



ISSUE DATE:
July 28, 2022

EFFECTIVE DATE:
Immediately

NUMBER:
OMHSAS-22-05

SUBJECT:

Use of American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Criteria for Substance Use Disorder Services in the Medical Assistance Program

BY:

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SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to providers of substance use disorder (SUD) services enrolled in the Medical Assistance Program.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to obsolete the Medical Assistance Bulletin #1163-98-01 titled "*Revision of Utilization Guidelines for Inpatient Hospital Drug and Alcohol Services under the Medical Assistance Program*" issued on May 18, 1998.

DISCUSSION:

Medical Assistance Bulletin #1163-98-01 titled "*Revision of Utilization Guidelines for Inpatient Hospital Drug and Alcohol Services under the Medical Assistance Program*," announced the adoption by the Department of Human Services of the *Pennsylvania Client Placement Criteria* (PCPC) for service authorization, placement, continued stay reviews, and discharge decisions for inpatient SUD services. Beginning in 2017, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs began transitioning to the use of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Criteria, 3rd Edition, 2013, for the review of placement and treatment decisions for all publicly funded SUD services, replacing the previously used PCPC. Additionally, Pennsylvania Act 70 of 2021 amended The Administrative Code of 1929 by adding section 2302-A, effective September 7, 2021, codified at 71 P.S. § 613.2, which requires "a drug and alcohol treatment provider shall align service delivery conditions with the ASAM Criteria, 3rd Edition, 2013". Accordingly, SUD treatment providers, including those providing services to Medical Assistance beneficiaries, are to use the ASAM Criteria, 3rd Edition, 2013.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:
Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Bureau of Policy, Planning & Program Development, P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17105. General Office Number 717-772-7900.

The ASAM criteria is the most widely used and comprehensive set of guidelines for placement, continued stay and transfer/discharge of patients with addiction and co-occurring conditions. The ASAM Criteria consist of broad levels of service along the full continuum of care, provided based on the treatment needs of the individuals, according to a multi-dimensional, individualized assessment.

Prior to its adoption in Pennsylvania for adults, ASAM had already been in use in the publicly funded SUD services for adolescents in Pennsylvania. ASAM is also used widely by commercial insurance for both adults and adolescents. Adopting ASAM, an evidence-based assessment system that is person-centered and recovery-focused, for the adult population ensures consistency in assessment and service delivery for both providers and payers across the SUD service system. Additional guidance on ASAM is available at [Pennsylvania ASAM Transition](#).

OBSOLETE BULLETIN:

The issuance of this bulletin renders the Medical Assistance Bulletin #1163-98-01 titled “*Revision of Utilization Guidelines for Inpatient Hospital Drug and Alcohol Services under the Medical Assistance Program*” issued on May 18, 1998 obsolete.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Website:
<https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/ebp/asam-criteria>