

Doctor burnout: A big health threat in U.S.

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(HealthDay)—Complaining of burnout and job dissatisfaction, many U.S. doctors plan to reduce their work hours or leave medicine altogether, a new study reveals.

"Our findings have profound implications for [health care organizations](#)," according to the researchers from the American Medical Association (AMA), the Mayo Clinic and Stanford University.

The study found that about one in five [doctors](#) intends to reduce work hours in the next year. And about one in 50 intends to leave medicine for a different career within the next two years.

The demands of [electronic health records](#) were among the challenges leading to [job dissatisfaction](#).

If only 30 percent of those doctors follow through on their plans to leave medicine, that would mean a loss of nearly 4,800 doctors. That's about the same as losing the graduating classes of 19 U.S. medical schools in each of the next two years, the researchers explained.

Replacing physicians is expensive for institutions. One recent analysis estimated the cost at \$800,000 or more per doctor. "In addition, turnover is disruptive to patients, staff and organizational culture," the study authors wrote.

"An energized, engaged, and resilient [physician](#) workforce is essential to achieving national health goals," said Dr. David Barbe, president of the American Medical Association.

"Yet burnout is more common among physicians than other U.S. workers, and that gap is increasing as mounting obstacles to patients' care contribute to emotional fatigue, depersonalization and loss of enthusiasm among physicians," Barbe said in an AMA news release.

"The AMA is urging Congress, hospitals, and health plans to recognize the coming crisis as an early warning sign of health system dysfunction. America's physicians are the canary in the coal mine," he noted.

Nearly 6,700 physicians across all specialties participated in the 2014 survey. The results were published Nov. 1 in the journal *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

More information: Helpguide.org has more on [burnout](#).

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