

# Medical boards may contribute to mental health stigma for doctors

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(HealthDay)—Existing policy has been amended to encourage licensing

boards to require disclosure of physical or mental health conditions only when these would negatively impact a physicians' ability to practice medicine, according to an article published in the American Medical Association's *AMA Wire*.

According to the AMA, many state medical boards persist in questioning licensure applicants about their history of treatment for mental health instead of focusing on their current fitness to practice, despite recommendations to the contrary from the AMA, American Psychiatric Association, and other organizations.

At the 2018 AMA Annual Meeting in Chicago, the House of Delegates amended existing policy to encourage state [licensing](#) boards to require disclosure of physical or [mental health conditions](#) only when the condition currently impairs the physician's judgment; adversely affects their ability to practice medicine in a competent, ethical, and professional manner; or when the physician presents a public health danger. In addition, the AMA has been directed to advocate wording to this effect in cases where state medical boards wish to retain questions about the health of applicants on medical licensing applications.

"Too many of our physician colleagues are dealing with burnout, depression, and even suicidal thoughts," David O. Barbe, M.D., immediate past president of the AMA, said in a statement. "We must do everything we can to improve physician wellness and eliminate any barriers that stand in the way of physicians accessing needed mental health care services."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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