

# Position Statement on Equitable Access to Quality Medical Care for Substance Related Disorders

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2016

Approved by the Assembly, May 2016

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

**Issue:** Persons with substance related disorders have often been excluded from both medical treatment and medical coverage by insurance companies due to false beliefs that (1) there is no efficacious treatment, and (2) providing medical coverage for substance related disorders on par with medical disorders would result in skyrocketing health care costs. Given the prevalence of substance related disorders and the morbidity, mortality and costs associated with them, they can no longer be ignored or excluded.

### **POSITION:**

- All substance related disorders are diagnosable mental illnesses for which effective treatments are readily available.
- APA opposes the exclusion of substance related disorders from legislation or programs that pertain to parity of insurance coverage, access to health care services, and quality of care.
- Access must be expanded to effective prevention and treatment for substance related disorders, including medication assisted treatment others, are not subject to the same restricted limits on access to and coverage of care as are substance related disorders.
- It is discriminatory and contrary to the scientific findings of the clinical, research, health economics and policy communities to exclude substance related disorder diagnoses and patients with these diagnoses and to limit access to effective behavioral and medication assisted treatments.