



American Medical Association Urges Increased Advocacy Support for Physician Wellness and PHPs

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AMA Advocacy Resource Center
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Background

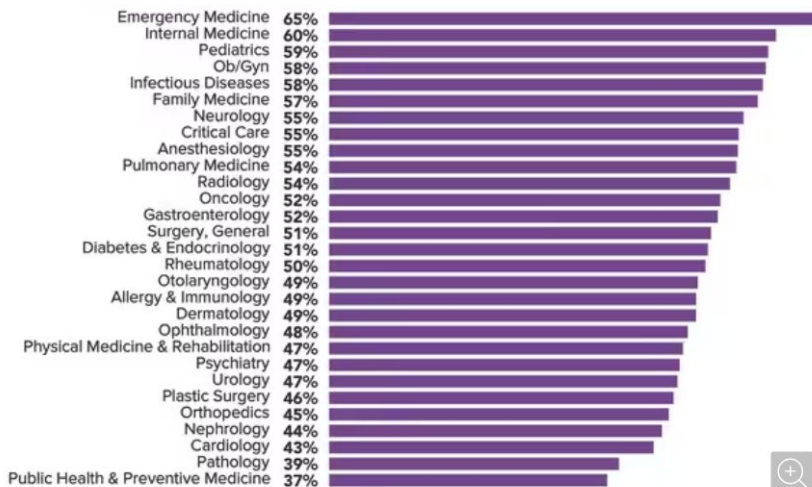


Stigma

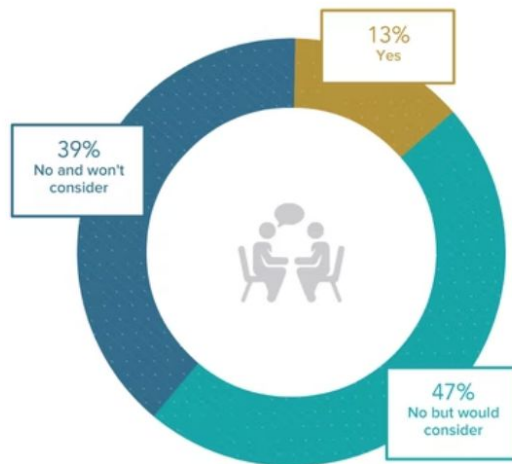
- “I can handle it.”
- “I don’t want anyone to know that I have a problem.”
- “My supervisor will think I’m weak.”
- “I’ll lose my license if I get help.”
- “I don’t have time to talk to someone about burnout.”
- “PHPs don’t really do anything.”
- “If I take time off, my colleagues will have to take all of my call.”
- “I have to set an example of being strong.”
- “If I take time off, my patients won’t have anyone to help them.”

Burnout affects all specialties, but few seek help

Which Physicians Are Most Burned Out?



Have You Sought Professional Help to Reduce Burnout?



<https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2023-lifestyle-burnout-6016058?faf=1#1>

It is with a heavy heart that we inform you that last month we lost one of our interns, Dr. [], to suicide.

It almost happened to me. I wish people understood mental health more in health care providers.

Lost one of my friends to suicide when we were residents. The depression and despair was invisible. We really do need to help each other out

Physician suicide strikes a strong chord for me. The resident who helped me decide to switch to surgery, coached me through my 4th year, took his own life. I never saw it coming. Please be there and be available for your peers, everyone is at risk. You can make the difference

We lost one of our fellow Med school classmates to suicide during our third year in school and it was heart wrenching. Let's break this toxic system and love and respect each other.

Happened at my former hospital. His wife was also a resident and pregnant. They took the interior locks off all the rooms the residents used for breaks after that.

a resident intern doctor at a hospital in san fran killed herself last week bc of the pressure and stress im on the verge of tears rn that is so heartbreaking and the culture is so terrible

When I was in my last year of residency, one of our interns died by suicide. It's taken me 6 years to write this story. Too many medical students and doctors in training are dying. Things need to change.

It doesn't help matters when state medical boards explicitly demand detailed explanation for those being treated for mental illness, but not because they "care" about patients or practitioners otherwise they would require disclosure more tactfully.

Each year in the U.S., roughly 300 - 400 physicians die by suicide. In the U.S., suicide deaths are 250 - 400% higher among female physicians when compared to females in other professions;

We know that the challenges of health care persist, however, if we don't give ourselves permission to take a break and that of our colleagues, what will end up with is more Lornas. And we don't want that.

Language matters



Does this support physician wellness?

1. Do you have a current condition or are you taking medication that would affect your ability to practice or provide safe patient care for the privileges you are requesting?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

N/A

If yes, please explain:

2. If the answer to No. 1 is Yes: Do you require a reasonable accommodation to exercise your requested privileges safely and competently?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

N/A

If yes, please explain:

Does this support physician wellness?

4. Have you, for any reason, ever

a. been suspended, dismissed, terminated, resigned or withdrawn from a medical school or postgraduate training (PGT) program?

Yes ☐

No ☐

b. been placed on probation or remediation by a medical school or PGT program?

Yes ☐

No ☐

c. taken a leave of absence or break from, had any interruption to, or any extension of a medical school or PGT program (reasons might include illness, disability, pregnancy or parental leave, academics, military service)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

RESOURCES

Resources for Reducing Mental Health Stigma

Guidance for Program Director Response to Mental Health Questions

Suggested Language for Program Directors to Use When Responding to Questions About Current or Former Residents' Mental Health

"The American Academy of Family Physicians, American Medical Association, Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation, and Federation of State Medical Boards recommend removing all intrusive questions about *past* medical history and to ask only about a physician's *current* health and fitness to safely practice medicine. I am not aware of any current condition that impairs Dr. X's judgment or that would otherwise adversely affect their ability to practice medicine in a competent, ethical, and professional manner."

<https://stfm.org/teachingresources/resources/mental-health-stigma/guidance-for-program-director-response/>

Audit



Change



Communicate

<https://drlornabreen.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ALL-IN-Audit-Change-Communicate-Toolkit.pdf>

MINNESOTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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Physicians Urged to Support Recommended Changes to Licensure Application Question

9/9/2021

This Saturday (Sept. 11), the recommended changes to the application question will be open to the public and those who are interested in the process.

The change recommended by the MMA is to change the current language, which requires a physician to be "competent, ethical and professional" to "do no harm" to a patient. The change is likely to impact a physician's ability to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety in a competent, ethical and professional manner.

The MMA supports the recommended language, "Do no harm" to a patient. The change is likely to impact a physician's ability to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety in a competent, ethical and professional manner.

Why a group of U of M med school residents pushed to get Minnesota to change its medical licensure language

After the suicide of a medical school classmate, Brianna Engelson, Jennifer Zick and Sameena Ahmed-Buehler wanted to do something to create a more open, accepting culture around mental health.

All Things Considered

Minnesota Board of Medical Practice amends medical license questions on mental health

Tom Crann September 22, 2021 1:50 PM

MINNESOTA BOARD OF MEDICAL PRACTICE

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January 2022

On September 11, 2021, the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice unanimously passed an amendment to the licensure application language requiring disclosure of past and current health conditions to ask:

"Do you currently have any condition that is not being appropriately treated which is likely to impair or adversely affect your ability to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety in a competent, ethical and professional manner?"

The modified language was implemented in January 2022 in application and renewal forms for all eight professions regulated by the Board of Medical Practice.

Current impairment vs. past diagnosis: MN

Before

State required the release of medical records for “Applicants who have a medical condition during the **last five years** which, if untreated, would be likely to impair their ability to practice with reasonable skill and safety must have their treating physician complete this form.”

After

“Do you **currently** have any condition that is not being appropriately treated which is likely to impair or adversely affect your ability to practice medicine with reasonable skill and safety in a competent, ethical and professional manner?”

Georgia Composite Medical Board

Before

During the last 7 years, have you suffered from any physical, psychiatric, or substance use disorder that could impair or require limitations on your functioning as a professional or has resulted in the inability to practice medicine for more than 30 days, or required court-ordered treatment or hospitalization? (If yes, provide treatment history documentation to include diagnosis, treatment regimen, hospitalization, and ongoing treatment/medication to the Board. NOTE: If you are currently enrolled in GAPHP, you may check NO.

After

Are you currently suffering from any condition for which you are not being appropriately treated that impairs your judgment or that would otherwise adversely affect your ability to practice medicine in a competent, ethical, and professional manner?

NOTE: If you are currently enrolled in Georgia PHP, you may answer NO.

<https://medicalboard.georgia.gov/initial-physician-licensure>

South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners

Before



After

15. Do you have a physical, mental or emotional condition which may adversely affect your practice?

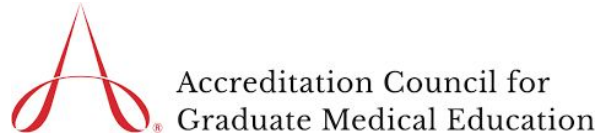
16. Have you been treated for or do you have a diagnosis for any Mental Health condition. (If yes, please ask your treating provider to send a status letter to the Board office).

"Are you currently suffering from any condition for which you are not being treated that impairs your ability to practice medicine in a competent, ethical, and professional manner."

Next steps



Key stakeholder s to engage



Next steps

1

Review your state/hospital/health system's license/credentialing application

2

Partner with your state medical society to promote changes to remove stigma and promote wellness

3

Promote success stories of physicians returning safely to practice; programs that fully support physician well-being

<https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/issue-brief-physician-health-wellness.pdf>



Physicians' powerful ally in patient care

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