

WELCOME TO VASAM
Quarterly Bulletin

we're so glad you're here!



President's Message

On behalf of the board of directors, thank you for your continued support and participation at the Virginia Chapter of ASAM! As the incoming president for 2025-2026, I am honored to have your trust to lead our esteemed medical society.

I've often found that historical reflection can be helpful to appreciate how we got here and chart our vision for the journey ahead. As an early career physician, I trained at the height of the opioid epidemic during a historic push to formalize our specialty and graduated from one of the first ACGME-accredited addiction medicine fellowships in the country. Without the established pathway, I cannot confidently say that I would have pursued this career as a trainee. I say this to remind us that when we as treatment professionals and policy makers come together to collaborate, educate and advocate for any important cause, monumental changes can happen, in this case the growth of our workforce. Our field is an ever dynamic one, and whether it be riding the changing waves of the overdose epidemic or charting the new political landscape we find ourselves in, VASAM seeks to be your safe harbor to foster your professional growth and represent your interests, both in our commonwealth and nationally.

Speaking of nationally, our venerable immediate past-president Dr. Debra O'Beirne has led us through an era of greater academic involvement, recognition and unprecedented chapter growth. She will remain on our executive board but will move onto her elected position as ASAM's Region V director. We are very proud to have our very own in an ASAM leadership role!

VASAM's 2025 annual meeting will be held November 7-8 at the Hotel Roanoke this year. The education committee is working tirelessly to bring our members and guests a state-of-the-art conference with nationally renowned speakers. Please mark your calendars to ensure you can attend!

Registration is open for ASAM's 2025 annual conference to be held this April in Denver. For those attending, we invite you to join our regional meeting where we can meet and greet our colleagues from Virginia and nearby states. An exciting endeavor born out of a closer academic partnership with VCU's Wright Center for Clinical and Translational Research and the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (VOAA) is our official role as subject matter experts to promote our mutual organizational interests, with the goal of education and equitable disbursement of funds allocated for evidence-based treatment programs. We are in the early stages of our discussions with VCU and the VOAA but look forward to a promising collaboration in the months ahead.

Lastly, the beating heart of VASAM is the committees which meet and act asynchronously to achieve their goals as outlined by their respective chairpersons and the board. They are the education, advocacy and public policy, membership, by-law, and strategic planning committees.

Much of the board met last month in Richmond for a strategic planning meeting which yielded information which will be instrumental in furthering our organizational goals in the months and years ahead. Given our growing committee participation, I'm afraid there isn't enough room to recognize everyone here! Please refer to the VASAM website to get to know our committees. If you as a member have any interest in getting more involved and possibly joining our board, I invite you to join a committee! Email us at info@vasam.org for more information.

Warmest regards,
 Masaru "Moose" Nishiaoki, MD, FASAM
 President, Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine

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WHAM 2025 Webinar Series

Back by popular demand, VASAM is pleased to present the "What's Hot in Addiction Medicine" Webinar Series. This year, the WHAM presenters will be announced individually. This four-part webinar series will be held quarterly in 2025. WHAM 2025 is free for all!



REGISTRATION IS OPEN !

Join us **March 19, 2025, from 6:30pm -7:30pm**
for our 1st WHAM this year!

Fidelma B. Rigby MD
Professor OB/GYN Maternal Fetal Division,
VCUHS Dept of OB/GYN

will present a talk on

“Human Trafficking and Addiction Medicine: How to Identify and How to Intervene”

Renewing your 2025 ASAM Membership

ASAM is the largest leading professional society actively seeking to define and expand the field of addiction medicine. ASAM membership offers the opportunity to develop treatment guidelines and protocol, network with peers and attend world-renowned courses in the field of addiction medicine and so much more. Besides being able to network with these doctors and share resources and best practices, there are numerous benefits of becoming a member.

Renew Your Membership HERE!

Benefits include:

- The Journal of Addiction Medicine
- ASAM Fellow Designation
- Special Interest Groups
- Advocate for Your Profession
- Career Center Access
- CME - Member Exclusive Rates
- Networking & Local Chapters
- Health Insurance - Member Exclusive Rates

The VaSAM Membership Committee Chair and committee members will also be reaching out to you directly via email in the next few weeks if you have not yet renewed your membership.

Member Types and Descriptions:

- **Associate** - Open to individuals who teach, conduct research or provide clinical care for individuals who are at risk for having a substance use disorder. Associate members in a clinical setting must have a state clinical license. (An equivalent master's level certification accepted if no clinical licensure is available in their state.)
- **Early Career** - Physicians in their first two years after completing an accredited Residency or Fellowship program OR in the first two years of practicing addiction medicine on a full-time basis.
- **Regular** - Licensed to practice allopathic or osteopathic medicine.
- **Resident** - Interns, residents, or fellows serving in an approved hospital or fellowship program. Must have a valid license in localities where required or an equivalent certifying document.
- **Retired** - Completely retired from the practice of medicine.
- **Student** - Enrolled and in good standing in a formally accredited University and/or Institution.

ASAM Corner



The ASAM 56th Annual Conference, will take place at the Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Aurora, CO, April 24 - 27, 2025. [Learn more here!](#)

The Gaylord Rockies is located at the edge of the Front Range, just minutes away from the Denver International Airport with breathtaking views of the Rockies and the Denver skyline. With a newly renovated Grand Lodge, an indoor/outdoor waterpark, six reimagined restaurants, a world-class spa, and a state-of-the-art fitness center - it is the ultimate destination for conference attendees to learn and relax.

The ASAM Annual Conference is the defining event in addiction medicine bringing together all professionals to connect, learn, and inspire. For 56 years, ASAM has been convening the addiction treatment community to showcase best practices and the latest science, research, and innovations in the field. This year, attendees will have the opportunity to:

- Connect and network with over 2,300 colleagues
- Learn from nationally recognized experts at 60+ sessions and 100+ posters
- Be Inspired by thought-provoking conversations with peers and powerful presentations highlighting actionable and practical skills

These are the dates and times for the main conference content. Pre-conference courses, regional meetings, special interest group discussions, and some fun and fitness activities occur outside of these times. Please check the [full schedule](#) for more information. Pre-Conference Courses take place Thursday, April 24, 2025, and are subject to an additional registration fee.

- **Thursday, April 24, 2025 | 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm**
- **Friday, April 25, 2025 | 7:30 am - 7:00 pm**
- **Saturday, April 26, 2025 | 7:30 am - 5:30 pm**
- **Sunday, April 27, 2025 | 7:30 am - 11:30 am**

Full Conference Registration includes:

- Three exciting general sessions and 60+ concurrent sessions*
- Dynamic Poster Hall with 100+ posters and live presentations from the poster authors
- Daily breakfast, lunch, refreshment breaks, and networking receptions
- Robust Exhibit Hall with relevant and engaging company booths
- Dedicated networking time to build connections with colleagues and new friends

*All content will be recorded and made available on-demand in the ASAM eLearning Center within 2-4 weeks following the live event. All full conference registrants will get access to this content until May 23, 2028.

Early Bird Rates available until March 10th! Registration Details are available [here](#).

Public Policy/Advocacy Committee

*Update provided by VaSAM Legislative Committee,
Chair: Dr. Douglas A Brown
Committee Members: Dr. Lauren Grawert and Dr. James Thompson*



The Advocacy Committee is actively engaging with external organizations to explore potential policy initiatives and collaboration opportunities. Below are the key updates:

Review of Maryland ASAM's Fentanyl Bill

The committee has been in contact with the Maryland ASAM Advocacy Committee members to review the contents of their fentanyl-related legislation proposals, which would require Emergency Departments to stock and use fentanyl test strips in the ED setting. We are currently assessing the bill's provisions and potential applicability to Virginia. At our upcoming Virginia ASAM meeting in March, we will present this information for discussion and determine whether we should advocate for similar legislative efforts within our state.

Outreach to the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) Advocacy Committee

We have reached out to the AAAP Advocacy Committee to explore opportunities for joint advocacy efforts on shared policy priorities. As of now, we have not received an email response. We plan to follow up at the end of the month to reaffirm our interest in collaboration and identify potential areas of mutual engagement.

National ASAM meeting

Virginia ASAM advocacy committee members will be attending the April national ASAM meeting in Denver, Colorado, with plans to attend the advocacy related lectures and meetings to ensure alignment and continued support of national ASAM priorities and agenda.

We look forward to further discussions on these advocacy initiatives!

Partner News



The Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) is partnering with the Wright Regional Center for Clinical and Translational Research at Virginia Commonwealth University and the Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine to help understand and address the opioid epidemic in Virginia's cities and counties. The goal is to identify gaps and barriers in our opioid network, highlight the mismatch between needs and resources, and uncover ways to improve service quality and coordination. The OAA has provided a grant to our team to create an evidence-based Opioid Abatement Authority Toolkit, which aims to guide cities and counties in applying for and using OAA funding for evidence-based programming. You can explore the toolkit [here](#). Please note that some government servers may block the site, but it is readily accessible via mobile devices.

We have created a survey to help inform this Toolkit, to ensure the content we provide is most helpful for cities and counties. Because your work intersects with the substance use treatment system, would you be open to sharing the survey link with members of your team or anyone else in your organization who has relevant experience or insights? Your feedback will directly influence the development of an OAA-funded opioid abatement toolkit and regional strategies to enhance community response. We know the Southwest Virginia region is part of a large behavioral health ecosystem and would value any input the region could provide.

The survey can be accessed here: [OAA Community Needs Assessment Survey](#).

Any questions or comments about the survey can be directed to Dr. E. Marshall Brooks at edward.brooks@vcuhealth.org. Thank you so much for your time and help with this important effort.

Save the Date for VaSAM 2025

November 7-8, 2025
The Hotel Roanoke
Roanoke, Virginia



VASAM's 2025 Annual Conference will feature Pre-Conference Symposia sessions during the day on Friday November 7th, followed by a Welcome Reception. Saturday, November 8th will include a Keynote address, a series of Invited Speakers, a Fellow-in-Training presentation, Student Poster Competition and various networking opportunities.

The Program Planning Committee, chaired by Dr. Brandon Wills of VCU, is working on the Schedule of Events now and additional details will be announced in the coming months. Registration will open in the Spring.

The Hotel Roanoke is conveniently located at 110 Shenandoah Ave. NW in Roanoke, Virginia. The historic Hotel Roanoke, an enduring American icon, has been hosting guests in The Roanoke Valley for over a century, since 1882. Their stylish guest rooms and state-of-the-art conference center seamlessly blend the charm of the past with modern-day essentials, such as complimentary Wi-Fi, providing a perfect stay and experience just a few steps away from Downtown Roanoke.

Hotel rooms are available to VASAM 2025 attendees for a special group rate of \$209, plus applicable taxes, per night, on a first-come-first-served basis. **Book your hotel room now!**

Sponsorship & Exhibition opportunities for VASAM 2025 are available now! Contact the VASAM 2025 Annual Conference Planners, alicia.standridge@vasam.net or molly.poisant@vasam.net to secure your sponsorship!

Bookmark this [webpage](#) for regular updates between Member Bulletins!

Meet the Member

Lauren H. Grawert, Chief Medical Officer, Double board-certified Addiction Psychiatrist, Certified PCSS-MOUD SAHMSA AAAP trainer, Distinguished Fellow of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (DFASAM), VaSAM 2025-2026 Secretary and Public Policy/Advocacy Committee member.



Dr. Lauren H. Grawert is a double board-certified addiction psychiatrist with over 15 years of experience in treating mood and anxiety disorders, as well as substance use disorders. She earned her medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) College of Medicine in 2009, followed by a general psychiatry residency in 2013 and an addiction psychiatry fellowship in 2014, both at MUSC.

Throughout her career, Dr. Grawert has held several leadership positions, including serving as Chief of Psychiatry for the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group in Northern Virginia, where she developed large-scale outpatient addiction treatment programs. She has also worked in private practice, specializing in general psychiatry, substance use disorders, and medication-assisted treatment.

In April 2023, Dr. Grawert was appointed Chief Medical Officer of Aware Recovery Care, a company specializing in in-home mental health and substance use disorder treatment. In this current role, she collaborates closely with the CEO to lead and scale the Medical Affairs organization, ensuring the delivery of high-quality addiction care to patients throughout the United States.

Dr. Grawert is a vocal advocate for reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction, striving to increase access to treatment and support. She has served as an expert for the Virginia Governor's Advisory Commission Task Force on Opioids and Addiction, contributed to Kaiser Permanente's National Mental Health & Addiction Leadership Organization, and held a professorship in psychiatry at Penn State College of Medicine. She writes a weekly newsletter on Linked In called "Hot Topics in Healthcare," which tackles addiction literacy.

In her clinical practice, Dr. Grawert adopts a warm, non-judgmental approach, recognizing the unique challenges faced by individuals dealing with addiction and mental health issues. As the incoming Virginia ASAM secretary and advocacy committee member, Dr. Grawert is very excited to partner with state agencies to increase access to high quality addiction care.

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