Addiction is a primary, chronic brain disease that has become a public health emergency throughout the US. ASAM advocates for public policies that work to educate the public, patients, clinicians and policymakers about addiction and ensure that individuals can access treatments that have been proven to be effective at reducing overdose deaths and supporting individuals in recovery.

There are many misconceptions about the disease of addiction, and a culture change is needed in this country to drive patients to the treatment options that have been proven to be effective at reducing overdose deaths and supporting patients in remission and recovery. It is critical that our treatment infrastructure reflect this by facilitating the use of evidence-based, research-validated guidelines and standards for the treatment of addiction and employing competency-based addiction education for all healthcare providers.

One of the greatest barriers to the successful treatment of individuals with addiction is the current healthcare financing system for much of addiction treatment, which offers little support for the coordination of behavioral, social, and psychological services that patients often need in addition to medication.