

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: March 26, 2026

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NAATP Announces 2026 Addiction Treatment Leadership Awards *Career Achievement, Diversity, Journalism, and Quality Improvement*

The National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers (NAATP) is pleased to unveil the recipients of its 2026 awards for leadership excellence in the realm of addiction treatment services. These annual awards commend remarkable achievements, elevate awareness, and galvanize sustained excellence within the industry. The awards serve as a testament to the transformative impact of individuals and organizations committed to advancing addiction treatment services. By honoring their exceptional contributions, NAATP hopes to inspire continued innovation, advocacy, and collaboration, driving positive change and improving outcomes for individuals affected by addiction.

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has been selected as the recipient of the **NAATP Dr. James West Quality Improvement Award**. The award recognizes new, innovative, and successful clinical, operational, and systemic advancements that improve the quality and quantity of addiction treatment. ASAM is recognized for its leadership in advancing evidence-based standards that improve the quality and reach of addiction treatment. Through the decades long development and widespread adoption of the *ASAM Clinical Criteria for Addictive, Substance-Related, and Co-occurring Conditions* (ASAM Criteria), which has its genesis here at NAATP, ASAM has provided a nationally recognized framework that enables clinicians and health systems to deliver patient-centered, level-of-care-appropriate treatment for individuals with substance use disorders. ASAM's work has strengthened clinical decision-making, supported consistent treatment standards, and expanded access to addiction care across the healthcare system. With the recent publication of the Fourth Edition of the ASAM Criteria and now the ASAM criteria for adolescents, NAATP is pleased to honor our ASAM colleagues.

Pia Mellody is the posthumous recipient of the distinguished **NAATP Nelson Bradley Career Achievement Award**. The Award recognizes the career-long achievements of individuals who have made significant contributions to addiction treatment and recovery services. Pia Mellody, whose passing last year is mourned widely by the addiction and mental health fields, was a true visionary whose groundbreaking work revolutionized our approach to treating addiction and trauma. As one of the foremost pioneers in the field, Pia developed her renowned *Model of Developmental Immaturity*, grounded in her deep understanding of trauma, codependency, and relational healing. In so doing she provided a roadmap for thousands of individuals to recover from addiction and rebuild their lives. Pia's work integrates complex psychological and emotional concepts into accessible, effective treatment methodologies. Through her teaching, writing, and clinical leadership, she trained generations of therapists and inspired entire organizations.

Philip Rutherford is this year's honoree for the **Dr. Peter Hayden Diversity, Inclusivity, and Racial Equity Award**. The Award recognizes champions of diversity, equity, and inclusivity in the addiction treatment and recovery field. Phil, who identifies himself as a person in long-term recovery, has dedicated his career to developing and implementing treatment and recovery systems throughout the continuum of care that improve access to high quality services for populations that are historically marginalized by systemic inequities. Through his professional service with Recovery is Happening, Faces and Voices of Recovery, the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and as a Board Member and trainer for NAATP, Phil has been a tireless, persistent, and uniquely strategic voice promoting equity through compassion and accountability for all those who are willing to try to improve our response to injustice.

Debra and Jeff Jay are the recipients of the **NAATP Michael Ford Journalism Award**. The award recognizes high standards of journalistic and writing excellence in the awareness, research, writing, and presentations of addiction information that demonstrate the value of and need for recovery through addiction treatment. Debra and Jeff are prolific professional and compassionate writers, together and individually, of a body of work, anchored in the landmark publication *Love First, A Family's Guide to Intervention*, that has guided the addiction field in the art of intervention, resulting in treatment for countless patients who otherwise would not receive care. *Love First* was followed by *It Takes a Family, Creating Lasting Sobriety, Togetherness, and Happiness*, that moves the patient and family from treatment to the journey of recovery. The unique, and now well-established contribution of the works is in the validation of the family as an honored and essential component of care. Rather than derision and classification of family as a dysfunctional unit, the Jay's core philosophy is one of respect, agency, and hope.

We congratulate each of our 2026 award recipients. They honor all of us through the work they do. The 2026 Awards will be presented at the Opening Night Banquet on May 4, 2026, at [NAATP's 47th Annual Addiction Treatment Leadership Conference](#) at the Amelia Island Omni Resort in Florida. For more information on NAATP's awards program, visit: [NAATP Addiction Treatment Leadership Awards](#).