



# THE ASAM CRITERIA

ASAM's Criteria, formerly known as the ASAM Patient Placement Criteria, began in the 1980s to define one national set of criteria for providing results-based care in the treatment of addiction. Today the Criteria have become the most widely used set of guidelines for placement, continued stay and transfer/discharge of patients with addiction and co-occurring conditions. ASAM's Criteria are required in the majority of US states.

## ASAM Criteria Validation

ASAM's Criteria are the most intensively studied set of addiction placement criteria. Scientists began the crucial process of testing ASAM's criteria in the early 1990s to develop decision rules not simply through expert consensus, but through an international system of data gathering, quantitative analysis, and empirical feedback. Dozens of reports published in the peer-reviewed literature have been supported by over \$7 million of US government funding. Project funding came from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. A considerable body of work exists to date on the ASAM Criteria including at least ten evaluations involving a total of 3,672 subjects. Several controlled studies have found that treatment based on the ASAM Criteria is associated with less morbidity, better client functioning, and more efficient service utilization than mismatched treatment. These results support the predictive validity and cost-effectiveness of the use of ASAM Criteria. They also indicate that the ASAM Criteria have valid clinical decision-making guidelines, good feasibility and reliability through a standardized computer assessment instrument, and good concurrent validity.

## How ASAM's Criteria Works

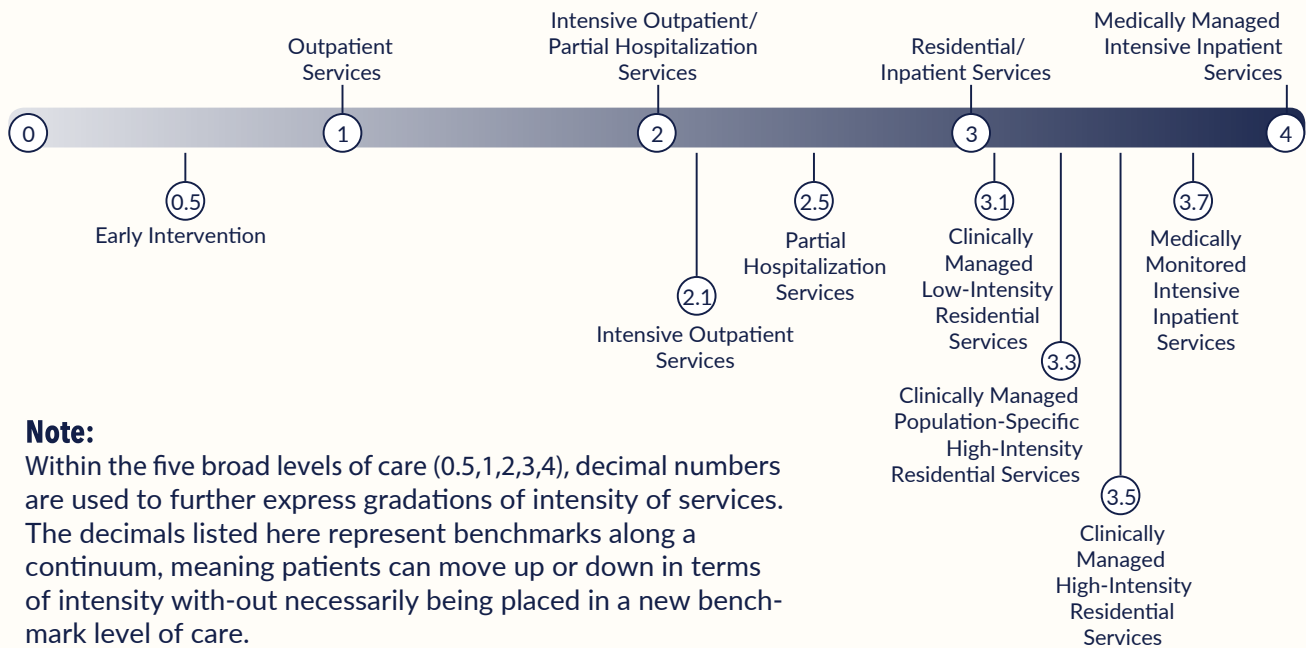
ASAM's Criteria guides clinicians to assess all dimensions of addiction and recovery and then use a well-defined decision logic to identify the level of care with the least restrictiveness and best opportunity for improving the patient's health. This helps develop comprehensive and individualized treatment plans for adults and adolescent. The ASAM Levels of Care are based on the degree of direct medical management structure, safety and security and the intensity of treatment services provided.

### AT A GLANCE: THE SIX DIMENSIONS OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT

ASAM's criteria uses six dimensions to create a holistic, biopsychosocial assessment of an individual to be used for service planning and treatment across all services and levels of care. The six dimensions are:

1	<b>DIMENSION 1</b>	<b>Acute Intoxication and/or Withdrawal Potential</b> Exploring an individual's past and current experiences of substance use and withdrawal
2	<b>DIMENSION 2</b>	<b>Biomedical Conditions and Complications</b> Exploring an individual's past and current experiences of substance use and withdrawal
3	<b>DIMENSION 3</b>	<b>Emotional, Behavioral, or Cognitive Conditions and Complications</b> Exploring an individual's thoughts, emotions, and mental health issues
4	<b>DIMENSION 4</b>	<b>Readiness to Change</b> Exploring an individual's readiness and interest in changing
5	<b>DIMENSION 5</b>	<b>Relapse, Continued Use, or Continued Problem Potential</b> Exploring an individual's unique relationship with relapse or continued use or problems
6	<b>DIMENSION 6</b>	<b>Recovery/Living Environment</b> Exploring an individual's recovery or living situation, and the surrounding people, places, and things

## REFLECTING A CONTINUUM OF CARE



ASAM's Criteria, formerly known as the ASAM Patient Placement Criteria, began in the 1980s to define one national set of criteria for providing results-based care in the treatment of addiction. Today the Criteria have become the most widely used set of guidelines for placement, continued stay and transfer/discharge of patients with addiction and co-occurring conditions. ASAM's Criteria are required in the majority of US states.



**continuum**  
THE ASAM CRITERIA DECISION ENGINE™

CONTINUUM™ - The ASAM Criteria Decision Engine provides a computer-guided, structured interview for assessing patients with addictive, substance-related and co-occurring conditions, based on the ASAM Criteria. CONTINUUM™ and the ASAM Criteria text should be used in tandem; the text to provide the background and guidance for proper use of the software, and the software to enable comprehensive, standardized evaluation. With CONTINUUM™, clinicians can easily conduct a comprehensive biopsychosocial patient risk and needs assessment along all six ASAM Criteria Dimensions while determining the ASAM Criteria Levels of Care recommendation. CONTINUUM™ is part of a family of assessment products, for information please visit [www.ASAMcontinuum.org](http://www.ASAMcontinuum.org).

For more information, visit

<http://www.ASAM.org/criteria>