

**Missouri State Medical Association  
House of Delegates**

Resolution # 21  
(A-24)

Introduced by: Gary Gaddis, MD PhD  
Subject: Physician Licensure Question  
Referred to:

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- 1 **WHEREAS**, Question #13 of the Licensure/Re-licensure application from the Missouri State Board of  
2 Registration for the Healing Arts for physicians currently states, “Do you currently have any condition or  
3 impairment which *in any way* (emphasis added by resolution author) affects your ability to practice in a  
4 professional, competent and safe manner, including but not limited to: (1) A mental, emotional, nervous  
5 or sexual disorder, or (2) an alcohol or substance abuse disorder, or (3) a physical disease or condition?”;  
6 and,  
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- 8 **WHEREAS**, the phenomenon of “burnout” has become more pervasive among physicians and other  
9 members of health care teams, such that in some specialties, more than 60% of practitioners may be  
10 suffering from “burnout”, a statement so widely known and accepted that it need not be referenced;  
11 and,  
12
- 13 **WHEREAS**, “Burnout” can easily lead to the psychological/psychiatric illness of depression, which could  
14 be characterized as a mental, emotional or nervous disorder that might impair one’s ability to practice  
15 medicine in a “...professional, competent and safe manner...”; and,  
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- 17 **WHEREAS**, Depression is a disease which is best managed by a medical professional, rather than being  
18 ignored and not ameliorated by medical treatment; and,  
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- 20 **WHEREAS**, given the high current prevalence of “burnout” among physicians, it is logical to assert that  
21 the leaders of the Missouri Board of Healing Arts should be more concerned about clinicians who are  
22 not currently receiving care for a mental, emotional or nervous disorder, than the degree which they  
23 should be concerned about physicians obtaining outpatient treatment and management for such  
24 conditions, when outpatient management is appropriate; and,  
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- 26 **WHEREAS**, physicians are human beings; and,  
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- 28 **WHEREAS**, most adult human beings are afflicted by at least one disease state; and,  
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- 30 **WHEREAS**, these humans will function most effectively in their lives and duties when their disease  
31 state(s) is/are being actively and effectively managed; and,  
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- 33 **WHEREAS**, human beings who bear the burden of the disease of depression are disproportionately likely  
34 to **not** have their disease being actively managed, especially if they are physicians; and,  
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- 36 **WHEREAS**, Physicians who are depressed are more likely than their non-depressed peers to die by  
37 suicide; and,  
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39 **WHEREAS**, for a physician to die by suicide is a disastrous outcome which occurs in the United States in  
40 hundreds of instances annually; and,

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42 **WHEREAS**, Missouri suffers from a chronic shortage of physicians, especially in rural areas and in  
43 primary care specialties; and,

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45 **WHEREAS**, it is therefore in the interest of the citizens of Missouri that Missouri physicians remain as  
46 active practitioners of their specialty, unless sufficiently severe afflictions of a mental health disease  
47 make it unsafe and imprudent for that physician to continue to practice medicine; and,

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49 **WHEREAS**, to remove barriers or perceived barriers for physicians to benefit from the receipt of  
50 outpatient mental health care services would be salutatory; therefore, be it,

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52 **RESOLVED**, that our Missouri State Medical Association will work cooperatively with the Missouri State  
53 Board of Healing Arts to modify the current language of licensure/re-licensure question #13, such that it  
54 becomes clear that the State of Missouri and its Board of Healing Arts does not consider the mere  
55 receipt of mental health services by physicians to signify the presence of a mental, emotional or nervous  
56 impairment to safely practice medicine; and, be it further,

57  
58 **RESOLVED**, that our Missouri State Medical Association will work to bring Missouri State Board of  
59 Healing Arts questions for re-licensure in compliance with American Medical Association Policy D  
60 275.946, "Protecting Physician Wellbeing on Applications for Board Certification", American Medical  
61 Association Policy H-275.945, "Self-Incriminating Questions on Applications for Licensure and Specialty  
62 Boards", and American Medical Association Policy H-275.970, "Licensure Confidentiality".

**Fiscal Note:     None**

**Current Policy:**