



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2021

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Livonia, Mi– Today, Congresswoman Haley Stevens (D-MI) and Senator Stabenow (D-MI) introduced a bipartisan, bicameral resolution designating today, September 17th as National Physician Suicide Awareness Day. This resolution is co-led by; Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA), Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, (D-IL), Rep. David McKinley (R-WV), Rep. Cindy Axne (D-IA), and Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA).

“Given the high levels of stress, burnout, physical and mental harm caused to physicians by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that we must do more to foster and promote physician mental health,” said **Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI)**. *“In order to change this risk and trajectory, we must be able to talk about physician suicide openly. This bipartisan, bicameral resolution recognizes September 17, 2021, as “National Physician Suicide Awareness Day” to reduce the stigma of mental health issues and promote a national discussion about physician suicide. America’s health care workers have been the heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic, saving countless lives while putting their own lives at risk. I am honored to bring awareness to this pressing issue and am grateful to my constituent Dr. Luda Khait-Vlisides for her advocacy on behalf of her fellow physicians and for her work on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.”*

“Recognizing the growing problem of physician burnout and trauma has only become more important during the pandemic, as health care workers have answered the call of duty and faced untold trauma and stress,” said **Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA)**. *“I am proud to co-lead the official designation of Physician Suicide Awareness Day on September 17 and renew my commitment to securing for these American heroes the resources and support they deserve.”*

“As the husband of a physician, I have seen the immense pressures and risks that health care workers like her endure on a daily basis,” **Congressman Krishnamoorthi (D-IL)** said. *“I am proud to be a co-lead of this bipartisan resolution designating September 17th as National Physician Suicide Awareness Day because we need to engage in these conversations about mental health as this*

pandemic has left our physicians vulnerable and overworked. This advocacy is personal to me, and this resolution is an important piece of my efforts to improve health care worker mental health. While physicians may be heroes, we must remember that they are humans too.”

*“Formal recognition of National Physician Suicide Awareness Day is a positive first step towards our public awareness of mental support needs for physicians, and ending the stigma of seeking help,” said **Dr. Luda Khait-Vlisides, of Plymouth, Michigan.** On this day, we celebrate the lives and mourn the losses of our colleagues and friends, while conversing openly about the struggle for physicians to prevent mental health emergencies amongst our peers. I would like to thank our legislators for recognizing the need to prioritize physician well-being, so that we may continue to serve our patients and our communities.”*

A [Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#) found that six in 10 health workers reported pandemic stress had harmed their mental health, three in 10 had considered leaving health care, and more than 50 percent said they are burned out.

Research on US emergency department health workers uncovered levels of exhaustion and burnout increasing during Covid-19, with as many as one-fifth at risk for PTSD. These findings echo studies done during the pandemic from China, Canada, Italy, and other countries.

Even before the pandemic, physicians worked under intense pressure and were exposed to regular trauma on the job. Yet structural barriers often discourage doctors from accessing mental health care that could save their lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only continues to exert a heavy toll on physician well-being and professional fulfillment, but also has shined a light on the stigma still associated with medical professionals seeking mental health care. This resolution recognizes September 17, 2021, as “National Physician Suicide Awareness Day” to raise awareness, reduce the stigma of mental health issues, and promote a national discussion about physician suicide.

The National Physician Suicide Awareness Day Resolution is supported by the American Hospital Association, American College of Physicians and American College of Emergency Physicians, The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM), American Academy of Emergency Medicine Resident & Student Association (AAEM/RSA), and the Council of Residency Directors in Emergency Medicine.

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