

## BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH QUESTION

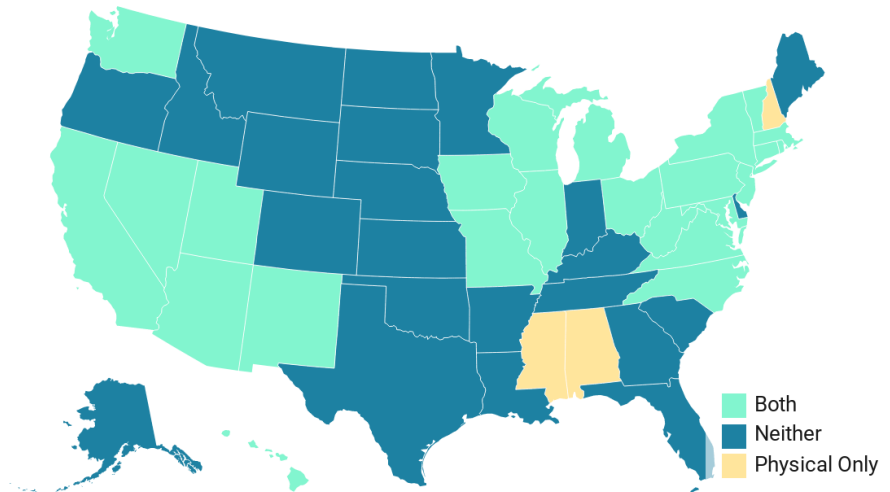
- Medical professionals experience severe mental health outcomes more than most other occupational groups.<sup>1</sup>
- 40% of physicians report reluctance to seek treatment for their mental health because of possible consequences to their medical license.<sup>2</sup>
- The Americans with Disabilities Acts (ADA) protects discrimination against both mental and health diagnoses and specifically mentions state agencies, like licensing boards.<sup>3</sup>
- Still, only 41.2% of states have physician licensure applications that are consistent with ADA regulations.<sup>2</sup>

### Are PA licensing applications consistent with ADA regulations regarding how they inquire about mental and physical health diagnoses?

## ARE PA LICENSURE APPLICATIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE ADA?

### Methods

- Licensure applications were collected from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- Applications were categorized as consistent separately for mental and physical health conditions.
- A consistent applications had to:
  - only inquire about a current (within the past year) diagnosis that impaired their function to practice as a PA
  - not include any call for speculation (e.g. “may cause impairment”)
  - or not include any questions regarding a diagnosis



**Figure 1. Consistency of PA Licensure Applications with the ADA.**

Applications were collected from all 50 states and D.C. and evaluated for consistency with ADA regulations separately for mental and physical health diagnoses. Teal states were not consistent for mental or physical conditions (45.1%), while green states were consistent in both (49.0%). Yellow states were only consistent for physical conditions, not mental health ones (5.8%).

### Results

- 29 of 51 (56.9%) applications were consistent for physical health (Fig.1).
- 26 of 51 (51.0%) applications were consistent for mental health.
- 25 of 51 (49.0%) applications were consistent in both mental and physical health conditions.

## CONCLUSION

- Only 49% of state PA licensure applications were consistent with ADA guidelines regarding how they inquire about mental and physical health diagnoses.
- Further research is needed to assess the effects of licensure questions on help-seeking behaviors among PAs, as well as other barriers to treatment.

1. Peterson C, Stone MD, Marsh SM, et al. Suicide rates by major occupational group- 17 states, 2012 and 2015. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2018;67(45):1253-1260.

2. Dyrbye LN, West CP, Sinsky CA, et al. Medical Licensure Questions and Physician Reluctance to Seek Care for Mental Health Conditions. Mayo Clin Proc. 2017;92(10):1486-1493.

3. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. 42 U.S.C. §§12101–12213 (2009).