

Heart of Safety Coalition

Insights Huddle recap

January 2023

Remove mental health stigma from credentialing

Our sincere gratitude goes to [Lisa MacLean, MD](#), Chief Clinical Wellness Officer at **Henry Ford Health**, as well as, [Corey Feist, JD, MBA](#), CEO and co-founder of **Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation**, and [Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD](#), Senior Legislative Attorney at the **American Medical Association**, for leading this Insights Huddle on removing mental health stigma from licensing and credentialing. Below is a discussion summary.

Discussion Summary:


- The suicide rate among doctors and nurses is roughly twice that of the general population.
- A key factor that leads clinicians not to seek mental healthcare is fear of losing their professional licenses, privilege to practice or professional standing.
- The Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation and its [ALL IN coalition](#) initiated Wellbeing First Champion Challenge program to remove intrusive mental health questions from licensure and credentialing applications.
- Health systems can take part by:
 - Auditing existing credentialing questions for language that stigmatizes mental health care.
 - Changing questions to either:
 - Ask only about current impairments (and treating physical, mental health and other impairments equally).
 - Not ask at all.
 - Ask clinicians to attest that they are fit to practice.
 - Communicating these changes – or the fact that clinicians are already safe to seek mental health care because the questions have already been eliminated. Ensure communication is to all team members so they know you are committed to psychological safety.
- In addition, systems can request that their state licensing boards and insurers eliminate intrusive language and champion safe harbor laws that prevent clinicians' private mental health records in lawsuits.
- Real-world lessons from Henry Ford Health:
 - There is likely to be little resistance to the change – but it's still a process.
 - Be persistent and follow through with all stakeholders to ensure the change makes it all the way through to public-facing credentialing resources and applications – online and in print.
 - Communicate credentialing changes and your organization's commitment to safety and well-being through as many channels as possible.
- Additional considerations:
 - Assign a project manager to support the process from beginning to end.
 - Involve communications partners from the start so they can optimize communication.

Wellbeing First Champion Challenge:

The Wellbeing First Champion Challenge program supports licensure boards, hospitals, and health systems in auditing and changing (as needed) all their applications, forms, and addendums to be free of intrusive mental health questions and stigmatizing language. Once the applications are verified, licensure boards, hospitals, and health systems are recognized as a Wellbeing First Champion.

Visit drlornabreen.org/removebarriers to learn more and access the free toolkit and verification submission form.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this Insights Huddle are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of Stryker. Provided resources may contain links to external websites or third-party content. We do not endorse, control or assume any responsibility for the accuracy, relevance, legality or quality of the information found on these external sites.



About the Heart of Safety Coalition

The Heart of Safety Coalition places care team member safety and wellbeing at the heart of healthcare. This national community of leaders, learners and advocates ensures that voices are heard, connections are made, and standards are raised to inspire systematic and individual change. The Coalition works to advance the Heart of Safety Declaration of Principles, which intersects health justice, physical safety, and psychological and emotional wellbeing to accelerate transformation. Driven by its mission to make healthcare better, Stryker supports and manages the Coalition.

Learn more at www.HeartofSafetyCoalition.com.