



Five ways to address physician burnout.

Although physicians are trained to face life-and-death situations, they're not immune to the toll — both physical and emotional — that comes with them. Over half (**53%**) of physicians say they're burned out¹, a quarter (**23%**) report feeling depressed, and one report shows that a doctor commits suicide every day.² This means it's more important than ever for organizations to address provider burnout. Here are five ways to start.

Have ongoing conversations.

Ongoing conversations about physician burnout between residents, attendings, and medical students are crucial, especially during times of crisis. Help all medical providers understand that they are in this fight together and prepare them psychologically and socially. It is important to change the assumption that healthcare providers have no needs, fears, or family and no need for rest.

Help without judgment.

Strive to eliminate the stigma of mental illness — whether it's cultural or self-imposed. Support providers' mental health and be aware that many are reluctant to seek treatment, help, or counseling because they fear losing their medical license or being reported to a physician reporting agency.

Many physicians also develop a professional identity of infallibility, refusing to show weakness or admit that they were wrong. They also believe patients come first, often at the expense of their own physical and mental health. Understanding these two tenets of identity can help you discuss physicians' reluctance to ask for help, which is compounded in times of stress.

Hear and validate concerns.

Executive leadership can and should take a role in ensuring healthcare professionals are physically and mentally well. Work with a human resources partner to create workgroups where healthcare providers can share honest feedback about the organization. Then use this feedback to create a strategy for improving well-being.

For example, you might hear that a perceived lack of transparency at your hospital is breeding feelings of exhaustion and cynicism. One piece of your strategy might be hosting more employee meetings to answer questions or ensuring your employees know when you have implemented changes based on their feedback.

Strengthen physician-leadership relationships.

Find the balance between creating opportunities for providers to grow within your organization and ensuring you have the right ratio of leaders to providers so you can have effective relationships.

Have employees regularly evaluate their leaders through anonymous 360-degree surveys so the leaders receive direct feedback and employees feel they can be candid about what's working well and what needs to improve.



Prioritize physician wellness.

One way to help address provider burnout is by having hospital administration join staff on the floor doing rounds, so they can see for themselves how providers are doing. This allows executive leadership to see how much provider burnout costs the hospital and impacts medical errors.

Another approach is creating a physician satisfaction committee that routinely surveys doctors and works on breaking down barriers to well-being. Ask healthcare providers the following questions (with the goal of having each person one day answer affirmatively):

- Do I feel I am treated with dignity and respect?
- Do I have what I need to make a contribution that gives my life meaning?
- Am I recognized and thanked for what I do?

With physicians and other frontline healthcare workers experiencing burnout and other mental health concerns, it is more important than ever for healthcare leaders to make provider wellness a top priority of their organization.

CompHealth can provide your healthcare facility with the doctors, nurses, and allied professionals you need to provide the best care for your community. Give us a call today to get started.

800.453.3030

1. 'I Cry but No One Cares': Physician Burnout & Depression Report 2023. Medscape, January 27, 2023.

<https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2023-lifestyle-burnout-6016058>

2. Physician suicide: Contributing factors and how to prevent it. CHG Healthcare, March 21, 2023.

<https://chghealthcare.com/blog/physician-suicide-prevention/>