

A medical charter: Commitments to limit physician burnout, promote well-being

March 29 2018, by Bob Nellis

More than half of U.S. physicians say they experience burnout in their work. Today, Mayo Clinic and other leading medical centers have published a "Charter on Physician Well-Being" as an intended model for medical organizations to not only minimize and manage physician burnout, but also promote physician well-being. The charter, which has been endorsed or supported by many major medical organizations, including the American Medical Association and the American Association of Medical Colleges, appears online in *JAMA*.

"This is a first step on a national level to lay out guiding principles and commitments that we consider essential for physician well-being throughout a career, beginning with the earliest training," says Colin West, M.D., Ph.D., a physician-researcher at Mayo Clinic and senior author of the charter.

The charter, which is aimed at organizations, medical leaders and policymakers, calls for adequate support systems for physicians dealing with stress, overwork and [mental health issues](#). It promotes development of institutional and organizational changes ranging from re-engineering work schedules and personnel policies to providing wellness and counseling programs for physicians. The charter reflects many of the issues highlighted in over a decade of research on [burnout](#) conducted by Mayo researchers and collaborators.

"Physicians should not be alone in managing burnout. It is a responsibility shared between individuals and the organizations in which

they practice," says Dr. West. "Leaders must be engaged and responsive to these problems by creating a supportive culture that minimizes stigma and promotes a positive workplace."

Research shows that when burnout grows unchecked, organizations and careers will suffer. But patients can suffer most due to treatment errors and reduced physician availability.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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