

# ASAM Criteria for addiction treatment

The American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM) is a physician-led organization of some 7,000 medical and related professionals that aims to improve addiction treatment and enhance addiction-related education.<sup>1</sup>

ASAM developed a set of criteria healthcare providers can use to assess individuals to help determine the most appropriate level of care.<sup>2</sup> These criteria are the foundation of addiction treatment in many states, including Louisiana.

The ASAM Criteria® encompass 6 ASAM dimensions, listed below.<sup>2</sup> The ASAM Criteria are used to help determine the ideal level of care for the individual.<sup>2</sup> These dimensions provide a framework for a holistic, biopsychosocial assessment of an individual:

- 1: Acute intoxication and/or withdrawal potential
- 2: Biomedical conditions and complications
- 3: Emotional, behavioral or cognitive conditions and complications
- 4: Readiness to change
- 5: Relapse, continued use or continued problem potential
- 6: Recovering/living environment

## Levels of care<sup>3</sup>

- **Level 0.5, or early intervention:** The goal of 0.5 services is to intervene before a person develops a substance use disorder. These services may include screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment, often referred to as SBIRT.
- **Level 1, outpatient treatment:** Level 1 is appropriate for people with less severe disorders, or as a step-down from more intensive services. Treatment time for adults is less than 9 hours a week and less than 6 hours for an adolescent.
- **Level 2, intensive outpatient services or partial hospitalization:** Level 2 treatment is divided into these levels:
  - 2.1 corresponds to intensive outpatient services, consisting of at least 9, and not exceeding 20, hours per week of treatment.
  - 2.5 is partial hospitalization, which is at least 20 hours a week but less than 24-hour care.

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- **Level 3, residential or inpatient services:** This level of treatment is further divided into 4 levels:
  - 3.1 Clinically managed, low-intensity residential services
  - 3.3 Clinically managed, population-specific, high-intensity residential services for adults
  - 3.5 Clinically managed residential services (high intensity for adults, medium intensity for adolescents)
  - 3.7 Medically monitored high-intensity inpatient services
- **Level 4, medically managed intensive inpatient services:** This level of care offers 24-hour nursing and physician care, with counseling available for adults and adolescents.

## References

1. “About Us,” accessed Nov. 29, 2022, <https://www.asam.org/about-us>.
2. “ASAM Criteria,” accessed Nov. 29, 2022, <https://www.asam.org/asam-criteria/about-the-asam-criteria>.
3. “Overview of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Care Clinical Guidelines: A Resource for States Developing SUD Delivery System Reforms,” accessed Nov. 29, 2022, <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/innovation-accelerator-program/iap-downloads/reducing-substance-use-disorders/asam-resource-guide.pdf>.