

The Addiction Treatment Provider

QUALITY

ASSURANCE GUIDEBOOK

2nd Edition A Guide to the
Core Competencies
for the Delivery of
Addiction Treatment
Services

VOICE | VISION | LEADERSHIP



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF
ADDICTION TREATMENT PROVIDERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Twelve Core Competencies. Forty-Nine Guidelines. These provisions form a foundation for the operation and delivery of treatment for substance use disorder and comprise this, the Second Edition of the *NAATP Quality Assurance Guidebook*.

Why a Guidebook?

Substance use disorder (SUD) treatment is healthcare, essential, lifesaving professional healthcare, and it should be operated and recognized as such. Accomplishing this distinction requires rigor, the kind of rigor found in the practice of professional services such as law and medicine, particularly including the various disciplines of medicine alongside which SUD must exist.

SUD treatment is unique, both in the sense that it is a relatively new discipline and because it arose out of a social, not medical, model of care. Yet it has evolved dramatically, and SUD is now established as a medical disease accompanied by a growing body of evidence-based treatment practices.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We now know that SUD is a disease, rooted in the brain, with biological, psychological, social, and spiritual manifestations. We also know that SUD is deadly and that our nation finds itself in a healthcare crisis of epic proportion. Research indicates that individuals meeting the criteria for a substance use disorder rose to over 48 million in 2022. Drug overdose deaths are estimated at over 110,000 annually, and deaths due to alcohol use number 500 people per day. This is compounded by the increasing co-occurrence of additional behavioral health issues further complicating treatment.

It is imperative, therefore, that we as addiction treatment and mental health professionals accept the challenge of embracing practice guidelines. Without doing so, our discipline will not take its rightful place alongside recognized and honored healthcare practices.

Yet, there is one more essential condition for the establishment and grounding of competent SUD practice. The guidelines we promulgate must be recognized by both the practitioner community and the national healthcare structure in which they are practiced.

Enter the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP). NAATP has served as the national business association for addiction and mental health treatment providers for five decades. Our function is to serve the service provider through resources and public policy advocacy and to evolve the practice of SUD treatment to maximum effectiveness. We do this, not as an outside force, but rather as a community of shared values and agreed upon practices. NAATP is a membership society, a community, and it is this community which is the essential ingredient to practice guideline recognition and implementation. As such, we call upon NAATP membership to embrace these guideline practices.

It is important to note that these quality assurance guidelines are generated by the very community in which they are practiced. They are written by the provider and for the provider. NAATP is grateful and indebted to the many professionals who drafted and reviewed the guidelines. They represent the best of us, and they are recognized in this publication in the foregoing pages. We owe special thanks to the NAATP Director of Quality Assurance, Peter Thomas, who guided this process and served as Editor in Chief.

The Guidebook is the product of NAATP's Quality Assurance Initiative (QAI), which was created to set guidelines for high-quality treatment service delivery, below which providers should not fall, and at which level proficient services will be delivered. The QAI objectives are to Promote Best Business Practice, Deter Problematic Business Practice, Assist Payers in the Discernment of Services, Inform Law and Policy Makers, Educate and Protect the Consumer, and Train and Educate the Provider. The QAI is the National Association's response to the need for clear and centralized professional industry guidelines.

The Guidebook identifies the core competencies of addiction treatment service through the twelve categories of Philosophy and Organizational Culture; Licensing, Accreditation and Regulatory Engagement; Clinical Continuum; Employment, Training and Credentialing; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging; Billing; Outcomes Measures; Technology; Community Engagement, Public Relations; Public Policy; Marketing, Advertising, and Visibility; and Ethics. Within these categories are 49 specific Guidelines, each accompanied by an explanatory commentary from an industry expert, followed by a list of resources referenced to aid the provider in understanding and implementing the guideline.

Membership in The National Association is an indication of high-quality, reliable care. Taken together with membership requirements of licensing, accreditation, and Ethics Code compliance, The Guidebook allows consumers, payers, and industry professionals to use the [NAATP Addiction Industry Directory \(The AID\)](#) with the confidence that the members listed therein are committed to the provision of reliable, proficient, and ethical addiction treatment. This publication honors their work.

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