

## ASAM Criteria 4<sup>th</sup> Edition – Adoption readiness FAQ

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### Background

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Criteria is the most widely used and comprehensive set of guidelines for placement, continued stay, and transfer/discharge criteria for individuals with substance use disorder and co-occurring conditions.

The ASAM Criteria defines the treatment criteria and levels of care for the treatment of substance-related and co-occurring conditions. Its structure is the underlying framework for service codes (billing guides), fiscal assumptions (rates), etc. Licensed behavioral health agency (BHA) providers are required to use the ASAM Criteria. Additionally, the managed care organizations (MCOs), behavioral health administrative service organizations (BHASOs), and private insurance plans use the ASAM Criteria as a utilization management tool.

**SB 5361 passed in the 2025 legislative session, delaying the adoption date until January of 2028.**

#### Quick Highlights:

- The Adult ASAM Criteria 4<sup>th</sup> Edition is now available.
- SB 5361 passed in the 2025 legislative session, delaying the adoption date until January of 2028. To get ready to use the new version, the state has been offering a series of training courses.
- The courses will be held virtually through June 2025.
- Training has been offered by Train for Change.
- The State plans to adopt the adult and adolescent and transition age youth (ATAY) volume simultaneously.

### My agency is already preparing to adopt the ASAM 4 criteria in 2026. Do we have to wait?

Agencies can continue to prepare, updating policies and procedures, clinical and program management tools, etc., adhering to new standards and framework, however are asked to not begin using the criteria in practice as rates, coding and billing will not go into effect until January 2028. Programs are encouraged to engage in ongoing quality improvements, which may align with ASAM 4 principles. However, Washington state's formal adoption will not take place until Jan. 2028.

### I already participated in training, should I take them again in the future?

Prior to the passing of SB 5361 HCA coordinated a series of provider trainings in preparation for the adoption of the criteria January 2026 (SB 6228). It is uncertain whether HCA will be able to provide additional training and education. Each provider will need to determine if a refresher or training course is needed for staff. In preparation for the ATAY volume, contingent upon funding, a series of trainings will be offered, similar to trainings for the adult criteria.

### Will Medicaid rates and billing for Managed Care and Fee-For-Service as well as the service encounter reporting instructions (SERI) guide(s) be impacted by this adoption delay?

Yes. Medicaid rates, service modalities, codes, encountering and billing guidance updated to reflect the new ASAM criteria now has the publication goal of Oct. 1, 2027, for an effective date of Jan. 2028.

## Will there be a new ASAM Criteria 4<sup>th</sup> volume for adolescent and transition age youth (ATAY)?

Yes. The ATAY version is anticipated to be released in 2026. The state plans to adopt the adult and ATAY criteria simultaneously Jan. 2028. In preparation for the ATAY volume, contingent upon funding, a series of trainings will be offered, similar to trainings for the adult criteria.

### Stay engaged

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### Questions?

On trainings – Contact Train for Change at [support@trainforchange.net](mailto:support@trainforchange.net)

On ASAM transition and other related questions – Contact HCA at [SUDdbhrproviderhelp@hca.wa.gov](mailto:SUDdbhrproviderhelp@hca.wa.gov). For adolescent and transition age youth (ATAY) questions, please include “ATAY” in the subject line.