



Minnesota Hospital Association

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NEWS RELEASE

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Health systems across Minnesota collaborate to understand, reduce burnout among health care professionals

ST. PAUL – Led by a group of its physician leaders, the Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) has launched a comprehensive statewide collaborative to address the rising tide of burnout among health care professionals. Burnout is a response to excessive job stress and is defined by the three dimensions of emotional exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy.

In 2016, on behalf of its member hospitals and health systems, MHA began conducting a statewide survey to assess the prevalence of burnout among physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs) such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants. The journal *Burnout Research* recently published results of the 2016 survey, in which 56 health systems across Minnesota, representing 104 hospitals, participated.

Of the 13,693 clinicians invited to participate in the survey, 43 percent responded, a high response rate likely reflecting the critical nature of the issue. One-third of respondents (34 percent) reported being emotionally exhausted – feeling a sense of burnout from their work. Almost three in five respondents reported feeling a great deal of stress because of their job; however, more than three-quarters reported being satisfied with their job and engaged with their work.

In 2017, MHA again surveyed physicians and advanced practice providers. This year, 63 health systems, representing 113 hospitals, participated and 19,350 clinicians were invited to respond to the survey.

“MHA will continue to publish ongoing results and the association between actions that health systems take and changing levels of burnout, so that others in the industry can understand what effectively reduces burden and stress on health care professionals,” said Rahul Koranne, M.D., MHA’s chief medical officer. “Ultimately, reducing burnout in physicians and APPs, as well as other health care staff, will improve the quality of care in service to our patients, families and communities across Minnesota.”

“Reducing hassles and fostering joy for physicians is key to all we want to do to support each other in this meaningful work,” said Penny Wheeler, M.D., president and CEO of Allina Health, which is actively participating in this work. “MHA’s burnout survey clearly highlighted opportunities to improve, reduce unnecessary noise and hassle, and foster joy and purpose. We are beyond grateful to have this actionable information so we can best support our physicians and other clinical caregivers.”

The MHA study highlighted the need for hospitals and health systems to intervene at multiple levels to reduce burnout. While individual supports and strategies may be needed, because of the high level of burnout among physicians and APPs, practice environments and organizational actions need to be the primary strategies to mitigate and prevent burnout. A statewide approach to understanding and acting on burnout enables hospitals and health systems to work collaboratively to address the crisis, sharing lessons and best practices to support all health care staff.

“The survey and results created great interest and engagement by providers and the opportunity administratively to collaboratively prioritize and implement solutions to address burnout, which varied by provider specialty,” said Tim Rice, CEO of Lakewood Health System, Staples. “Addressing burnout does not occur overnight and the continued development of the survey and data allows us to be on this journey together learning best practices and, most significantly, enhancing the quality of life for our providers, which has a direct correlation to improved quality care and service for our patients.”

“We are building a data-driven, continuous quality improvement framework to address health care burnout across Minnesota, like what we would do for any other health care problem,” said Koranne. “This unique statewide collaboration championed by health systems of all sizes and leaders of all types is evidence of the hopeful and collaborative mindset in our state. It is time for us to move from admiring the problem of burnout to taking action to bend the burnout curve and support our health care staff, which ultimately enhances our care of patients.”

The Minnesota Hospital Association represents 142 hospitals and health systems, which provide quality care for their patients and meet the needs of their communities.

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