

Aligning Co-Occurring Services with the American Society of Addiction Medicine Criteria

The purpose of this bulletin is to update the guidance in the bulletin OMHSAS06-03, Co-Occurring Disorder Competency Approval Criteria for All Facilities Licensed by the Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Program Licensure, or the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, by providing information on co-occurring capable and co-occurring enhanced services as defined within the American Society of Addiction Medicine Criteria, 3rd Edition, 2013 (The ASAM Criteria).

In 2006, the Department of Health's Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs (now DDAP) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) issued a joint bulletin OMHSAS06-03 outlining the criteria for facilities to be approved as co-occurring competent facilities. In 2018, Pennsylvania began the use of The ASAM Criteria for placement, continued stay, and discharge for all publicly funded substance use disorder (SUD) services. In order to implement The ASAM Criteria, DDAP, and DHS collaborated to provide updated information on establishing a delivery system for the treatment of individuals presenting with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. In June 2021, the Act of July 9, 2021, P.L. 377, No. 70, known as Act 70, required drug and alcohol treatment providers to align service delivery conditions with The ASAM Criteria. Under Act 70, drug and alcohol treatment providers must be aligned with the service delivery conditions in The ASAM Criteria and therefore provide co-occurring capable services.

Alignment with The ASAM Criteria is integral to improving the treatment of co-occurring mental health (MH) and SUD. According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, among adults 18 years of age or older, 6.7 percent (17 million) had both a mental illness and SUD. While 50 percent (8.5 million) of these individuals received either SUD treatment or MH treatment, only 5.7 percent of those individuals received concurrent SUD and MH treatment at a specialty facility.

This bulletin includes the definitions of co-occurring capable and co-occurring enhanced programs as set forth in The ASAM Criteria. The information may be used to assist SCAs, BH-MCOs, and treatment providers in identifying co-occurring capable and co-occurring enhanced programs and in referring individuals to those programs.

Co-Occurring Capable Providers

As described in The ASAM Criteria, "co-occurring capable" means that providers have policies and procedures for assessment, treatment planning, program content, and

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discharge planning that address co-occurring MH and substance use symptoms and disorders. Co-occurring capable providers are able to assess and recognize their clients' co-occurring disorders, make arrangements for treatment of co-occurring mental illness with mental health providers, and accommodate such mental illness into the clients' SUD treatment within their programs. Other characteristics of such programs include:

- ➔ Arrangements in place for coordination and collaboration between SUD and MH services.
- ➔ Addresses medication monitoring, addiction and psychological assessment and consultation, either on-site or through coordinated care with off-site providers.
- ➔ Staff trained to address the interaction between MH and SUD and their effect on the patient's readiness to change – as well as relapse and recovery environment issues – through individual and group program content.
- ➔ The primary focus of co-occurring capable programs in SUD settings is the treatment of SUD. In MH settings, a co-occurring capable program's primary focus is the treatment of mental disorders. Such programs have arrangements in place for coordination and collaboration between SUD and MH services. DHS strongly encourages MH providers to be co-occurring capable by meeting the co-occurring capable characteristics outlined above.

Co-Occurring Enhanced Providers

As described in The ASAM Criteria, “co-occurring enhanced” means that providers also have policies and procedures for assessment, treatment planning, program content, and discharge planning that address co-occurring MH and substance use symptoms and disorders. Co-occurring enhanced providers are able to provide comprehensive treatment for their clients' co-occurring SUD and mental health treatment needs. Other characteristics of such programs include:

- ➔ Licensed and staffed as required in their respective MH or SUD regulations.
- ➔ Aligns with The ASAM Criteria at their corresponding level of care (LoC).

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- ➔ Addresses all co-occurring capable characteristics outlined in The ASAM Criteria
- ➔ Addresses all co-occurring enhanced sections in The ASAM Criteria specific to the program’s LOC.
- ➔ Incorporates policies, procedures, assessments, treatment, and discharge planning processes that accommodate patients who have both unstable co-occurring mental and substance use disorders.
- ➔ Incorporates mental health symptoms management groups into addiction treatment and vice versa.
- ➔ Motivational enhancement therapies specifically designed for those with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders are available.
- ➔ Close collaboration or integration between addiction and mental health services that provide crisis backup services and access to addiction and mental health case management and continuing care.

In contrast to co-occurring capable services, co-occurring enhanced services place their primary focus on the integration of services for MH and SUD in their staffing, services, and program content such that both unstable addiction and mental health issues can be adequately addressed by the program.

The chart below summarizes the pathways to providing co-occurring enhanced services:

Outpatient Licensed Providers			
Licensed SUD Program	+ Licensed MH Professional (s)	= Co-Occurring Enhanced	Key considerations: Facility records must identify patients as SUD, MH, or Co-Occurring. (28 Pa. Code § 709.31(b))

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Licensed SUD Program	+ Licensed MH Program	= Co-Occurring Enhanced	Key considerations: Facility records must identify patients as SUD, MH, or Co-Occurring. (28 Pa. Code § 709.31(b))
Residential Licensed Providers			
Licensed SUD Program	+ Licensed MH Program	= Co-Occurring Enhanced	Key considerations: Facility records must identify patients as SUD, MH, or Co-Occurring. (28 Pa. Code § 709.31(b))