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Dear Bar Leaders:

Time in law school is marked by extreme stress, anxiety, overwhelming expectations, and financial uncertainty. Law students constantly question their own self-worth and choice of career.

Recent studies have shown that today's law school students are experiencing these issues at alarming rates. Moreover, they are not seeking the help needed to manage difficult personal challenges. Many students admit they are not seeking help because they are concerned that doing so will negatively impact their bar admission.

In fact, the 2014 *Survey of Law Student Well-Being* sponsored by the American Bar Association reported that 42 percent of surveyed law students believed they needed help for emotional or mental health issue in the past year, but only half sought assistance. Why didn't more ask for help? Forty-five percent of the respondents feared that seeking help for a mental health issue could pose a threat to their bar admission. The perceived negative impact on bar admission was a leading factor in not seeking help. This is unacceptable.

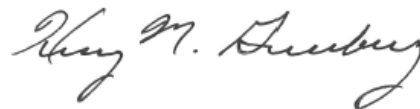
In February 2019, the Conference of Chief Justices took a decisive step to address this issue. The Conference passed a resolution "urging its members and state and territorial bar admission authorities to eliminate from applications required for admission to the bar any questions that ask about mental health history, diagnosis, or treatment" and instead use questions that only focus on an applicant's conduct.

In view of this clear and unequivocal stand, the New York State Bar Association should promptly review questions on the New York bar application's character and fitness questionnaire that address an applicant's mental health issues, to determine if they comport with the nationally endorsed recommendations found in the Conference of Chief Justices' resolution. Accordingly, I request that you, as chairs of the Young Lawyers Section, the Committee on Disability Rights, the Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar, the Law Practice Management's Attorney Wellness Sub-Committee, and the Lawyer Assistance Committee, appoint representatives to serve on a blue ribbon multi-disciplinary task force to review the relevant questions on the questionnaire. Following the completion of your review, I request that your section and committees jointly issue recommendations for comment and possible adoption at the November 2019 House of Delegates meeting.

NYSBA is committed to fostering the next generation of healthy, competent, and dedicated lawyers. Seeking help for anxiety, stress, or other mental health issues should be encouraged, supported and rewarded. The idea that bravely and smartly addressing one's personal challenges early on could have a negative impact on admission to the bar is not consistent with our profession's core values. The review of the bar application's questionnaire is an important first step in our efforts to help law students become healthy lawyers.

I look forward to your report and recommendations. This is important work and will make a lasting difference to many. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Henry M. Greenberg".

Henry M. Greenberg
President