

## Ohio Physician Wellness Coalition

January 31, 2024

Sent via email to the following Ohio Regulatory Boards:

**Ohio Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Athletic Trainers Board; Ohio Vision Professionals Board; Ohio Board of Psychology; Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board; Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board; Ohio Board of Nursing; Ohio State Chiropractic Board; Ohio State Dental Board; State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy; Ohio Speech and Hearing Professionals Board; Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board**

The Ohio Physician Wellness Coalition (OPWC) was established in 2017 by Ohio's major physician associations. Led by our Physician Advisory Council (PAC), our goal is to address physician burnout by providing physician wellness initiatives. OPWC has identified that a multifaceted approach is necessary to address burnout and understands that it is important to include efforts that support the healthcare professionals that physicians work alongside every day. Effective healthcare delivery is a team effort and by bringing awareness to initiatives that create a culture that supports the health and wellbeing of every team member, we can help ensure that our fellow healthcare professionals are protected and supported.

We are writing to bring to your attention the recent action of the State Medical Board of Ohio to amend the board's initial and renewal licensing applications by removing questions related to past impairments, including mental health conditions and substance use disorders. The medical board regulates a broad group of medical practitioners including physicians, physician assistants, podiatrists, dietitians, massage therapists, respiratory care therapists, radiologist assistants, and genetic counselors.

The medical board recognizes that the current application questions regarding past impairment both discourage many applicants and licensees from receiving care that they need, and they potentially violate Title II of the ADA, which forbids public entities from discriminating against qualified individuals on the basis of disabilities, including mental health conditions.

The medical board reviewed the initial and renewal applications for all licensee types, removed unacceptable questions, and replaced those questions with the following:

**Initial application question for all license types:**

- **Are you currently suffering from any condition for which you are not being appropriately treated that impairs your judgment or that would otherwise adversely affect your ability to practice in a competent, ethical, and professional manner? (Yes/No)**

Condition means both physical and mental conditions, including substance use disorder.

You may answer "NO" to this question if you are currently in compliance with a monitoring agreement with Ohio Professionals Health Program.

Any questions can be directed to the board offices.

**Renewal question for all license types:**

- **Are you currently suffering from any condition for which you are not being appropriately treated that impairs your judgment or that would otherwise adversely affect your ability to practice in a competent, ethical, and professional manner? (Yes/No)**

Condition means both physical and mental conditions, including substance use disorder.

You may answer NO to this question if you are currently in compliance with a monitoring agreement with Ohio Professionals Health Program.

You must answer YES if you are not in compliance with a monitoring agreement with Ohio Professionals Health Program.

We encourage the Board to follow the example of the State Medical Board of Ohio and review your board's initial and renewal applications to determine whether they contain any questions that that may discourage applicants and licensees from seeking help for a mental health condition or substance use disorder. Once you have determined if your board's application questions need to be updated, we urge you to amend your applications by replacing those questions with the nationally accepted language adopted by the medical board.

We have attached information related to a national campaign aimed at changing the way regulatory boards view impairment. The attached toolkit from the Lorna Breen Foundation assists boards in identifying and removing intrusive questions related to substance use disorders and mental health conditions from licensure applications.

We thank you for taking the time to consider our request. We understand that this request requires administrative time and effort. The professional staff members that support the OPWC are available to assist your board's staff in reviewing the language on current license applications. You may contact Jennifer Hayhurst, Policy Director, at the Ohio Professionals Health Program (OhioPHP) for additional information at [jhayhurst@ohiophp.org](mailto:jhayhurst@ohiophp.org).

Respectfully,

The Ohio Physician Wellness Coalition  
(Signature page follows)



Todd Baker, Chief Executive Officer  
Ohio State Medical Association



Nicklaus J. Hess, DO, FACOFP, President  
Ohio Osteopathic Association



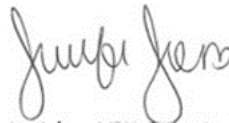
Janet Shaw, MBA, Executive Director  
Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association



Kate Mahler, CAE, Executive Vice President  
Ohio Academy of Family Physicians



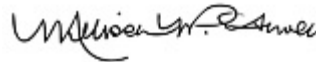
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Enclosure