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**SafeHaven Legislation (LB286) Offers Critical Confidentiality Protections for Physicians Participating in the LifeBridge Nebraska Physician Wellness Program**

[Lincoln, June 2023] – This legislative session, the State of Nebraska took a significant step towards supporting the physician community with the passing of SafeHaven legislation LB286, introduced by Senator Lynne Walz on behalf of the Nebraska Medical Association (NMA). This important legislation, which was included in the omnibus bill, LB227, provides vital confidentiality protections for physicians participating in the LifeBridge Nebraska physician wellness program. It aims to foster a safe and secure environment for medical professionals to address their personal mental health and wellbeing without fear of reprisal or breach of privacy. The legislation passed on final reading on June 1st, 2023, and will take effect September 2, 2023, allowing LifeBridge Nebraska to operate under enhanced safeguards for participating physicians. This action by the Nebraska Legislature recognizes the invaluable contributions of the leaders of Nebraska's healthcare teams and the importance of providing a safe space for physicians to seek help with mental health and wellness.

LifeBridge Nebraska, a revolutionary program that connects physicians with a peer physician coach, is available to all physicians licensed in the state of Nebraska at no cost. The program is available to physicians at all stages of their career, regardless of NMA membership status.

SafeHaven legislation LB286, as part of LB227, physicians participating in LifeBridge Nebraska key confidentiality protections, including:

**1. Confidentiality of Participation:** Any record of a person's participation in a physician wellness program is confidential and not subject to discovery, subpoena, or a reporting requirement to the department, unless the person voluntarily requests release of the information in writing, or the physician peer coach determines that the person's condition constitutes a danger to the public health and safety by the person's continued practice of medicine or surgery.

**2. Protection from Disclosure:** A person who contacts or participates in a physician wellness program shall not be required to disclose such contact or participation to any health care facility, hospital, medical staff person, accreditation organization, graduate medical education oversight body, health

insurer, government agency, or other entity as a condition of participation, employment, credentialing, payment, licensure, compliance, or other requirement.

Additionally, LB286 adds physician peer coaches to the list of exempt individuals regarding mandatory reporting so long as:

1. The credentialed physician is serving in the capacity of a physician peer coach in the LifeBridge program; and
2. The physician receiving peer coaching services does not constitute a danger to the public health and safety by their continued practice or medicine or surgery.

SafeHaven legislation demonstrates Nebraska's commitment to supporting the mental health and wellness of the physicians in Nebraska. It creates an environment that prioritizes the well-being of medical professionals, enabling them to provide optimal care for their patients.

"We are delighted to see the passing of SafeHaven legislation as part of LB227," said Dr. Daniel Rosenquist, MD, president of the Nebraska Medical Association. "This legislation affirms Nebraska's dedication to the well-being of physicians and is a powerful statement of the state's support for our physicians."

LifeBridge Nebraska has already made a positive impact on the lives of a number of Nebraska physicians, and with the implementation of SafeHaven legislation, this program is poised to reach even further. LifeBridge Nebraska remains committed to supporting the physician community and is pleased that this legislation recognizes the invaluable contributions of physicians in serving the needs of Nebraskans.

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