

Treat Yourself First Campaign Aims to Reduce Stigma for Healthcare Workers Seeking Mental Healthcare

The Minnesota Dental Association is proud to join a coalition of Minnesota-based professional associations working to end the fear and stigma that many healthcare professionals experience when in need of mental health services and support. Called the Treat Yourself First campaign, the effort, which is funded by a 2024 Minnesota Department of Health grant, is designed to:

- build awareness of stigma around help-seeking and create a supportive environment that encourages clinicians to prioritize their mental health and seek help when needed;
- create peer-to-peer messages and resources designed to amplify clinicians' voices to reduce stigma surrounding mental health and seeking mental health care; and
- communicate to all Minnesota clinicians that there are effective, confidential resources available to help them battle burnout and fatigue and focus on their own well-being.

"Burnout and stress are real challenges in dentistry. To provide the best care for our patients, we must first take care of ourselves, prioritizing mental, physical, and emotional well-being. A healthy provider leads to healthier outcomes for everyone," said Dr. Alejandro Aguirre, president of the Minnesota Dental Association. "Through the Treat Yourself First campaign, we aim to ensure dental professionals feel supported in prioritizing their well-being and seeking the help they need."

"Even before COVID-19, the National Academy of Medicine found that burnout had reached 'crisis levels' among the U.S. healthcare workforce, with 35-54% of nurses and physicians, 61-75% of pharmacists, and 45-60% of medical students and residents reporting burnout symptoms," said Edwin Bogonko, MD, MBA, president of the Minnesota Medical Association.

"The goal of the campaign is to normalize the process for clinicians and healthcare professionals to seek help for work-place related stresses and increase clinicians' awareness of mental health issues and services," Bogonko said.

On January 30, Sen. Liz Boldon (DFL – Rochester) introduced [SF 831](#), which includes a one-time \$250,000 appropriation to help promote the awareness and education campaign.

The coalition has also launched a website, www.TreatYourselfFirst.org, that includes resources for healthcare workers to use to get the help they need and to help promote it to their fellow healthcare workers.