

SARAM: the Society for the Abdication of Responsibility for Addiction Medicine

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[Related resources: <http://www.doctordeluca.com/Library/LibPages/WODjournalism-lib.htm>]

See also:

["Katrina Causes Wave of Addiction Problems"](#) - Bob Curley; [JoinTogetherOnline](#); 2005-09-26

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Excerpt:

"Katrina displaced thousands of people with addictions from their treatment programs and support networks... 'There has been absolutely no response to the needs of people in addiction recovery,' [said S. Atkins of the Hope Network volunteer organization]."

Comment (DeLuca):

The complete societal abandonment of substance users and pain patients in the wake of Katrina confirms the American Society of Addiction Medicine's (ASAMs) absolute irrelevance to the public health, medical, and drug policy issues that ARE the substance abuse and pain crisis problems in America. The Society has been almost useless in advancing the frontiers of academic addiction medicine and can't even effectively disseminate well proven standing technology such as naltrexone for alcohol use disorders and buprenorphine for opioid abuse. If ASAM were doing its job would I be getting multiple letters a week, every week, month after month, year after year from people unable to access anything near state of the art pharmacotherapy of any sort for substance abuse problems?

[Here is an example as true today as when it was written in 2003:

"Dopey Docs and Naltrexone" - <http://www.doctordeluca.com/FAQ/DopeyDocs.htm>]

And did ASAM deign to weigh in on *Hurwitz*, a case at the very crux of the war on doctors and the pain crisis in America? Nope; all we get is silence. Can ASAM step up to even speak out for legions of alcohol and drug users and pain patients utterly abandoned by government faced with a national disaster? Silence. Did ASAM step in with a crisis plan to care for and support the doctors and patients which are its reason for being? Whoops. Can ASAM kiss federal and AMA ass by not rocking the boat? Oh yeah, they are really good at not rocking the boat.

Clearly ASAMs humiliating, decades-long, quest to be accepted by Daddy into the AMA far outweighs any commitment it has to the actual provision of desperately needed addiction medicine services. Sorry, I can't see this as anything other than 'cowardice unbecoming a physician.' The whole point of professional organizations is that together we can stand up and do the right thing when alone we would be impotent and

overwhelmed. So I'll say it again: ASAM has made itself entirely irrelevant - it has made a sham out of most of the first half of its mission statement

[see: "ASAM's Mission" - left, top corner of ASAM homepage: <http://www.asam.org/>]

I am no longer a member of ASAM, but if I was I'd be ashamed. As it is I am just very sad and disappointed and more than a little angry. Those of you who are still members ought to demand a serious self-examination of "ASAM's Mission" from new President (my friend and ex-ASAM-colleague) Dr. Elizabeth Howell. In the meantime let me suggest a name change for the organization:

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