Now’s the Time to Have a Difficult Talk about Physician Suicide

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American Medical Association [1]

As recently highlighted on National Physician Suicide Awareness Day [2], physicians have one of the highest suicide rates of any profession due to many factors throughout their careers. The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased physician stress. Yet some physicians worry that seeking help for behavioral health issues might put their medical license and career at risk. The American Medical Association (AMA) has a policy encouraging credentialing groups to protect confidentiality when physicians get mental health services. And some states are taking further action. The Medical Society of Virginia was instrumental in the passing of a new state law creating the SafeHaven program, which provides confidential services to physicians in a way that safeguards their medical license. A few other states have confidentiality protections for physicians receiving mental health care. To help other states, the AMA has drafted model legislation to use with policymakers.


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