

## Vermont Podiatric Medical Association

Stephen J. Merena, DPM  
3 Vista Ct.  
Jericho, VT 05465

January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dr. Wendy Davis, President  
Vermont Medical Society  
PO Box 1457  
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dr. Davis:

Thank you for contacting the Vermont Podiatric Medical Association regarding your efforts to expand the services offered by the Vermont Practitioner Health Program. The VPMA is pleased to offer our support for this expansion.

Many medical professionals who experience mental health conditions face feelings of shame and embarrassment and do not know where to turn for help. We believe that it would be an important resource for podiatrists for the Vermont Practitioner Health Program to be able to offer confidential services tailored to medical professionals with mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety and burnout. We hope that this will provide a safe resource where clinicians can turn for help before their condition begins to impact their ability to practice medicine. However, if their condition rises to the level of Board of Medical Practice involvement, VPHP will also be able to provide services to help monitor a clinician and/or help them return to practice safely.

We understand that to meet the needs of an increased number of participants with a different set of clinical needs, the VPHP program will require additional staff. In the future, this may require increasing the assessment on podiatrists' licensee fee to fund the VPHP program from \$25 every two years to \$50 every two years. VPMA supports increasing the fee for this important program.

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Merena DPM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Merena, DPM  
President, Vermont Podiatric Medical Association