



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

626 8th Avenue, SE • P.O. Box 42730 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2730

May 22, 2025

Dear Tribal Leader:

SUBJECT: PASSING OF SB 5361 – DELAYING THE USE OF ASAM 4 CRITERIA

In accordance with (A) Chapter 43.376 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) regarding collaboration with Indian tribes in the development of policies, agreements, and program implementation that directly affect Indian tribes, and (B) the Tribal Consultation and Communication Policy of the Health Care Authority (HCA), HCA hereby seeks your advice on the following matter.

Purpose

Senate Bill (SB) 5361 has passed the 2025 legislative session. This bill delays the adoption date of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria 4th edition until January 2028.

HCA and the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) will not officially adopt the ASAM criteria 4th edition until January 2028. This allows the behavioral health field more time to prepare more intentionally for this complex system change. The State plans to adopt the adult and adolescent and transition age youth (ATAY) volume simultaneously. The ATAY volume is currently scheduled for release in March 2026, and a [draft framework](#) outlining the anticipated content is available.

As a part of this transition, HCA is continuing to develop a comprehensive plan that supports the preparation and adoption of the 4th edition. More information about the transition plan and collaborative partnership will be communicated in the coming months through GovDelivery, Monthly Tribal Meetings, and the HCA-Office of Tribal Affairs Bulletin. Training will continue to be available through the end of June 2025. Please sign up [here](#).

Background

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

It defines the criteria and levels of care for the treatment of substance-related and co-occurring conditions. This structure is the underlying framework for our service codes (billing guides), fiscal assumptions (rates), etc. Licensed behavioral health agency providers are required to use ASAM criteria. The 4th edition of the criteria was released in October 2023.

ASAM criteria is a Washington Administrative Code (WAC) requirement. In collaboration with the Department of Health (DOH) and OIC, HCA is committed to ensuring a smooth and effective transition process for all partners involved. To learn more, please go to [ASAM Criteria](#).

Comments and Questions

Please refer to the [adoption readiness FAQ](#) for further information. Additional questions and feedback can be sent to SUDdbhrproviderhelp@hca.wa.gov. For adolescent and transition age youth questions, please include "ATAY" in the subject line. This will help inform the FAQ and how we can better support the behavioral health field as we move forward.

Please forward this information to any interested party.

Sincerely,



Teesha Kirschbaum
Division Director
Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery

By email

cc: Aren Sparck, Tribal Affairs Administrator, EXO, OTA
Teresa Claycamp, Deputy Division Director, DBHR, HCA
Tony Walton, Adult Substance Abuse Disorder Section Manager, DBHR, HCA
Lucilla Mendoza, Tribal Behavioral Health Administrator, EXO, OTA