

ASAM CONTINUUM[®] & AZ WITS FAQs

Updated: 11/1/2021

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For additional information visit [AHCCCS ASAM Initiative](#)

For questions email - ASAM@azahcccs.gov

AHCCCS REQUIREMENTS

Q1: How will the ASAM CONTINUUM® initiative be funded?

A1: AHCCCS has implemented two separate funding opportunities including a Differential Adjusted Payment (DAP) for providers/clinics to integrate the ASAM CONTINUUM® into their EHR and increasing assessment reimbursement for H0031 with U9 modifier for additional reimbursement of \$28.71 to cover the cost of the ASAM CONTINUUM® subscription.

By April 30, 2021, clinics needed to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to AHCCCS indicating they will contract with a vendor to complete integration of ASAM with their EHR system by April 30, 2022. To receive the 0.5% DAP increase for ASAM integration with its EHR, the clinic must have submitted an LOI to AHCCCS by April 30, 2021. If a clinic submits an LOI and receives the 0.5% DAP increase for CYE 2022, but fails to integrate its system by April 30, 2022, that provider will be ineligible to receive any DAP for dates of service from October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023 (CYE 2023) if a DAP is available at that time.

Q2: Which AHCCCS providers are required to conduct the ASAM CONTINUUM®?

A2: AHCCCS providers who conduct substance use disorder (SUD) assessments are required to utilize the ASAM CONTINUUM®; this includes SUD assessments for members who have co-occurring mental health and SUD.

Q3: Who should an AHCCCS provider conduct the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment with?

A3: Members who have SUD, members who have co-occurring disorders with both mental health and SUD, and members with serious mental illness and a co-occurring SUD.

Q4: When will providers who conduct SUD assessments be required to utilize the ASAM CONTINUUM® by?

A4: Providers who conduct SUD assessments will be required to start utilizing the ASAM CONTINUUM® by October 1, 2022.

Q5: What is the process for integrating the ASAM CONTINUUM® into the provider's EHR?

A5: Providers should start the process by speaking with their own EHR vendor about integrating the ASAM CONTINUUM® into their system. The providers and/or vendors can reach out to ASAM CONTINUUM® contact - Bill Liu at bliu@asam.org for technical assistance related to EHR integration.

Q6: What is the level of integration for the ASAM CONTINUUM®?

A6: The intent is for the full integration of the ASAM CONTINUUM® into the Provider EHR. Full integration will allow providers/clinicians to stay within their own EHR resulting in ease of use and allow for clinical data and utilization reports to be generated within their own system.

Q7: Is integration required if a provider already has the forms built into their own EHR System?

A7: The provider must ensure the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment/forms are the most updated versions. The current version ASAM CONTINUUM® update version 3.3 and can be found on the ASAM CONTINUUM® website.

Q8: What code and modifier should be utilized for the ASAM CONTINUUM®?

A8: Providers should utilize the H0031 assessment code with the U9 modifier when billing for the ASAM CONTINUUM®. Currently, there is an additional reimbursement of \$28.71, per ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment, by using the U9 Modifier.

Q9: Is there training or certification requirement to purchase the ASAM CONTINUUM®?

A9: No, you are not required to have training or certification to purchase the ASAM CONTINUUM® subscription. However, AHCCCS is requesting that each provider complete the AZ WITS training prior to purchasing subscriptions from FEI Systems for access to the AZ WITS platform and ASAM CONTINUUM®. ASAM is providing discounted subscriptions for those that complete training.

Q10: What billing codes are used with the U9 modifier to receive the additional reimbursement?

Q10: AHCCCS is providing an additional reimbursement amount of \$28.30 for each ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment utilizing the U9 modifier with the following procedure codes H0001, H0031, 90791, and 90792. Providers that have integrated the assessment tool into their EHR system can utilize the U9 modifier. **For FFS claims, U9 modifiers will be verified through the Division of Fee for Service Management.**

Q11: Are Behavioral Health Residential Facilities (BHRF) providers able to use the U9 modifier if the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment is completed?

A11: BHRFs receive a per diem rate for the provision of behavioral health services, per AMPM 320- V, the per diem rate includes mental health assessment and therapeutic behavioral services as part of that rate.

ASAM CONTINUUM[®] - SUBSCRIPTION

Q1: Do I have to purchase a subscription?

A1: Yes, the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] is a subscription-based product. ASAM has agreed to provide discounted subscription rates for all AHCCCS providers including those utilizing their EHR system.

Q2: Is there funding available to pay for the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscription?

A2: AHCCCS increased the assessment reimbursement for H0031 with U9 modifier for additional reimbursement of \$28.71 to cover the cost of the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscription.

Q3: How much is an ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscription cost when utilizing the AZ WITS platform?

A3: **Updated: 11/1/2021** - The ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscription is the same cost when utilizing AZ WITS or integrating into the EHR. Organization will be provided with a training opportunity for the ASAM CONTINUUM[®]. If you order a subscription within 30 days after training, you are eligible for a 50% discount (\$420 per subscription). If you order after the 30 days post training, you are eligible for a 40% discount (\$504 per subscription).

AHCCCS has extended the contract with FEI Systems to host AZ WITS until February 2023.

ASAM has agreed to continue the subscription discounts until February 2023. See the current AZ WITS FEI Systems Order Form on the AHCCCS ASAM Initiative webpage for pricing information. When subscriptions are purchased through FEI Systems for access to the AZ WITS platform the cost is discounted 40% to 50% depending on when the purchase occurs. The provider does not have to pay any additional fees as AHCCCS has paid for the AZ WITS platform. These rates will be in effect for three years from September 2019 – September 2022. In September 2019, a full price subscription cost \$840 per year and continues to apply.

Q4: How can an ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscription be purchased?

A4: Subscriptions can be purchased through FEI Systems when utilizing the AZ WITS platform. Subscriptions are sold in one-year increments. If you are interested in purchasing an AZ WITS ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscription, email ASAM@azahcccs.gov.

Please see the AZ WITS FEI Systems Order Form on the [AHCCCS ASAM Initiative webpage](#) for more information.

Q5: Do I need to purchase a subscription if I am only reviewing and signing the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] reports?

A5: No, only staff members who are completing the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] assessment or need to view the actual ASAM CONTINUUM[®] questions and answers need to purchase subscriptions. Provider agency staff that only need to view the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] Summary or Narrative reports do not need to purchase the subscription. The provider agency staff administrator will be able to set-up as many AZ WITS accounts as needed to support access to the agency's clients. The staff administrator will be able to assign appropriate security roles for staff to launch the assessment associated with the subscriptions purchased.

Q6: Is the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscription transferable?

A6: Yes, the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] subscriptions can be transferred within the provider agency. The staff administrators will be trained to transfer those subscriptions if a staff leaves or no longer needs access to the ASAM CONTINUUM[®].

ASAM CONTINUUM[®] - ASSESSMENT TOOL

Q1: What is ASAM CONTINUUM[®]? – The ASAM Criteria Decisions Engine

A1: The ASAM CONTINUUM[®] provides counselors, clinicians, and other treatment team members with a computer-guided, structured interview for assessing and caring for patients with addictive, substance-related, and co-occurring conditions. The decision engine is based on the ASAM Criteria[®] and uses research-quality questions (including tools such as the ASI, CIWA and CINA instruments) to generate a comprehensive patient report that details DSM SUD diagnoses, severity, and imminent risks as well as a recommended level of care determination.

Q2: What is the difference between the ASAM Criteria[®] and ASAM CONTINUUM[®]?

A2: The ASAM Criteria[®] is the most widely used and comprehensive text of guidelines for treating patients with addiction. ASAM CONTINUUM[®] is software which guides clinicians through an ASAM Criteria[®] assessment and assists them with determining appropriate level of care placement. ASAM CONTINUUM[®] and ASAM Criteria[®] should be used in tandem—the text provides background and guidance for proper use of the software, and the software enables comprehensive, standardized evaluation. With ASAM CONTINUUM[®], clinicians can easily conduct a comprehensive biopsychosocial patient risk and needs assessment along all six ASAM Criteria Dimensions while determining the ASAM Criteria[®] Levels of Care recommendation.

Q3: Will the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] be released in another language?

A3: The ASAM CONTINUUM[®] is currently only available in English. The ASAM CONTINUUM[®] platform has been programmed such that it can be readily translated into other languages.

Q4: Can the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] be used to assess adolescents?

A4: ASAM suggests that users conducting assessments with adolescents modify ASAM CONTINUUM[®] using their clinical judgement, as some questions may be interpreted differently based on adolescent needs. The final reports from the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] can also be interpreted as needed to be appropriate for adolescents. Changes made to your electronic health record platforms, such as modifications to software functionality or assessment questions, would be at the discretion of your current EHR company to provide other adolescent options as needed.

Q5: Who can conduct the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] assessment?

A5: The ASAM CONTINUUM[®] is a computer-guided, structured-interview tool that assists clinicians and non-clinicians in conducting expert level biopsychosocial assessments.

Q6: How long does it take to conduct the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] assessment?

A6: After training and a learning curve of 15-20 cases, the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] assessment was independently found to take the average clinician about 60 minutes to complete. The first time an assessment is completed it might take two hours as users begin to navigate the tool.

Q7: Can the ASAM CONTINUUM[®] be used in criminal justice settings?

A7: The ASAM CONTINUUM[®] is adapted for use in criminal justice populations. The Re-entry Interview Script Enhancement (RISE) is in use specifically for clients in jail or prison who are being prepared for release.

Q8: Does the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment replace the current ASAM assessment?

A8: Yes, the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment is a comprehensive assessment that is for members with a SUD or Co-Occurring Disorders.

Q9: Is the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) Scale included in the ASAM CONTINUUM®?

A9: Yes, although the GAF Scale is no longer included in the DSM-5 textbook, the instrument has not lost any of its validity. The American Psychological Association (APA) dropped its multi-axial system of evaluation and functional measurement from its diagnostic criteria, but the ASAM Criteria® system involves much more than simple diagnostic criteria - and therefore requires a detailed, quantitative, functional interviewer rating across a broad spectrum of patient activities. It remains an excellent tool for characterizing multi-dimensional levels of function for patients who may have SUD and/or psychiatric disorders. For this reason, its use is being continued in the ASAM CONTINUUM®.

Q10: Is the ASAM CONTINUUM® required of Fee-for-Service (FFS) Providers?

A10: The ASAM CONTINUUM® is not required to be used for FFS members including American Indian Health Plan (AIHP), Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (TRBHA) & Tribal Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) members. Regardless of whether the ASAM CONTINUUM® is used for FFS, coordination with AIHP (Division of Fee for Service Management), TRBHA, and Tribal ALTCS should take place.

Q11: What is CO-Triage®?

A11: ASAM CONTINUUM® Triage (CO-Triage®) is a provisional referral tool for alcohol and substance problems. The CO-Triage questions help clinicians identify broad categories of treatment needs along the six ASAM Criteria Dimensions. The decision logic in CO-Triage calculates the provisionally recommended ASAM Level of Care (ASAM Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and Opioid Treatment Services) to which a patient should proceed to receive an ASAM CONTINUUM Comprehensive Assessment – the definitive, research-validated, level of care placement recommendation.

With CO-Triage, clinicians, as well as other health care service providers, can:

- Make provisional ASAM Level of Care treatment recommendations,
- Easily identify ASAM dimensional needs that require immediate attention including any withdrawal management, co-occurring, or bio-medical enhanced services,
- Increase the likelihood that patients are referred to the correct ASAM Level of Care, and
- Build from and easily synchronize with the research validated ASAM Criteria comprehensive assessment tool.

For more information visit the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) webpage

AZ WITS - APPLICATION

Q1: What is AZ WITS?

A1: For providers who do not have access to the ASAM CONTINUUM® through their EHR, AZ WITS (Web Infrastructure for Treatment Systems) is a web-based application to conduct the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment. AZ WITS satisfies AHCCCS reporting requirements related to ASAM CONTINUUM® assessments. These reporting requirements include aggregated reporting on assessments completed and comparing actual level of care assigned to level of care recommended by the ASAM CONTINUUM® algorithms.

AHCCCS has extended the contract with FEI Systems for another two years (February of 2023) for the use of the AZ WITS (Web Infrastructure).

Q2: What is the benefit to using the AZ WITS platform?

A2: When a provider utilizes the AZ WITS platform, they are using a Shared Source, Collaborative Model with providers, Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), and AHCCCS. AZ WITS facilitates cooperation and collaboration among providers by enabling the sharing of client services information via the web and allows AHCCCS to access data as well as manage relationships with providers and community organizations.

Q3: Who will I contact if I have technical issues with my AZ WITS platform?

A3: Each provider agency will have a staff administrator who will be responsible for setting up staff accounts/subscriptions and who will be able to reset passwords and troubleshoot issues. It is also recommended that each agency have a staff person dedicated as a “Champion” to assist with issues. For more advanced or complex issues the provider agency staff administrator can contact the AHCCCS ASAM Support Team.

Q4: How do I integrate AZ WITS into my EHR?

A4: The AZ WITS system does not integrate with other EHR systems. AZ WITS is a web-based application. Please see the [ASAM website](#) for more information including a list of authorized distributors and compatible EHR systems. The length of integration varies based on the EHR technical department and degree of integration that is desired. The provider is responsible for any cost associated with EHR integration. Please contact your EHR vendor for more information.

Q5: What is the benefit of using the AZ WITS platform?

A5: There are many benefits to utilizing the AZ WITS platform for access to the ASAM CONTINUUM®, including using the ASAM Criteria® to fidelity, improved patient outcomes, improved patient placement level of care, and no EHR integration cost or monthly maintenance fees.

Q6: Is the consent form required to initiate the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment?

A6: 42 CFR Part 2 (Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Records) is more restrictive than HIPAA. A member must give authorization for a Part 2 Provider to bill their insurance by signing a consent. A member must give a Part 2 Provider permission to share their SUD records with any other person or entity including their other treating providers. And any entity that receives Part 2 records may not re-disclose them without a member’s consent. Providers may not load the information into the automated tool where anyone else can see it without the member’s consent.

Q7: Can AZ WITS be used for non-AHCCCS members?

A7: AZ WITS can be used with non-AHCCCS members or members that have not been given an AHCCCS ID yet. The consent must still be completed, select “AHCCCS” as the Disclosed to Agency. For the member ID, enter “**S00000000**.” Once a member receives an actual AHCCCS ID, you will need to create a new client account as ID numbers cannot be changed in AZ WITS.

Q8: Must a consent be completed to give access to the Managed Care Organization (MCO to review the completed assessment)?

A8: The consent is required due to HIPAA Privacy and 42 CFR Part II regulations. The MCOs and the provider are in different AZ WITS agency environments. The provider may have members\clients with different MCOs. The consent ensures that the provider is giving access to the MCOs for the member\client associated with that MCO. The AZ WITS consent form is the mechanism to make the member\client information available to the MCO viewing queue.

Q9: Why does the AZ WITS platform have required fields highlighted in yellow but the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment does not?

A9: The product is made up of two systems - the first is the AZ WITS portion (loading member details, consent, etc.), the second is the ASAM CONTINUUM® software. The bright yellow and white is specific to the AZ WITS portion. Once a member is loaded then the provider can "Launch" the assessment. The fields needed for the assessment scoring have a pale-yellow background.

Q10: Does AZ WITS have data import/export capability?

A10: The completed assessment can be downloaded and uploaded into an EHR with the ability to accept uploaded PDF files. AZ WITS also allows for data to be exported but there is no interface for providers to upload data to the AZ WITS platform at this time.

Q11: Does AZ WITS include CO-Triage®?

A11: The AZ WITS platform has the option to include the ASAM CO-Triage® for an additional subscription add-on fee. FEI Systems has included the add-on subscription cost in the Order Form. Please see the AZ WITS FEI Systems Order Form on the [AHCCCS ASAM Initiative webpage](#) for more information.

AZ WITS - APPLICATION HELP

Q1: What if I do not know the full name of the member when accessing a profile?

A1: Use the first couple of letters of the name then use "*" - example "rob*" for Robert.

Q2: What web browser works with AZ WITS?

A2: All browsers except Safari and Internet Explorer (IE) web browsers are recommended. Microsoft is phasing out Internet Explorer, officially ending support on August 17, 2021. Not only is there a security risk when using outdated software, but as of August 2021, Internet Explorer will no longer work optimally and may result in a degraded experience or will be unable to connect to services.

Q3: What if I completed the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment on an adolescent and the level of care recommended is not appropriate?

A3: If the recommended level of care is not appropriate, then select the appropriate level of care with the Actual Level of Care, select the Clinical Override, and add a note in the Comments section.

Q4: What if I am completing the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment on a recent post incarceration member?

A4: It is recommended to ask the member what they did prior to arrest or if they used any substances during incarceration and change questions to past or future tense for members exiting a controlled environment.

Q5: If my agency has ASAM CONTINUUM® integrated in the EHR, would I still need to use AZ WITS?

A5: No, AZ WITS is a separate online portal to gain access to ASAM CONTINUUM®.

Q6: What if I cannot access the ASAM CONTINUUM® assessment after I have created the client's profile?

A6: Make sure that pop-up blocker is turned off and select "always allow" and make sure you have a completed consent with the appropriate health plan selected.

Q7: What if I do not have the ability to check the member's blood pressure and heart rate?

A7: The blood pressure and heart questions are no longer required and have been replaced with required questions used to determine if you were able to assess blood pressure and/or heart rate. The blood pressure and heart rate questions have been revised to not be required so they do not require the provider to input "normal" rates. If you are unable to check one or both and answer 'no', then there is no requirement to enter actual values.

Q8: What if there are multiple Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) licenses, per location?

A8: When the account is set up, multiple locations can be created. A dropdown selection of the name of the facility will be available per location that will match what is stated, per ADHS location. Please let us know how you would like your account to be set up by emailing ASAM@azahcccs.gov prior to submitting your order form.

Q9: Can you change the member's AHCCCS ID if you enter it incorrectly?

A9: No, once a member's AHCCCS ID has been created it cannot be edited. If a duplicated AHCCCS ID has been entered AZ WITS, the system will provide a message – "Similar Clients already exist in the System and are listed below. Do you wish to continue inserting this client record? Click "Override and Add" to continue to add the member.

Q10: Can a member's address be updated in AZ WITS?

A10: Yes, a member's demographic data can be updated at any given time.

Q11: Can more than one chart be opened at any given time in AZ WITS?

A11: No, only one member's chart can be open at one given time.

Q12: How can I train new staff?

A12: The AZ WITS training site will be available for new staff to train and practice in prior to utilizing the production site. Email ASAM@azahcccs.gov for a training account login. Training was recorded and posted in Relias – titled "AHCCCS - ASAM Continuum Videos."