

August 1, 2015

Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure
310 Whittington Parkway, Suite 1B
Louisville, KY 40222

Dear Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure:

The Lexington Medical Society (LMS) request the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure (KBML) recognize our Physician Wellness Program (PWP) as a model for promoting physician well-being through confidential counseling. The LMS Physician Wellness Program enables physicians to take care of their patients by taking care of themselves. This program provides 8 sessions with a seasoned psychologist to treat our members for burn-out, depression, and stress. There is no insurance billed. The psychologist would maintain their internal records, but these counseling sessions would not be reported to LMS or the KBML. The intent is to encourage physicians to seek help.

The LMS PWP is modeled after a highly successful program pioneered by the Lane County Medical Society (LCMS) in Eugene, Oregon. The LCMS, with over 700 active physicians, has had 52 physicians self-refer in their PWP's first 30 months of existence, a 7.4% rate. The Oregon Medical Board recognizes the LCMS's PWP as a model for Oregon and the rest of the country by promoting physician well-being through confidential counseling.

The LMS PWP's intent is to encourage physicians to seek help by emphasizing confidentiality and a member-vetted counseling service. A physician, participating in the LMS PWP, simply calls the contracted psychologist group directly for an appointment. This number has an extension the physician can dial for urgent care. Each active LMS physician has 8 visits in a calendar year. This psychologist group was vetted by LMS members for their professional reputation and experience with working with physicians. LMS pays a monthly bill from the psychologist group based on the number of sessions, no names are reported. This method of billing and reporting is similar to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) the psychologist group has with other organizations.

It was estimated recently that each year the United States has over 400 physicians die by suicide. The LMS PWP takes action to provide a service to enable our physicians to take care of their patients by taking care of themselves. An endorsement of the LMS PWP by the KBML will strongly encourage our members to seek care. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rice C. Leach
President

