Header/Sender Name

Title

Organization if Applicable

Address

Contact Information

Recipient Name

Title

Organization

Address

**Re: Medical Licensure Disclosure Change Request**

To the Medical Board [insert Chair’s name, if known],

I am writing as a [licensed physician/medical student] in [state], to ask for assistance on a pressing issue for our state. As you know, physicians are experiencing more challenges to their well-being and mental wellness than ever due to COVID (1), and many are seeking ways to reduce barriers to physicians seeking mental health care. Despite this, medical license applications that ask questions about mental health are associated with physicians being less likely to seek mental health care (2), and some applications that ask questions about mental health may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (3).  There are national recommendations on how to ask questions about mental health and how to provide supportive language to physicians on taking care of their health, including mental health (4,5,6).

Presently our state’s medical license application does not fully follow recommendations from the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) in that it contains questions about the applicant’s mental health history or treats physical and mental health differently (4,5,7):

 [add the text from the application]

 I’m respectfully requesting the Board consider changing these questions so that they do not stigmatize mental health diagnoses or help seeking behavior. In addition, the medical license application should include text that is supportive of physicians seeking mental health care when needed, such as:

*“It is common for physicians to feel overwhelmed from time to time and to seek help when appropriate. The Board emphasizes the importance of well-being and appropriate treatment and support for all health conditions.”*

Thank you for your consideration of this vital topic, and I hope we may speak about the Board considering this change.

Sincerely,

[signature, title, contact information]

 References:

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3.     James T.R. Jones, Carol S. North, Suzanne Vogel-Scibilia, Michael F. Myers, Richard R. Owen. Medical Licensure Questions About Mental Illness and Compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. J of the Am Acad of Psych and the Law Online Dec 2018, 46 (4) 458-471; DOI: 10.29158/JAAPL.003789-18

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 5.     Federation of State Medical Boards. Physician Wellness and Burnout. Published April 2018. Accessed March 16, 2021. <https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/policy-on-wellness-and-burnout.pdf>

6.     Saddawi-Konefka D, Brown A, Eisenhart I, Hicks K, Barrett E, Gold JA. Consistency Between State Medical License Applications and Recommendations Regarding Physician Mental Health. JAMA. 2021;325(19):2017–2018. doi:10.1001/jama.2021.2275

7.     Story J, Solberg D. Barriers to Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Treatment Among Physicians and the Impact on Patient Care. *Mo Med*. 2017;114(2):91-93.

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