use.

“Addiction treatment professionals use our expertise every day to help patients – and today we are proud share this experience in advocating for improving access to evidence-based care,” said Brian Hurley, MD, MBA, DFASAM, president-elect of ASAM. “We are in the midst of the worse overdose crisis in US history. We need bold action by Congress, including policies that

strengthen the addiction treatment workforce and increase the clinically responsible and appropriate access to methadone for individuals with opioid use disorder when managed by board certified addiction physicians.”

U.S. Representative Donald Norcross (NJ) is scheduled to speak to advocates about his work on the M-OTAA and other federal legislation that can help treat addiction and save lives. The event will also feature insights from top Administration officials working to address the addiction and overdose crisis, including Nora Volkow, MD, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Thomas Prevoznik, Acting Assistant Administrator of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and Kirsten Beronio, JD, Senior Policy Advisor for the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The need is urgent to strengthen the addiction treatment workforce and modernize access to treatment. For example, there are [only 96 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-accredited addiction medicine fellowship programs in the US](#) – far below the recommended goal of 125 fellowships by 2022 set over five years ago by the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Abuse and the Opioid Epidemic. When it comes to methadone access, there are [less than 2,000 OTPs](#) but [over 61,000 community pharmacies](#) in the US, or approximately one OTP for every 32 pharmacies. In fact, [most US counties have no OTPs](#). The delivery of methadone treatment for OUD must be modernized to address [fentanyl’s deadly role in driving the rise of, and disparities in, overdose deaths](#).

###

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.