

March 8, 2014

Dear Colleague:

A document of great interest to physicians providing care for patients with addiction was released on February 20, 2014, by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). “Standards of Care: for the Addiction Specialist Physician” (The Standards) is the first in a series of reports being produced by the Practice Improvement and Performance Measurement Action Group (PIPMAG) convened by ASAM with support from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and overseen by representatives of other professional societies as well as the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. For more information on PIPMAG please visit: <http://www.asam.org/magazine/read/article/2014/02/17/standards-of-care-for-the-addiction-specialist-physician-document-released>.

The Standards, which can be read in their entirety here: <http://www.asam.org/docs/default-source/publications/standards-of-care-final-design-document.pdf>), serve to describe what physicians treating addiction are expected to do at different points in the process of providing patient care. They do not describe the totality of care needed for individual patients nor do they limit the physician to specific functions. They provide a minimum standard of physician performance and are subject to ongoing review. The Standards are intended to support quality improvement activities conducted by health care provider systems, medical specialty certification boards, and individual physicians monitoring their own performance. In all areas of medicine, specially trained and certified specialists establish the standards of care for their respective fields. General physicians and physicians of other specialties are expected to practice in accordance with these standards. The condition of substance use disorders is no different.

Work continues on the development of performance measures corresponding to these standards. Final reports of these efforts are expected in October 2014.

For further information and questions please contact Dr. Melinda Campopiano, M.D. at SAMHSA. You may call her directly at (240) 276-2701 or email her at melinda.campopiano@samhsa.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

[Signed by H. Westley Clark, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., CAS,
FASAM.]

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