An Update on
Modernizing License and Credentialing Applications to Not Stigmatize Mental Health

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Barriers to Accessing Mental Health

Nearly 40% of physicians (2325 of 5829) reported that they would be reluctant to seek formal medical care for treatment of a mental health condition because of concerns about repercussions to their medical licensure.

The connection between credentialing and physician mental health: a call to action.

The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law

Medical Licensure Questions About Mental Illness and Compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act


Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Online December 2022

Q&A: Physicians call for changes to medical licensing applications

By Saranya Loehrre, MD, MPH
By Ankita Sagar, MD, MPH, FACP
By Stephanie Viguers
Barriers to Accessing Mental Health

- 9,100 Physicians surveyed, across 29 specialties
- Internal Medicine scored 2nd highest on rates of burnout at 60%, second to Emergency Medicine
- Over 60% experienced burnout for 13 months or more
How do physicians cope with burnout?

- Exercise: 50%
- Talk with family or friends: 45%
- Sleep: 41%
- Spend time alone: 40%
- Listen to music: 37%
- Eat junk food: 32%
- Drink alcohol: 22%
- Meditate: 22%
- Binge-eat: 18%
- Use prescription drugs: 3%
- Smoke cigarettes: 2%
- Use cannabis products: 2%
- Other: 11%
- None of the above: 2%

Respondents could choose multiple answers. Respondents who chose "None of the above" are not shown.

Source: Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report 2023
Do physicians seek help to reduce burnout?

Source: Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report 2023
Why don’t physicians seek help to reduce burnout?

- Depression says something negative about me: 51%
- I worry that people will think less of my professional abilities: 42%
- I fear that the medical board or my employer will find out: 41%
- I worry that people will think less of me: 41%
- I see depression as weakness: 26%
- Other: 14%

Source: Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report 2023
Do you currently have any condition that adversely affects your ability to practice medicine in a safe, competent, ethical, and professional manner?

Source: Physician Wellness and Burnout Report and Recommendations of the Workgroup on Physician Wellness and Burnout Adopted as policy by the Federation of State Medical Boards (April 2018)
As of November 8, 2022, 19 states have aligned their applications.

**Map Legend:**
- States where applications were consistent with our recommendations.
- States where applications were inconsistent with our recommendations or where applications could not be accessed for review.
Commitment

Resolution Process
Original resolution in 2017, and Recent Reaffirmation

Position Paper
Physician Impairment and Rehabilitation: Reintegration Into Medical Practice While Ensuring Patient Safety
Annals of Internal Medicine, 2019

Advocacy Toolkit
Template for Letters, slide decks, background information

Chapter Level Efforts
March 2023 Webinar
Resolution & Reaffirmation

- Original resolution from 2017
- Reaffirmation in 2022 cosponsored by multiple chapters

“modernization of state licensure practices that focuses more on the functional impact of mental health diagnoses in physicians and limits additional administrative requirements so that it does not isolate prior or current mental health considerations from other medical considerations in the reporting process”
“Physicians may avoid seeking medical help because they fear loss of confidentiality and privacy, loss of livelihood, or the appearance of vulnerability or because they deny or subordinate their personal needs to practice demands and therefore do not recognize the impairment. The stigma of addiction and mental illness added to the concern that diagnosis may lead to professional liability or loss of licensure can compel physicians to suffer in silence and delay seeking help.”
Advocacy Toolkit

- Background Information
- Example/Template Letter for advocacy within your organization
- Example/Template PowerPoint to “Make the Case” for changing/aligning with recommended language for credentialing applications

Pro Tip:
Template letters and powerpoint slides are adaptable to the local efforts!
Cross organization Collaboration

IHI Leadership Alliance Help Health Care Heal Coalition

- A special initiative hosted by the IHI Leadership Alliance that was created to collaboratively advance this work.
- Founded in 2021, launched in 2022
- ACP leaders and members are actively involved, including:
  - Dr. Eileen Barrett
  - Dr. Susan Hingle
  - Dr. Richard Wardrop
  - Dr. Priya Radhakrishnan
- Enhances cross organizational collaboration and momentum building
Panel Discussion focused on identifying barriers and best practices for non-stigmatizing language in licensing and credentialing applications for physicians.

Small Group Breakout Rooms focused on brainstorming next steps at the state and/or organizational levels.

Panelists:
Eileen Barrett, MD, MACP
Harvir Gambhir Singh, MD, FACP
Danielle Kochen, MD
Priya Radhakrishnan, MD, FACP
Ankita Sagar, MD, FACP
Richard Wardrop, MD, FACP
Call to Action

- **Review** ACP Advocacy Toolkit
- **Register** for the upcoming webinar: Modernizing License and Credentialing Applications to Not Stigmatize Mental Health Webinar
  - Tuesday, March 14, 2023 8:00 - 9:00 pm (Eastern)
  - Virtual - Zoom Webinar
- **Share** this information with one colleague