

8 things that can put you at risk of burnout

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As a physician, you have a higher risk of burnout than your peers in other professions—in fact, nearly one-half of physicians say they feel burned out. Depending on your lifestyle, practice type and other factors, you may be at an even higher risk of developing burnout. Learn the risk factors, and what you can do to prevent burnout.

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According to a free online module, part of the AMA's STEPS Forward website, evidence shows stressed, burned-out physicians have:

- Lower patient satisfaction scores
- Higher rates of medical liability suits
- Increased likelihood of leaving the profession
- Tendency to make more medical errors
- Greater likelihood of exhibiting disruptive behaviors

Who is more likely to be burned out?

Physicians who feel high degrees of stress at work, often brought on by time pressure, lack of control, chaotic work environment or lack of values alignment with leadership, are at risk of burnout. Conversely even in high demand jobs, strong support in doing the work and significant control over the work can protect against burnout.

Physicians who experience the following factors are more likely to be burned out:

- Demanding workload
- Number of nights on call

- A partner who also is a physician
- Children to raise
- A medical error made recently
- Midway through their medical career
- Conflicts between work and home
- Less than 20 percent of their time is spent on the most meaningful aspects of work

Delve deeper into burnout risk factors with the seven signs of added stress that physicians should know.

For male physicians, the risk of suicide is up to three times the risk of suicide for non-physicians, according to a consensus statement on physician depression developed by experts on the subject. For female physicians, it's even worse—this risk increases up to five times.

What can physicians do?

There are two main strategies for combatting burnout: You can do so internally by improving your own resiliency. And you can do so externally by making changes at the practice level to improve efficiency and make time for the most important part of being a physician—caring for your patients.

The AMA's STEPS Forward series has two modules to help:

- A module how to improve physician resiliency. You'll learn how to start small and gradually increase your hardiness against stress, ultimately improving yourself and your practice.
- A module on how to prevent burnout in your practice. You'll read real-life ways physicians across the country improved patient satisfaction, quality outcomes, and clinician recruitment and retention.

The modules also offer continuing medical education credit.

Preventing physician burnout is a priority for the AMA's Professional Satisfaction and Practice Sustainability initiative, which aims to help physicians and their practices thrive so they can continue to put patients first. Stay tuned to *AMA Wire*® for more ways to improve your resiliency and prevent burnout in your practice.

Here's how to learn more

- Visit the STEPS Forward website to see the current modules.
- Check out upcoming live STEPS Forward events.

- Sign up to be notified when new modules and events are available.