



Federation of State Physician Health Programs

The Federation of State Physician Health Programs, Inc. (FSPHP), is a nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to provide a forum for education and exchange of information among state programs, to develop common objectives and goals, to develop standards, to enhance awareness of issues related to physician health and impairment, to provide advocacy for physicians and their health issues at local, state, and national levels, and to assist state programs in their quest to protect the public.

The goals of the FSPHP are to:

- achieve national and international recognition as a supporter of state physician health programs.
- promote the best medical care possible for all patients.
- promote early identification, treatment, documentation, and monitoring of ongoing recovery of physicians prior to the illness impacting the care rendered to patients.
- pursue consistent standards, language, and definitions among state physician health programs.
- maintain an organizational structure that will help achieve its vision and mission.

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History

The Federation of State Physician Health Programs, Inc. (FSPHP) evolved from initiatives taken by the American Medical Association (AMA) and individual state physician health programs, focusing upon rehabilitation and monitoring of physicians with psychoactive substance use disorders as well as mental and physical illness. The initial success of these efforts led to the creation of an independent organization that would carry out this mission in a consistent and objective fashion. Beginning in December 1990, the FSPHP assumed this role.

Physicians with psychoactive substance use disorders, physical illness and mental health problems have long been documented throughout history. Formal efforts to deal with physician impairment existed as far back as 1958. At that time the [Federation of State Medical Boards](#) (FSMB) of the United States identified drug addiction and alcoholism among doctors as a disciplinary problem. It called for the development of a model program of probation and rehabilitation that could be adopted by individual state boards. Ten years later, another attempt was made to encourage the development of physician health programs when the FSMB approved a resolution calling for nationwide programs.

In a landmark policy paper prepared by the AMA Council on Mental Health, "The Sick Physician: Impairment by Psychiatric Disorders, Including Alcoholism and Drug Dependence," the AMA acknowledged physician impairment. In 1974, model legislation was developed that offered a therapeutic alternative to discipline, recognizing alcoholism and other drug addictions as illnesses. The AMA held a Physician Health Conference in April 1975 and a second in 1977 where it officially recognized the psychiatrically disturbed physician. A flurry of articles published in the late 1970s increased education and awareness about physician addiction. By 1980, less than a decade after the AMA's policy paper, "all but three of the 54 U.S. medical societies of all states and jurisdictions had authorized or implemented impaired physician programs." Today, all states have responded and developed programs which operate within the parameters of state regulation and legislation and provide many different levels of service to physicians in need.

The FSPHP is now an independent, duly constituted professional, educational and nonprofit corporation with elected officers and a [Board of Directors](#). Originally founded by several states with advanced programs, the [FSPHP](#) now has a membership of 45 state programs, as well as international members from Canada. In an attempt to foster continued communication and understanding between the FSPHP and the FSMB, recent annual meetings of the FSPHP and the FSMB have been scheduled in the same meeting location to allow participation in both organizations' meetings.