



ISSUE

Reduce Barriers to Wellness Support for All Healthcare Professionals

MMA Position

Minnesota should expand statutory confidentiality protections for participation in wellness programs (i.e., evaluation, counseling, or other services to address career fatigue or wellness related to work stress) to include all licensed healthcare professionals, not only physicians, as a strategy to reduce stigma, encourage early help-seeking, and strengthen the healthcare workforce.

Background

In 2024, the Legislature passed new confidentiality protections for physicians participating in specified wellness programs. The protections were added to address concerns that seeking care and support could harm their ability to practice medicine. In 2025, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$250,000 (FY 2026) to fund the promotion of the [Treat Yourself First](#) campaign to address burnout and well-being among healthcare professionals.

The campaign provides evidence-informed resources and guidance for healthcare professionals experiencing burnout, career fatigue, or behavioral health concerns.

The current law provides confidentiality protections only for physicians participating in wellness programs. However, all healthcare professionals face stigma and barriers to seeking mental healthcare and should be afforded the same confidentiality protections.

In addition to removing administrative hassles and workplace barriers that contribute to burnout, Minnesota must ensure that physicians and other healthcare professionals can safely access mental health and well-being support. A thriving healthcare workforce is essential to delivering safe, high-quality patient care.

Research continues to show that healthcare professionals across disciplines face significant stigma and barriers to seeking mental health care. Recent studies document self-stigmatizing beliefs and fears of professional consequences as common reasons healthcare professionals avoid care, including concerns about confidentiality, licensing, and career impact. In addition, research among nurses finds that those experiencing higher burnout are less likely to seek psychological help, underscoring the continued relevance of stigma around help-seeking among healthcare professionals.

While the Treat Yourself First campaign reflects a statewide commitment to supporting all healthcare professionals, current statute (i.e., [Minn. Stat. §214.41](#)) limits confidentiality protections for wellness program participation to physicians only. This creates a two-tiered system in which non-physician healthcare professionals face greater perceived risk when seeking help.

Expanding confidentiality protections will help ensure that all healthcare professionals can access support without fear, encourage early intervention, and support a resilient and sustainable healthcare workforce.

Talking Points

- Burnout and behavioral health challenges affect all licensed healthcare professionals, not just physicians.
- Minnesota law currently provides confidentiality for physicians participating in wellness programs, but excludes other healthcare professionals who face similar risks and stigma.
- Expanding confidentiality protections will encourage early help-seeking, reduce workforce attrition, and support patient safety.
- Healthcare professionals should be able to seek support for burnout, career fatigue, and behavioral health concerns without fear of licensure, disciplinary, or employment consequences.