



FSPHP Statement During Public Comments before the Medical Board of California Quarterly Meeting, February 29, 2024

Physician Health Programs (PHPs) have been crucial in supporting and saving the lives of healthcare professionals for nearly four decades, answering a call from the American Medical Association and the Federation of State Medical Boards. The Federation of State Physician Health Programs, Inc. (FSPHP) is a national organization of PHPs that promotes best practices, and whose mission is to support physician health programs in improving the health of medical professionals, thereby contributing to quality patient care.

It is imperative to recognize that a confidential authorized physician health program is indispensable in every state. These programs offer a safe and supportive pathway for early referral and intervention for mental health and substance use disorders among physicians and healthcare professionals. By separating from disciplinary processes, these programs ensure timely assistance without fear of punitive measures, nurturing a culture of wellness, accountability, and patient safety.

The evidence speaks volumes: PHPs have demonstrated successful outcomes in managing safety-sensitive professionals, with physician recovery rates significantly surpassing those of the general population. Moreover, studies indicate that completing a PHP program reduces professional liability risk compared to practicing physicians who have never been under PHP monitoring.

Early referral to PHPs can avert adverse professional consequences and safeguard patients, benefiting both participants and the medical community as a whole. FSPHP stands ready to provide additional information should the Board decide to explore this topic further. Thank you.