

To: Members, House Health Policy Committee
From: Sean Sorenson-Abbott, Manager, Government Relations
Date: September 19, 2019
Re: House Bill 4862
MHA Position: Support

The Michigan Health and Hospital Association supports House Bill (HB) 4862, sponsored by Representative Douglas Wozniak. This bill would expand confidentiality protections for the participants and providers performing Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) services at health care facilities.

CISM services were developed to help employees cope with the physical and emotional reactions that can arise after a traumatic event in the workplace. It is a voluntary, internationally recognized intervention process that is carried out by a team of peers trained in understanding the signs and effects of critical incident stress. Rather than replacing formal psychotherapy, CISM teams are used as an initial response option to defuse stress and debrief, as well as to make referrals for further one-on-one services.

CISM programs are becoming increasingly prevalent among MHA members, as Michigan hospitals continue to strive for best practices in protecting their staff from workplace violence. According to 2014 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employees in the healthcare and social assistance fields experienced violence-related injuries in the workplace at a rate more than four times higher than other private sector professions. Ensuring the confidentiality of CISM communications will further encourage participation in the programs, and consequently encourage victims of traumatic events to receive proper care.

In 2016, Governor Snyder approved Michigan's first CISM statute, providing confidentiality and legal protections to CISM teams utilized by 'emergency service providers'. However, due to the use of a separate definition than that used in the Public Health Code (333.20106), health facility employees are not considered emergency service providers in the existing CISM law. HB 4862 would have no effect on existing programs that are currently protected. Rather, the bill would simply extend those same privileges to physicians and individuals working in a healthcare facility.

If you have any questions on the contents of this memo, please feel free to contact me at (517) 886-8382 or ssorenson@mha.org.

Brian Peters, Chief Executive Officer