

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Kathleen Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Oppose Repeal of NY Committee for Physicians Health (Part L of the Executive Health & Mental Hygiene Budget)

Dear Governor Hochul:

On behalf of the physician and student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I write in opposition to the proposal in Part L of the Executive Health & Mental Hygiene Budget that would effectively eliminate New York's highly successful Committee for Physicians' Health (CPH) Program. The AMA strongly supports the work of the CPH and cautions that eliminating this program would be a devastating blow to maintaining physicians' health and wellness and protecting patient safety in New York. At its core, the CPH provides essential services to help physicians, medical students, and physician assistants who may experience burnout, or who have a substance use disorder or mental illness. Through its work, the CPH has helped countless physicians and other health care professionals recover, maintain their health, and return to practice where they provide high-quality patient care.

Restoring a physician's health and career provides multiple benefits to New York, including supporting a healthy and safe workforce and ensuring that health care practitioners know they can and should seek help before a treatable condition results in potential tragedy. New York physicians know and trust the CPH because of its long-standing place as a familiar and dependable resource that they turn to for education, outreach, and peer assistance. The AMA joins the Medical Society of the State of New York and other supporters of the CPH to urge continued funding, authorization, and support for the CPH.

Finally, we also want to stress that eliminating the funding and authorization for the CPH Program leaves the state with nothing to replace it. Since the inception of CPH more than 40 years ago, CPH has assisted **more than 7300 physicians**. Moreover, it routinely monitors the recovery of 400 physicians and annually reaches out to more than 100 physicians thought to be suffering from a substance use disorder or mental illness. Ensuring the CPH's funding and authorization protects New York against widespread disruptions in care and ensures that physicians and other health care professionals have a trusted source from which to seek care. At a time when medical students and physicians are reporting increased levels of burnout and psychological stress, the AMA urges you to maintain the CPH – a trusted source of care that

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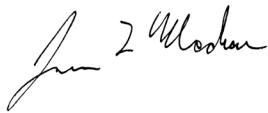
Page 2

achieves the dual goals of supporting physician health and well-being while simultaneously protecting the public.

Thank you for your consideration on this critical issue. We strongly urge you to oppose repeal of the CPH in Part L of the Executive Health & Mental Hygiene Budget.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L. Madara".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Medical Society of the State of New York
Willie Underwood, III, MD, MSc, MPH