

## Medical Licensure Questions & Physician Reluctance to Seek Care for Mental Health Conditions

Dyrbye LN, et al including Christine Sinsky and Tait Shanafelt  
Mayo Clin Proc. October 2017;92(10):1486-93

- Nearly 40% of physicians (2325 of 5829) reported that they would be reluctant to seek formal medical care for treatment of a mental health condition because of concerns about repercussions to their medical licensure.
- Physicians working in states in which medical licensure application questions inquire broadly about current or past diagnosis or treatment of a mental health condition, past impairment from a mental health condition, or presence of a mental health condition that could affect competency were **21% to 22% more reluctant to seek help**.
- Physicians who worked in states in which questions on medical licensure applications **asked only about current impairment from a mental health condition** or **included no question pertaining to mental health** were less reluctant and thus may be more likely to seek and receive care if the need arose.

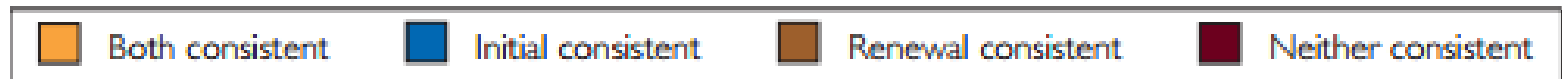
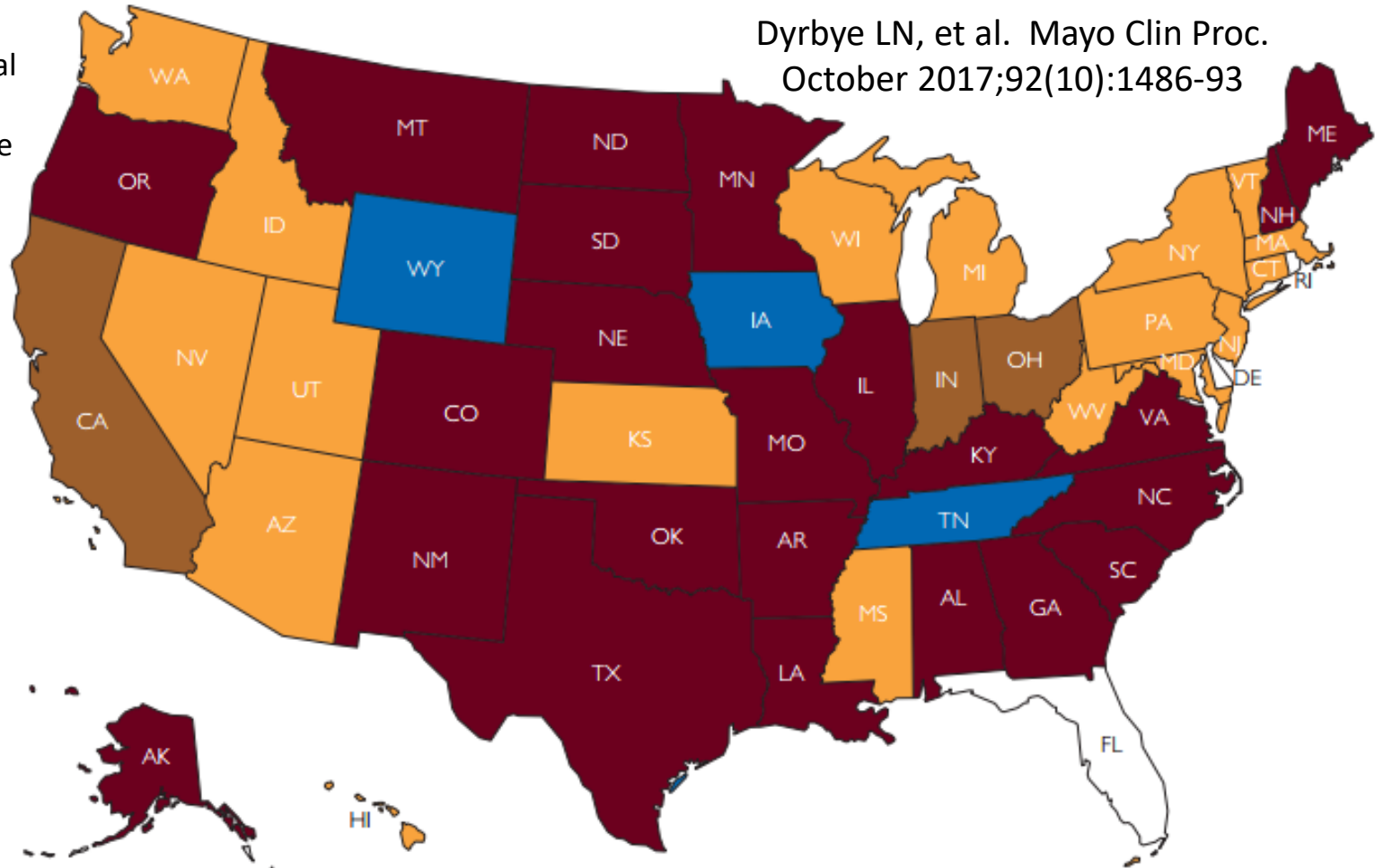
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Independent variable	OR (95% CI) <sup>c</sup>	P value	Overall P value
Age (for each 1 year older)	0.97 (0.97-0.98)	<.001	<.001
Female (reference, male)	0.74 (0.66-0.84)	<.001	<.001
Relationship status (reference, married)			.22
Partnered	0.98 (0.74-1.29)	0.88	
Single	1.17 (0.98-1.39)	0.08	
Widowed	0.77 (0.47-1.27)	0.3	
Practice location (reference, private practice)			<.001
Academic medical center	0.74 (0.64-0.84)	<.001	
Veterans hospital	0.51 (0.31-0.81)	.005	
Other practice setting	0.82 (0.71-0.95)	.007	
Medical licensure application questions (reference, both applications consistent)			.007
Neither application consistent	1.21 (1.07-1.37)	.002	
Renewal application consistent	1.22 (1.05-1.43)	.011	
Initial application consistent	1.29 (0.96-1.74)	.09	

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Oregon's initial and renewal medical license applications are worst in the West in inhibiting help seeking



Medical license application “consistent” if specifically asked re: current impairment from a medical or mental health condition. Initial and renewal refer to first or subsequent application.