Lean approach may help tackle burnout in health care providers

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(HealthDay)—The Lean approach, which emphasizes reducing waste

and improving customer value by focusing on the big picture, can be used to address physician burnout, according to a report published in *Medical Economics*.

The Lean process, which emphasizes reducing waste and improving customer value, has been used successfully in many industries, including health care. The principles underlying Lean are continuous improvement and respect for people and the work they are doing. In health care systems, Lean has been shown to remove wasteful processes and consider what motivates clinicians.

The approach removes barriers and frustrations from the workflow process, with the team or system identifying problems and taking action on them. Creation of a huddle board represents one method of addressing issues; a problem can be reported and tacked onto the huddle board as it occurs. The problem can then be addressed in a timely manner. Staff are encouraged to collaborate and communicate and address problems at an early stage; this can be facilitated by use of the huddle board.

"The most effective way to get any health system to move to a Lean approach, however, [Paul DeChant M.D., Ph.D., deputy chief officer for IBM Watson Health in California] says, is to encourage the 'C-Suite level folks' to get actively engaged in and support the work of the people 'at the front lines,'" according to the report.

More information: Abstract/Full Text