

## RESOLUTION

Subject: Continued Commitment to Physician Wellness and Destigmatization

Submitted by: Shawn C. Jones, MD

Referred to: Reference Committee

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WHEREAS, physician burnout has persisted as a significant concern for over two decades, with national studies documenting rising trends since the early 2000s, peaking during the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing at elevated levels in recent years; and

WHEREAS, physician burnout remains a critical issue, with 48.2% of physicians reporting at least one symptom of burnout in 2023, according to the American Medical Association, highlighting the ongoing need for systemic interventions despite slight improvements from previous years; and

WHEREAS, a 2024 study published in BMC Health Services Research introduced a validated measure of physician fortitude, finding significant correlations between lower fortitude and higher levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and turnover intent, underscoring the importance of resilience-building initiatives; and

WHEREAS, a 2024 survey by the Physicians Foundation revealed that over 50% of physicians knew a colleague who had considered, attempted, or died by suicide, with stigma around mental health and concerns about licensure and credentialing repercussions cited as major deterrents to seeking help; and

WHEREAS, the tragic suicide of Dr. Nakita Mortimer in 2025 brought national attention to the mental health struggles of medical residents, with a 2024 survey indicating that nearly a quarter of residents have considered self-harm, emphasizing the urgent need for cultural and institutional shifts to prioritize physician well-being; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky Medical Association adopted policy in 2024 (Resolution 2024-23) supporting the removal of stigmatizing language in credentialing processes and advocating that only current, untreated conditions affecting a physician's ability to practice should be considered relevant for credentialing purposes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that, in light of research and studies published since the adoption of Resolution 2024-23 showing that mental health challenges and burnout remain a significant and ongoing concern among physicians, the KMA reaffirm its current policy supporting statutory and regulatory changes to eliminate stigmatizing language in healthcare credentialing applications and to restrict personal health inquiries to current, untreated conditions that impair a physician's ability to practice competently, ethically, and professionally; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA continue its efforts to raise awareness among physicians, credentialing bodies, and policymakers regarding physician wellness, burnout, and the critical need to address mental health concerns early to protect physician well-being and maintain safe, high-quality patient care.