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May 28, 2021

Senator Robert P. Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

RE: Support for the Lorna Breen Act, H.R. 8094

Dear Senator Casey:

On behalf of the physician members of the Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED), I am writing to voice our strong support for the Lorna Breen Act, H.R. 8094.

The legislation is aimed at protecting the mental wellbeing of health care professionals. Dr. Lorna Breen served as the emergency room director at the New York-Presbyterian Hospital and dedicated her life to the care of her patients. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Breen was at ground zero of the crisis and along with fellow health care workers across the country, she was both victim and witness to the stresses of the pandemic. Overwhelmed and under constant pressure, Dr. Breen, unfortunately, took her own life.

As you are well aware, the health care workers “in the trenches” of fighting COVID-19 are risking their lives and the lives of their family members. These workers are facing not only physical health risks, but the added emotional brunt of working through this crisis as they struggle to provide appropriate care in an increasingly high-stress, ultra-intensive environment. With the memory of Dr. Breen comes the need to meaningfully address the topic of mental health for physicians. This critical legislation aims to prevent suicide and burnout among health care professionals and mitigate their mental and behavioral health conditions. Additionally, it contains a provision for a comprehensive study aimed at understanding the factors contributing to burnout and the mental health conditions of health care professionals.

The Lorna Breen Act was established by her family in memory to her life of service to her patients and to bring about positive change to assist the very heroes that have served on the front lines of the pandemic and continue to do so. This act is the first of its kind and is important to our members and colleagues around the country.



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As this legislation is making its way through the U.S. Senate, I respectfully ask for your support should this legislation advance to the U.S. House of Representatives in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me at your convenience should you wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Edward Balaban DO, FACP, FASCO

Edward Balaban, DO, FACP, FASCO, FCPP
Chair, Board of Trustees
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