

Battling doctor burnout? New app makes a game of learning to beat it

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Your smartphone can connect you to friends, family and increasingly your clinical practice. Now there's a physician app for your smartphone—the AMA's HealthBytes game—that will help you optimize your practice operations to reduce the risk of doctor burnout.

Committed to making physician burnout a thing of the past, the AMA has studied, and is currently addressing issues causing and fueling physician burnout—including time constraints, technology and regulations—to better understand and reduce the challenges physicians face. By focusing on factors causing burnout at the system-level, the AMA assesses an organization's well-being and offers guidance and targeted solutions to support physician well-being and satisfaction.

Within the app, play "Practice Master" to see whether you can improve the efficiency of a medical practice to maximize the experience for both patients and doctors. No matter how many times you play the game, you are bound to learn something new each time.

While physicians and their teams can play the HealthBytes game on their desktops, it is also available for download on the Apple and Google Play app stores.

From implementing team-based care to minimizing stress and reducing physician burnout, HealthBytes aims to educate doctors and their teams on how to improve practice efficiency. Here is how it works.

Follow a series of statistics

The game opens with several “did you know” statistics. This gives physicians and other health professionals with important information on burnout, as well as how this can affect the practice.

For example, after reviewing the high percentage of physicians who are burned out, the app shares that “High turnover is costly—\$500,000 to \$2 million per provider—and stressful for the providers that stay!”

As the game continues, players are introduced to why burnout matters to the health care system. That is because it can lead to:

- | Increased risk of medical errors.
- | Reduced empathy for patients.
- | Decreased medication adherence from patients.
- | Increased physician intent to leave the practice.

At any point during the introduction or game, you can skip to the next page. However, we recommend following through each step to better understand burnout and how to improve your practice.

Meet a doctor who needs help

Then it’s time to help a doctor in the office. Each time you play the game there will be a different doctor situation, which introduces different scenarios and problems to overcome.

One example is Steve Ronan, MD, who owns a busy practice. Like other physicians, Dr. Ronan is facing administrative challenges that increase his stress levels, which can lead to burnout. As part of the game, you will help him make some critical decisions to enhance operations within his practice to reduce burnout and improve patient care.

To help Dr. Ronan you will need to complete the following in his schedule:

- | Meet with the team.
- | Design my dream team.
- | Optimize documentation.
- | Patient visit: Ms. Lindsay Abrahams.
- | Create a well-being plan for myself and the team.

You only have four minutes to complete the game. For each question answered correctly, you will earn points. But don't worry if you are unsure of the answer, just select "Expert Advice" for a helpful hint.

At the end of the game, you can share your score, play again or complete further readings from AMA STEPS Forward™, open-access modules that offer innovative strategies to allow physicians and their staff to thrive in the new health care environment. These courses can help you prevent physician burnout, create the organizational foundation for joy in medicine, create a strong team culture and improve practice efficiency.

STEPS Forward is part of the AMA Ed Hub™, an online platform that brings together all the high-quality CME, maintenance of certification, and educational content you need—in one place—with activities relevant to you, automated credit tracking and reporting for some states and specialty boards.

Prior to the 2019 American Conference on Physician Health™(ACPH), the AMA will be hosting a practice transformation boot camp. The boot camp has been designed to focus on the fundamentals of effective change strategies and workflow interventions that improve practice efficiency and promote professional well-being. Physicians, care team members and other health system professionals are invited to register.

Registration for the AMA-led boot camp and the ACPH—a scientific conference co-sponsored by the AMA, Mayo Clinic and Stanford University—is now open. This year's theme for the ACPH is "Activating health system change to promote physician well-being."