



February 13, 2023

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Chair  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
Chair  
Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Rodgers and Guthrie:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I would like to express our strong support for the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (H.R. 7153). This bill would reauthorize essential programs to further prevent and reduce incidences of suicide, mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and long-term stress, sometimes referred to as burnout amongst the physician workforce. We appreciate your recognition of the need to strengthen services to address the mental health needs of our nation's physicians and fight the stigma around seeking necessary treatment and support. Thank you for convening a legislative hearing on February 14<sup>th</sup> in the subcommittee entitled "Legislative Proposals to Support Patients and Caregivers," which includes consideration of this important legislation. ACP requests that this letter be inserted into the official hearing record.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 161,000 internal medicine physicians, related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and compassion to the preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

Since the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act became law in 2022, access to mental and behavioral health support and treatment has improved for physicians across the country. The College supports H.R.7153, which would build on the progress the law made by further strengthening critical programs to prevent burnout and improve access to resources for mental and behavioral health services – key factors to help address the current physician workforce shortage.

In a 2021 [physician survey](#) conducted by the American Medical Association, almost 63 percent of physicians reported symptoms of burnout. This number is up from 38 percent in 2020. America's physicians are at a critical breaking point that must be urgently addressed. The 2024 Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report showed that [53 percent](#) of physicians who reported feeling burned out and/or depressed have not and will not seek professional help. Many physicians reported barriers such as stigma and the professional risks associated with disclosing their treatment activities to the medical board as factors for not seeking help. This is very alarming given that avoidance of treatment could lead to worsening depression and even suicide. In fact, physicians in the United States face higher incidents of suicide than almost any other profession.



The College endorses this legislation, which would ensure that physicians across the country will continue to have access to education and training on effective strategies to prevent stress and burnout before the need becomes dire. This reauthorization bill would prioritize grant funding for communities with a shortage of health care workers, rural communities, and those experiencing burnout due to administrative burdens. Further the bill would reauthorize and expand the scope of a national education and awareness campaign that would provide hospital and health system leaders with evidence-based solutions to reduce health care worker burnout.

ACP strongly supports the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act (H.R. 7153), and we thank you for your leadership in bringing this important legislation before the subcommittee. If you have any questions, please contact Vy Oxman, Senior Associate of Legislative Affairs, at 202-261-4515 or via email at [voxman@acponline.org](mailto:voxman@acponline.org).