

# Wisconsin Society of Addiction Medicine

*A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine*

## NOVEMBER 2021

### President's Message

Dear WISAM Members:

We are now entering fall and winter, the days are getting notably shorter. However sorry my body is about the limited time outside after a day's work, my mind is excited about the possibilities of new projects and creative ventures that the longer nights allow.

This gave me a bit of a boost to read, and recently, I came across this quote: "Intention minus action equals squat." (The Servant: A Simple Story About the True Essence of Leadership by James Hunter)



October brought our annual conference. I hope you were able to attend. If not, you can access the live recordings ([link](#)). Thanks again to our fabulous conference committee for their dedicated efforts in seeing another virtual conference to fruition. Without action, the intention to gather the addiction treatment community would never have been realized.

WISAM activities in the last month have included testifying in support of the decriminalizing of fentanyl test strips, ([link](#)). As of this writing, the bill has passed the Assembly with no opposition, and hopefully will make it into law this session.

We are continuing advocacy with the National Advocates for Pregnant Women for a more clinically appropriate and evidence-based interpretation of Act 292. In the last few months, some of us met with state officials to assess the possibilities of changing this unconstitutional law.

For some context on this topic: the fetus is guaranteed a lawyer, but the woman is not. In the current charged environment where much attention has been focused on Texas' law limited access to abortion, women's rights seem to be under attack. Act 292 has been in place since 1999 in Wisconsin and was deemed unconstitutional in 2018, yet it still stands. Consider for a moment, the unequal enforcement of this law- how often does a woman drink alcohol in Wisconsin? In excessive amounts? Out of control? Or smoke cigarettes in this way? How often is this used to report someone to CPS? And who is getting reported? Are suburban, Caucasian women being tested at the same rate and frequency that Black or Latina women are?

If you want to learn more about the impact of enforcement of Act 292, please take some time to view "Personhood Documentary" ([link](#)) and read here about a woman whose life was affected by this law: ([link](#)). While we are not able to overturn the law due to the

current legislative environment, there are still changes we can make.

So, I want to encourage the readership to recognize that while this kind of work is not easy to do, it is important for our patients and communities. Intention plus action equals will. Each time we act on our intentions, we are strengthening our willpower, building our integrity; each action then provides energy for ongoing action.

Ask your clinical community how they handle reporting of pregnant women who have substance use disorder. You may be surprised. I was. And I used this surprise to help manifest change in the part of the world where I have the most influence at my health system. I took time to encourage our hospital system to clarify in written policy that the law clearly states reporting is considered permissive, not mandatory, when a pregnant woman is felt to have a substance use disorder. After changing the written policy, now we are talking with the nurses and social workers to help communicate that engagement with treatment is most effective and better received when done outside of the legal arena.

If you want information about the specifics of this Act, please see here ([link](#)). If you would like to discuss with your local facility about making a change, please let WISAM know. I can only imagine the gratitude that will ensue from communities where their loved one got into treatment rather than jail for the upcoming holiday season.

I hope everyone has a happy holiday season. May you all find the energy to follow your intentions with action to keep building your willpower.

Sincerely,  
Ritu Bhatnagar, M.D., M.P.H.

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***Additionally from the president...***

I wanted to share this announcement from SAMSHA with you. They are extending the methadone take-home flexibilities for one year while they work on a more permanent solution. You can find the link to the announcement [here](#).

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## **WISAM Open Exchange - Back for 2022!**

In 2021, WISAM rebranded the teleconference calls held in past years to be known as the "WISAM Open Exchange." We will have the 2022 schedule released soon. In the meantime, you can mark your calendars for January 27, 2022 as the first one. The topic led by Dr. Bhatnagar is "Addressing Moral Injury in Addiction Treatment: what to do when the ideal world and local realities don't align".



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## **Time to Renew your WISAM Membership!**

In order to renew your membership with WISAM, please [visit the ASAM website and log-in](#).

WISAM continues to work towards advancing the field of Addiction Medicine in Wisconsin through educational opportunities, creating a professional network, and the sharing of scientific information. We have some great things planned for 2022!



Membership  
JOIN | RENEW

[WWW.WISAM-ASAM.ORG/](http://WWW.WISAM-ASAM.ORG/)

## Wisconsin Doctor Day



Doctor Day will take place at the Monona Terrace in Madison, WI and include a keynote presentation, priority issue briefing, policy breakouts and of course legislative visits!

The multi-specialty nature of Doctor Day makes Wisconsin's annual physicians' advocacy event unique compared to similar events across the country. Physicians and medical students from nearly 20 different physician organizations annually participate in Doctor Day.

Learn first-hand how you can make a difference in the legislative process!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Public Policy Committee

WISAM is looking for individuals who are interested in becoming more involved in the Public Policy Committee. Our current Chair, Dr. Elizabeth Salisbury-Afshar, is ready to help lead a team with a keen interest in public policy matters around issues that affect addiction medicine, the practice of addiction medicine, and public policies that may impact the social determinant of health for our patients. **Please contact us in order to get connected and learn more about the opportunities we have available to get involved.**



## Helpful Links

[WISAM Website](#)

[WISAM Event Calendar](#)

[WISAM News](#)

[ASAM Website](#)

[Membership Information](#)

[ASAM CME Events](#)



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