

# PROMOTING YOUR PROGRAM

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## MARKETING THE BENEFIT

A good program without a good marketing plan will not succeed, and choosing the right mode of communication for your membership will be important:

Be mindful about avoiding language that might stigmatize the program.

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- Membership email or newsletter
- Website
- Social media
- Brochure mailings—these could be combined with fundraising
- Business cards
- Physician lounge posters or brochure racks
- Medical staff or practice partner meetings
- Hospital intranet pages or screensavers
- Short video (30-60 seconds) or Facebook/Instagram Shorts
- Video with testimonials of members willing to go public
- Introduction of one of your contracted mental health providers at a member meeting.

## TERMINOLOGY

We recommend using the term “mental health provider” (MHP) when referring to those professionals whose services you will use. With the potential of using psychologists, clinicians, counselors, and social workers, this term is a good catchall.

Depending on your state laws or local preference, you may need to choose among the terms counseling, therapy, coaching, assistance, or something else. Check with some of your local MHPs to see what works best for your program.

When starting the first program in Lane County, Oregon, organizers were mindful about avoiding language that might stigmatize the program, such as calling it a “physician suicide prevention” program. This was because, in part, the program grew in response to a series of physician suicides.

## BRANDING

It is important when branding your program to be consistent with fonts, colors, language, and “feel” throughout all your marketing efforts. Some tips:

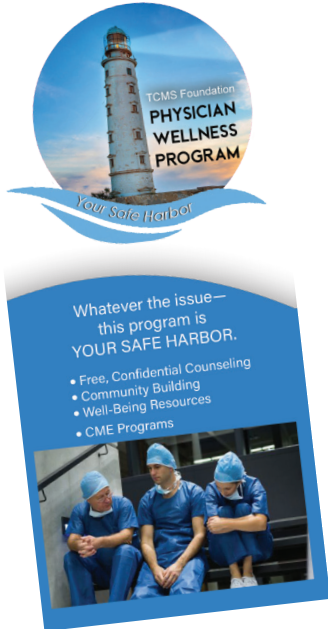
- [Use the templates and style guide provided](#) or create your own.
- Include photos and not just information. Positive or neutral photos are generally favored over pictures of depressed or stressed-out doctors. The photos in the templates provided have all the permissions needed to publish. If you decide to use other photos, be sure you obtain permission to use them.
- It is inadvisable to use photos of your society members for this project unless the member personally endorses the program.



Medical societies have a history of starting local programs that spread across the nation, such as Project Access and Honoring Choices. We are presenting a landmark and program name you can use freely for your medical society: **LifeBridge**.

# PRINTED MATERIALS

## BROCHURE



- If you use graphic images, be sure you obtain permission or use copyright-free ones.
- Highlight the website for your program.
- Place the phone number for your program in more than one place.
- Clearly state the steps for how to set up an appointment.
- Include the eligibility requirements for your individual program.

## BUSINESS CARDS

Discreet business cards with just the essential information—the phone number and website—can be kept in a person’s wallet as an easy reminder of the resource.

## LANYARDS

Print your website and phone number on lanyards to be distributed at area hospitals and to all medical students and residents. Be sure to get the “pull away” lanyards that don’t create a choking/safety hazard.

## STICKERS

Students and younger physicians love stickers, especially quality laminated ones that can be placed on water mugs. Print a QR code directed to your website on stickers to be distributed to your members

# DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

## Broad Principles


Always know who your target audience is. For physician wellness, it will mainly be your physician members but could also be prospective or current funders, employers, mental health providers, and even the public.

- It is important to create a connection with your audience. Focus on clearly communicating the value of the program.
- Stress why it is important to them and what it can do for them as well as how easy it is for them to access the program.
- Share why they might use this program over something/someone else.
- Provide anonymous or quoted-with-permission testimonials and success stories.
- Use content that is socially and culturally appropriate.
- Ask other groups that physicians frequent to add a link to your website:
  - Physician-only networking groups
  - Facebook groups
  - Medical staff or hospital resource sites

If contacted by a physician about the program, respond quickly and efficiently. You don't want them to wait for information when they first show interest.

- If you don't need to ask for a name, don't.
- Be familiar with the social media platforms and respond in a private way through direct messaging.

Focus on how you will clearly communicate the *value* of the program.



## Website

- Make the website a supportive and comforting environment.
- Keep things simple so that information does not get buried and is easy to find.
- Make it easy to access the program. Try using a different colored button for your program from all the other buttons on your home page.
- Think about how you can help normalize the seeking of mental health for your area. Would citing national statistics about burnout and depression among physicians help? Or should you use more general wording emphasizing that physicians are human too? Discuss with your planning committee what will best resonate for your local situation.
- Appeal to a physician's professional ethical duty to put patients first by optimizing their own health so they can "show up" for patients.

## Social Media

- Customize wording and imagery for each social media avenue (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Strike a balance between keeping the same voice across all outlets and tailoring it to each audience or platform.

If you already have social media accounts, look at the data from those to see what types of posts are the most popular.

- Use a hashtag to help promote the program.
- If you already have social media accounts, look at the data from those to see what types of posts are the most popular.
- Only share useful content for the program (depending on the type of program).
- If it's a local program, try to connect with other social media accounts in the area.
- Be interactive (encourage participation).
- Survey your members to see exactly what they want or are willing to do.
- Use polls, informative videos, and the like.

## Email

Email is a good way to disseminate information about your program broadly. Emailing can be more personal with some effort and thought.

- Customize it to the recipient (names, location, company, etc.) and audience type. Students and residents experience different stressors from middle-aged physicians; male and female physicians have different pressure points.
- Be short and to the point, and make links easily accessible. Your members are not typically going to take much time out of their day to read an extremely long email and spend 10 minutes looking for a “contact” section or “appointment” section.
- From time to time, rotate the images you use to promote the program: age, gender orientation, race, physicians in “uniform” and in everyday clothes.



## Video

You may find creating a short video to be a valuable resource. Some people retain more information from watching a video than they do from reading. A video allows the use of music and imagery that taps into emotions, which are typically at the root of what drives people to seek help from this program.

Videos are easy to share through social media and your website and have more exposure than ads. Make sure your video is accessible. Upload it to your YouTube channel, embed it on your website, and promote it in your email blasts and during live presentations.

If sharing on Instagram or Facebook Shorts, be sure your video is shot or reedited in portrait orientation rather than landscape.

You may be able to use a longer form of your video (2-3 minutes) if showing it during one of your events vs. having people view it online.

### Planning the Video

- What type of camera/audio/lighting/tripod, etc., do you need? Is there a production company you can partner with?
- Who is the video for? This determines who will be in the video or what the video will include.
- If using narration, write a video script no more than 60 seconds long that focuses on the most important elements of your program. [See sample script here.](#)
- Determine who will provide the narration based on voice quality, not reputation or position.





## BE A CHAMPION; FIND AN AMBASSADOR

Make no mistake, deciding to launch a PWP is a hefty undertaking. Hopefully, this tool kit and the resources contained within have helped to ease that burden. Now that your program is up and running, there will be no greater champion for the program than you.

Take the opportunity to present the program before medical staff, group practices, and administrators. Include the information in your presentations to CEOs and Medical Group Management Association groups.

Make your commitment to the program clear to all you meet. You may grow tired of talking about it after a while, but it will be the first such program offered to some, so don't lose your passion.

Consider having a member psychiatrist serve as a volunteer medical director for the program, as their endorsement and promotion can be powerful and persuasive. By ensuring adequate oversight of the program, you provide assurances to the membership that you've thought through certain important health industry standards. List the medical director's name on all promotional materials as a reference.

You might also find that a physician who has gone through your program wishes to become an ambassador. This is something that can dramatically influence the impact of your PWP. Some societies have anonymous quotes in their marketing materials from physicians who have gone through the program. Others have program veterans who speak to physician groups and promote the program and society membership. This is not something that you can count on happening in your society, but it is a possibility that you should be prepared to meet with thoughtful consideration.

## PRESENTING YOUR PROGRAM IN PERSON

During or after your program launch, you may have opportunities to attend wellness committee meetings, present to medical practices, or even talk about your program at a hospital medical staff meeting. This is best done by your volunteer medical director or physician champion, but you should be prepared in case they aren't available.

Emphasize this is a voluntary, self-referral program and a member benefit.

- Describe your program. Be specific about what it offers and to whom. "LifeBridge is a confidential program that provides up to six appointments a year with one of our contracted counselors at no cost to members." Be sure to say exactly who is eligible. This may include a member's spouse/significant other or non-physicians if they are members of your society.
- Emphasize the confidential nature of the program and contrast it with employee assistance programs (EAPs) if you know your host organization has one.

*"You may have access to an employee assistance program that offers a similar service, but you may be reluctant to use it for fear it would become part of your employee record. That is one of the reasons why we've taken great pains to ensure your confidentiality in this program. Only limited notes are kept by our mental health providers; no medical diagnoses are made; only aggregated demographic information is collected; and when the mental health provider bills us, no participant names are attached. No one knows you have used the program except for you and the mental health provider's office."*

- Emphasize this is a voluntary self-referral program. *"This is a completely voluntary self-referral program. In fact, the way we have designed it is that participation is not possible if it is mandated by your employer, a board, or any other process."*





- Talk about how the program was designed and your therapist-vetting process.

*“When we decided to create this program, we knew it was important to design it with physicians in mind, so we put together a committee made up of several physician members, some behavioral health experts, and a psychiatrist who is our volunteer medical director for the program. Together we interviewed potential therapists to make sure their clinical setting and knowledge would best serve our member physicians.”*

- Show the audience your website as you hand out materials on how to make appointments.

*“While wanting to make getting an appointment as confidential as possible, we also wanted to make it simple. If you visit our website, you can view a list of participating mental health providers and their education, location, treatment foci, etc. All you have to do is call that number and identify yourself as a member of the medical society.”*

- Point out other resources on your website. “We have many other resources on our website such as videos, podcasts, articles, and upcoming events.”
- If you are up and running, point out your usage statistics in a way that provides third-party validation.

“Embedded within all of us, and unique and sacred for each of us, is that original dream—a calling really—to become a doctor. Our challenge is to keep that flame alive.”

— Brian Sayers, MD  
Chair, Travis County  
Medical Society Physician  
Wellness Program

*“In the first two months of operation we have had five members use the program with 12 appointments scheduled. Four of those worked for a hospital system that offers an employee assistance program, so we know its value is already being demonstrated.”*

- If your medical community has suffered the loss of a physician due to suicide in recent months, consider empathically reminding the group of the real and present impact on your community. Until the reality of physician burnout and suicide hits home, it is sometimes difficult for working physicians and executives to acknowledge the very real and present danger stress and burnout present.

*“As some of you may be aware, we had a recent suicide in our medical community. [There is no need here to be specific about who, how, or why.] While we cannot speculate on all the reasons or factors in this death, nor can we guarantee that we could have prevented it, the goal of this program is to help physicians catch personal and occupational challenges much further upstream as well as help those who are about to go over the falls.”*

- If you can end your talk light-heartedly, it may play well, depending on the formality of the setting and your personal relationship with them. Or you might consider ending on an inspirational note and talk about a success story of your own program or another program.

*“Last month I went in for my annual exam, which I do religiously every year. And I got my flu shot, caught up my tetanus, and scheduled my 50-year-old colonoscopy next month, which I am excited*

*about. I said, 'Do I have to?' And my doctor said, 'No, but as the medical professional in your life, I strongly advise it.' Now, I am not a doctor, but I am a professional who thinks a lot about your wellness. Can I take the liberty of 'strongly advising' all of you to make an appointment through our program 'prophylactically'? We all need somebody to look under our hoods sometimes rather than trying to solve problems on our own. That is why we started this program, and I hope you will take advantage of it.*

*One more recommendation I might offer to those of you physicians in a leadership position. Make an appointment through our program or your EAP even if you do not have anything to talk about. Eventually, you are going to be in a position where you need to encourage somebody you supervise, physician or otherwise, to access these services. When they hedge, you can easily say, 'Hey, it's not that big of a deal. Last year I made an appointment, and it was easy, they were very professional, and I have complete confidence in their ability to keep my anonymity. Can I help you make an appointment?' That will be a powerful testimony to them when you, as a leader, can demonstrate your own vulnerability.*

## LAUNCHING

LifeBridge Chattanooga's early stages of the program included an in-depth survey of area physicians, which ultimately received responses from about one-third of medical society members. That research provided guidance for program development.

The program launch featured two days of gatherings with Mark Greenawald, MD, medical director, Carilion Clinic Institute for Leadership Effectiveness. Dr. Greenawald presented a community grand rounds session, met with selected leaders of area hospitals and medical society leaders, and was the keynote speaker at a well-attended dinner for physicians and their spouses.

# SAMPLES

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## BRANDING

[Branding Standards](#)

## PRINT MEDIA

[Brochure \(Generic\)](#)

[Brochure \(KAM\)](#)

[Poster \(KAM\)](#)

[Brochure \(WCMS\)](#)

[Photo Sources](#)

[Discreet Business Cards \(ACMS\)](#)

[Promotional Item \(ACMS\)](#)

[Wellness Summit Flyer \(SSMS\)](#)

[Physician Lounge Poster \(ACMS\)](#)

## VIDEO

[Video Script \(Generic\)](#)