

Pediatrician health and wellness a personal passion

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With up to half of physicians reporting that they suffer from at least one symptom of burnout and its profound personal and professional consequences, physician health and wellness is not only an AAP strategic priority but also a passion of mine.

The Academy is taking a comprehensive, science-based approach to support the health and wellness of our members. And I'd like to let you know about some of the ways we're working to address burnout and improve the well-being of pediatricians.

Action collaborative

The AAP is working alongside more than 100 medical organizations through the National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Clinician Health and Wellbeing to identify what it is about the work and learning environment that adversely affects clinician wellness and well-being — and what can be done to help. Burnout can mean multiple things, so finding solutions requires specific understanding of its causes.

Part of the Academy's role in the collaborative is to provide pediatricians' perspective, and we're well-positioned to do so. The AAP has conducted extensive member research to define the problems so that we can start in the right place to find solutions.

The data we've collected through the Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study, a Graduating Resident Survey and three Periodic Surveys on pediatrician wellness show that, overall, pediatricians:

- report high levels of satisfaction with their career and positions,
- find their patient relationships rewarding, and
- believe their work contributes to the health of families in the community.

Yet they voice increased frustration with certain aspects of practice — particularly with unreasonable administrative burdens.

Generalists and subspecialists alike strongly agree that processes that reduce time spent on tasks like electronic health record (EHR) documentation, billing preauthorization and other insurance requirements would help reduce burnout. Other top strategies for reducing burnout (in order of preference) include:

- improving workflow efficiency,
- reducing work hours or providing flexible hours,
- giving physicians a greater voice in making decisions, and
- reducing clinical load.

Clearly, pediatricians' frustrations cannot be fixed simply by providing an individual wellness program. While support of individuals is important, we also need system-level change that supports physician autonomy and

patient care. In response to what we've learned from you, we're approaching this challenge from a number of fronts, including advocacy, practice, innovation and education.

AAP Wellness Advisory Group

To keep us moving forward, we've formed the AAP Wellness Advisory Group, which brings together a diverse set of members experienced in the areas of regulatory environment, leadership, individual wellness, pediatric education and health plan administration.

Their charge is to help evaluate needed changes at the system level as well as disseminate resources and information to help pediatricians better manage workflows, balance work and family, and decrease time on documentation so they can focus more on their patients and balancing life's demands. (See related article at <http://www.aappublications.org/news/2019/02/26/wel022619>.)

AAP payer advocacy

One of the system changes the Academy has been championing is appropriate payment for services. To that end, we've recently increased our advocacy efforts to address chapters' and members' concerns about payment in both the public and private arenas. (See article at <http://www.aappublications.org/news/2019/03/04/ppaac030419>.) In addition, AAP payer advocacy is engaging payers on evolving value-based payment models and pediatric quality metrics to advocate for payment models that are appropriate for pediatrics and will sustain the patient/family-centered medical home.

I lend my full support and look forward to sharing updates about these fundamental efforts to improve pediatricians' health and professional satisfaction and the quality of care we provide our patients.

In the meantime, thank you for all you do for the Academy and for children. And, please, take care of yourselves.

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