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TIME TO RAISE THE FLOOR: THE NAATP QUALITY CONTROL INITIATIVE

**NAATP's New Quality Control Initiative Will Produce
Addiction Treatment Provider Guidebook to Assist the
Treatment Field and Deter Bad Actors**

The Guidebook will articulate addiction business practice do's and do not's, include an implementation toolkit, and inform a training program. ▶

The National Association is pleased to announce a new initiative to address problematic business practices in the addiction treatment field. Illegal, unethical, and unprofessional practices have reached an all-time high, fueled in part by the opioid addiction crisis, creating a need for well-defined industry practice standards. While bad practices are committed by a minority of treatment providers, they cause serious public harm and damage the reputation of ethical, high-quality treatment operators.

The Guidebook will identify inappropriate business practices and that which is best practice. The Guidebook will include instructional “how to” tools for provider implementation of best practices. It will also create a training curriculum that will set an educational operations standard for the field.

The Guidebook is the product of NAATP's new Quality Control Initiative (QCI) designed to:

- Promote Best Business Practice
 - Deter Problematic Business Practice
 - Inform Law and Policy Makers
 - Educate and Protect the Consumer
 - Train the Provider ▶
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VOICE VISION LEADERSHIP



The National Association has identified the following specific practices as most concerning:

- Patient Brokering
- Predatory Web Practices
- Deceptive Web Directory Call Aggregation
- Insurance/Billing Abuses
- Payment Kickbacks
- Licensing & Accreditation Misrepresentation

The Guidebook will define and prohibit these practices while presenting clear standards for ethical business operations.

The QCI was adopted at a July 2017 special meeting of NAATP leadership following approval of the goals by the NAATP Board of Directors who represent the nation's top addiction treatment programs. Once in place, NAATP treatment provider members will be required to adhere to the guidelines, thereby creating a "high floor" practice standard.

The landscape for addiction treatment services has changed and we operate in a different environment than we once did. NAATP has seen industry growth, retraction, and accompanying business practices in our four-decade existence, but never before have we seen the magnitude of both growth and values-less practices that we now experience.

As the field's trade association, our response has been measured and proportional. *The NAATP Ethics Program* was developed to address rising concerns over unethical addiction treatment business practices. We began to see a trend toward such practices, primarily in terms of program marketing, several years ago. Such practices give an unfair advantage to certain providers, raise concerns about quality of care, make it difficult for values-based providers to succeed, and harm the reputation of the entire field. ▶



The NAATP Code of Ethics (The Code) was created to provide definition for good business practice and serve as a guide for values-based programs. The Code and the NAATP Values Statement are accessible online at NAATP.org.

These inappropriate practices continued, and NAATP took the next step of requiring NAATP members to agree to comply with The Code as a condition of membership. Although the problematic behavior is believed to lie largely outside our membership roster, and although NAATP is not a policing body, we believed we should lead by example to ensure that our own house was in order first.

The next move toward addressing harmful practice came in 2016 when NAATP developed an accountability component to ensure that NAATP members adhered to The Code. The Ethics Complaint Policy and Procedure (P&P) was developed, adopted, and implemented and allows a complainant to file an ethics complaint against a NAATP Member. Under the P&P, the NAATP Executive Staff and Ethics Committee review the complaint, determine if it is meritorious, and if it is, address the concern with the provider. If a provider were to persist in conduct violative of The Code, the member can be removed.

Additionally, as part of The National Association's efforts to guide the field and policymakers, we published the NAATP Public Policy Statement earlier this year. The Public Policy Statement provides systemic guidance and definition for the field and is found online at NAATP.org. ▶



NAATP Ethics and Quality Resources

- NAATP Values Statement
 - NAATP Public Policy Statement
 - NAATP Ethics Code
 - NAATP Ethics Complaint P&P
 - NAATP Quality Control Initiative
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naatp.org/resources/addiction-treatment-provider-ethics

Now, with these measures in place, NAATP has moved to the next level of action to improve addiction treatment practice with the Quality Control Initiative.

This is no small matter or undertaking. It will require the assemblage of the nation's top thought leaders from the entire continuum of treatment services together with public policy officials and payor representatives. Underlying the effort will be the establishment of addiction treatment delivery core competencies, which, once in place, will guide the drafting of the Guidebook and all its components.

As always, NAATP's motivation is our commitment to serve our treatment provider members by fostering a climate that produces successful operation through high quality care. The ultimate measure of success, therefore, is patient outcomes. As we assess the business climate, we need always ask the question: Does the conduct promote good outcomes or harm the patient?

Problematic business practices should be run through this test and when they are, we see that the practices outlined above must be stopped. This is the motivation for the NAATP Outcomes Pilot Project (The OPP), reported later in this issue, as well.

We at The National Association look forward to the challenge and the opportunity to serve the field through this exciting and important new initiative. Please stay in communication with us as the work evolves. ■