



The vision of the MASELA's LifeBridge Physician Revitalization Program is to encourage and sustain a vibrant, healthy and functional medical community where every physician is valued and supported.



masela.org/lifebridge



**MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA**

Unity • Strength • Advocacy • Service • Collaboration • Collegiality

The Medical Association of Southeast Louisiana (MASELA) is a 501c6 nonprofit professional association representing physicians throughout the Southeast Louisiana region. It was created in late 2020 by Jefferson & Orleans Parish Medical Societies recognizing that a unified approach to addressing enhanced professional satisfaction, medical practice challenges and public health crises was needed in the region.

MASELA's Board of Directors recognizes the importance of physician well-being to our entire community: We believe **Healthy Physicians = Healthy Communities**. To support and assist physicians in achieving and maintaining personal and professional balance, MASELA's Board of Directors is committed to establishing education, resources and direct services.

In October, 2022, MASELA launched its **LifeBridge Physician Revitalization Program**. The cornerstone of this program is a confidential, complimentary counseling program for Active Members of MASELA. who are working full-time in medicine.



Why are counseling services needed?

The practice of medicine is stressful. Stress is cumulative. Unresolved stress can lead to career dissatisfaction, addiction, illness, disruptive behavior, burnout and death. "Compassion fatigue" or burnout is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. A 2011 & 2014 Mayo-AMA study shows burnout is increasing (54% of physicians reported suffering from at least one symptom of burnout). In 2021, 61% of physicians often have feelings of burnout according to the Physicians Foundation.

Burnout can be aggravated by predisposing personality traits and can lead to increased risk for medical errors and interpersonal conflicts. It is estimated that more than 400+ physicians commit suicide every year. By having an early intervention program in place, such as the Physicians' Revitalization Program, physician impairment and suicide may be avoided.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF LIFEBRIDGE MASELA PHYSICIAN REVITALIZATION COUNSELING PROGRAM



- * Peer-developed and sanctioned
 - * Physician-initiated counseling
 - * Confidential, not subject to discovery or attestation disclosure
 - * In-Person and Teletherapy appointments available
 - * Appointments are quickly and easily available
 - * Program uses experienced psychologists, social workers and counselors interviewed and approved by the Medical Director of the PRP program
- Appointments available at physician-friendly times including early morning and evenings

- * Appointments are available away from hospitals and identifiable mental health establishments
- * Minimal paper record or private electronic record, separate from all health systems EMR
- * Not reportable to licensing board, under most circumstances
- * Established protocol for assisting impaired clients, acceptable to state license board
 - * Up to three (3) complimentary sessions; additional sessions available at client's own cost
 - * No insurance billed; no insurance record
 - * Referrals made to other mental health resources as needed



**How to get an appointment:
Complete the online request form at
masela.org/lifebridge or scan the QR code or
send a confidential email to
lifebridge@masela.org**



Oversight & Governance of LifeBridge:

The Medical Association of Southeast Louisiana's Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for oversight of all LifeBridge programs and services. Reporting to the MASELA Board of Directors, a Physician Well-being Advisory Committee composed of practicing physicians of several specialties and behavioral health practitioners was formed to develop policies, protocols, and strategies for LifeBridge. Under the direction of the Medical Director, licensed professional behavioral health practitioners, including psychologists and social workers, are contracted to provide counseling services to physicians soon after a request is made. Services are provided away from hospitals and identifiable mental health establishments.

The Medical Director is available to discuss referrals protocols for physicians who have challenges beyond the scope of the counseling program. Scope of counseling services provided are intended to be an early intervention strategy for physicians suffering from stress and burnout to aid them in developing their own strategies to achieve greater resilience and balance in their professional and personal life. Appropriate referrals will be made for physicians who need additional services.

Note: This service is not for physicians in crisis. If you are in crisis, you should call 988 or go to the closest emergency room.

Payment for Counseling Services

The Medical Association of Southeast Louisiana, through individual, organizational, and corporate donations and grants, provides resources necessary to fund counseling for physicians provided by contracted behavioral health professionals. Up to three counseling appointments are complimentary to the physician seeking to enhance their professional satisfaction by reducing causes of burnout. No insurance will be filed therefore maintaining confidentiality and further reducing the barriers to care. Physicians wishing additional appointments with behavioral health counselors will be responsible for payment. If a physician is referred to a psychiatrist, the physician will be responsible for payment.

Records Storage, Compliance & Data Collection

There is a minimal medical record kept by the therapist. Services provided are not subject to discovery or attestation disclosure in most cases. Scope of counseling services provided under the LifeBridge program are not reportable to the Louisiana Board of Medical Examiners. Individual therapists and the Medical Association of Southeast Louisiana have liability insurance. Each physician is asked to acknowledge receipt of a Physician Statement of Understanding, and therapists will provide their own HIPAA privacy form and an informed consent for counseling. Therapists are held to a strict code of professional ethics and confidentiality. Usage data is collected from therapists but is not individually identifiable. This data is used primarily for accounting and fundraising purposes.



Initial funding for this program has been provided by the Greater New Orleans Medical Foundation and the Jefferson Physicians Foundation. To make a tax-deductible donation, contact MASELA at 504.302.1900 or lifEBridge@masela.org

Why should hospitals and health systems support and promote the LifeBridge Physicians Revitalization Program?

JCACHO accreditation mandates the medical staff “implement a process to identify and manage matters of individual health for licensed independent practitioners which is separate from actions taken for disciplinary purposes.”

Physician well-being:

- Enhances patient satisfaction (1/4 of Quad Aim)
- Reduces inappropriate prescribing and testing and enhances patient compliance
- Enhances workplace productivity efficiency, quality of patient care and patient safety
- Enhances recruitment and retention of physicians, especially in primary care
- Minimizes turnover and cost
- Prevents future physician impairment
- Reduces malpractice litigation
- Enhances the development of physician leaders who will guide other physicians into making the strategic and necessary changes in healthcare transformation.



Why should a hospital or health system support LifeBridge if the institution already has an established relationship with an Employee Assistance Program or other behavioral health resource?

According to the American Medical Association, less than 2% of physicians will use an Employee Assistance Program or other counseling program offered by their employer due to concerns regarding confidentiality. Physicians are more likely to use an independent third-party counseling service than one which has been arranged by an institution at which the physician has a relationship. Institutions will want to do what is in the best interests of physicians and patients by promoting the services offered through LifeBridge.

For more
information:

504.302.1900
lifEBridge@masela.org

