New AMA module helps identify physician distress

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(HealthDay)—A new resource has been developed to help physicians

identify distressed colleagues and help them to access care, according to a report published by the American Medical Association (AMA).

Noting that the rates of suicide among physicians are higher than those in the general public, the article highlights ways for physicians to identify distressed colleagues and help them get care. Many physicians feel that their identities are linked to their professional image, making them vulnerable to distress when problems arise.

A new module from the AMA STEPS Forward collection of practice improvement strategies focuses on the vulnerability and treatment needs of physicians. Steps to identify and help physicians include talking about the risk factors and warning signs for suicide. Physicians should take action to standardize care-seeking within their organization, including encouraging colleagues to take time off for vacation and sick leave. In addition, it should be made easy to find help, for example by posting referral lists for resources inside and outside the organization in a highly visible location. Finally, physicians should consider creating a support system within their organization.

"Self-care is one of the most visible ways to standardize care-seeking in your practice," according to the article. "Allow yourself time to recharge, talk about your own stress, say 'no' when you need to, and learn to recognize the signs of distress in yourself."

More information: More Information

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