

April 8, 2024

The Honorable Julie M. Rogers
Chair
Committee on Health Policy
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Re: American Medical Association strong support for House Bill No. 5464

Dear Chair Rogers:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I write in **strong support** of House Bill (HB) No. 5464, which supports physicians and medical students who seek care for health and wellness. HB 5464 is needed as physician burnout continues to increase,¹ but physicians and medical students are reluctant to seek care.² More than 40 percent of physicians, residents, and medical students report that they do not seek care for a mental health condition or substance use disorder because they are afraid it will result in negative professional consequences from employers and medical boards.^{3 4} This includes mandated disclosure of past treatment or diagnosis of a mental illness or substance use disorder on a credentialing, licensing, or other application. The AMA encourages all physicians and medical students to seek care at the earliest stages possible—before, for example, a benign issue becomes acute or potentially adversely affects patient safety.

The AMA urges a “Yes” vote on HB 5464 to ensure that physicians, medical students, and other health care professionals licensed or regulated in Michigan will not be mandated to answer stigmatizing, inappropriate questions about their past mental health diagnosis or treatment. The language in HB 5464 appropriately focuses required disclosures about health status on two, relevant inquiries:

- “Do you have any reason to believe that you would pose a risk to the safety or well-being of a patient or client?”
- “Are you able to perform the essential functions of the health profession for which you are seeking a license, registration, or renewal, with or without reasonable accommodation?”

¹ Tait D. Shanafelt, Colin P. West, Lotte N. Dyrbye, Mickey Trockel, Michael Tutty, Hanhan Wang, Lindsey E. Carlasare, Christine Sinsky, Changes in Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Integration in Physicians During the First 2 Years of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Mayo Clinic Proceedings, Volume 97, Issue 12, 2022, pages 2248-2258, ISSN 0025-6196, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocp.2022.09.002>.

² Brower KJ. Professional Stigma of Mental Health Issues: Physicians Are Both the Cause and Solution. Acad Med. 2021 May 1;96(5):635-640. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000003998. PMID: 33885412; PMCID: PMC8078109.

³ Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report 2024: 'We Have Much Work to Do'. Medscape. January 26, 2024. Available at <https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2024-lifestyle-burnout-6016865>

⁴ America's Current and Future Physicians. The Physicians Foundation. 2023. https://physiciansfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/PF23_Brochure-Report_Americas-Physicians_V2b-1-2.pdf

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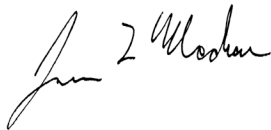
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The questions proposed under HB 5464 are of the type strongly supported by a growing list of national organizations advocating for change in licensing and credentialing applications, including the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation,⁵ Federation of State Medical Boards,⁶ American Hospital Association,⁷ The Joint Commission⁸ and National Association of Medical Staff Services,⁹ in addition to the AMA. Questions that focus on current impairment also are supported by the U.S. Surgeon General¹⁰ and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.¹¹ The AMA and these organizations collectively support removing questions about past diagnosis and treatment because they deter care, perpetuate stigma, and harm physicians, medical students, and other health professionals.

The AMA strongly urges a "Yes" vote on HB 5464, which will help physicians and medical students seek the care they need, protect patient safety and make Michigan a safer place to practice medicine.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Michigan State Medical Society
Bobby M. Mukkamala, MD

⁵ Stefanie Simmons, J. Corey Feist, and Abraham Segres, 2024: [Changing Licensing and Credentialing Applications to Promote Health Workers' Mental Health, Virginia, December 2022–September 2023](#)

American Journal of Public Health 114, 152–155, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2023.307506>

⁶ Physician Wellness and Burnout Report and Recommendations of the Workgroup on Physician Wellness and Burnout. Adopted by the Federation of State Medical Boards. April 2018. Available at <https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/policy-on-wellness-and-burnout.pdf>

⁷ Suicide Prevention. Evidence-Informed Interventions for the Health Care Workforce. American Hospital Association. September 2022. Available at https://www.aha.org/system/files/media/file/2022/09/suicide-prevention_evidence-informed-interventions-for-the-health-care-workforce.pdf

⁸ Letter to Congress in support of the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Providers Protection Act. The Joint Commission. March 17, 2021. Available at https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/federal-relations-and-public-policy/17mar2021-the-joint-commission-support-letter_dr-lorna-breen-act-house.pdf

⁹ Remove Intrusive Mental Health Questions from Credentialing Applications. National Association of Medical Staff Services. September 19, 2022. <https://www.namssgateway.org/Full-Article/remove-intrusive-mental-health-questions-from-credentialing-applications>; See also: NAMSS Releases Revised Ideal Credentialing Standards for Initial Practitioner Applicants. January 9, 2024. Available at <https://www.namssgateway.org/Full-Article/namss-releases-revised-ideal-credentialing-standards-for-initial-practitioner-applicants-1>

¹⁰ Addressing Health Worker Burnout: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Building a Thriving Health Workforce. 2022. Available at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/health-worker-wellbeing-advisory.pdf>

¹¹ NIOSH [2024]. *Impact Wellbeing™* Guide: Taking action to improve healthcare worker wellbeing. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication 2024-109, <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH-PUB2024109>