

AMA honors 22 organizations' commitment to cutting doctor burnout

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Nearly two dozen health care organizations have earned recognition from the AMA for their outstanding efforts to address the systemic causes of physician burnout in areas such as assessment, leadership, teamwork and practice-environment efficiency.

There has been engagement with health system CEOs about the importance of doctor burnout and a business case made for investing in physician well-being, which resulted in the Charter on Physician Well-Being. Now comes the AMA's Joy in Medicine™ Recognition Program, which is designed to guide and inspire organizations committed to improving physician satisfaction and reducing burnout.

Part of the AMA's recently launched Practice Transformation Initiative, the Joy in Medicine Recognition Program serves as a road map to reduce burnout within health care organizations and unite the medical community on solutions that increase joy in the practice of medicine. Recognition is based on three levels of organizational achievement: bronze, silver and gold.

"Since 2013, the AMA has been leading the national conversation on physician burnout with innovative research and bold advocacy aimed at removing obstacles and burdens that contribute to symptoms of burnout in 44% of physicians," said AMA Board Chair Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH. "While AMA efforts to date have increased awareness of the physician burnout crisis at all levels and driven positive change, there is an immediate need for transformational solutions."

"Wide-spanning change in the health care delivery system needs to emphasize physician well-being as essential to achieving national health goals," Dr. Ehrenfeld added. "The Practice Transformation Initiative is positioned to lead the medical community to activate systematic change that will energize physician's in their life's work of caring for patients."

Organizations must meet five out of the six demonstrated competencies to be recognized in the bronze, silver or gold categories.

Commitment

Bronze: Organizations and practices are asked to sign the Charter on Physician Well-Being. A well-being committee should also be established.

Silver: A chief wellness officer is on the executive leadership team who reports directly to the CEO or dean. Struggling units and individuals should be identified while supporting interventions.

Gold: The organization or practice establishes a center for physician or workforce well-being.

Assessment

Bronze: Physician well-being should be assessed annually using a validated tool such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Mini-Z or similar validated tool.

Silver: Burnout results are reported to the board, along with a specified goal.

Gold: Costs of physician burnout are estimated annually and reported to the organization's leadership.

Leadership

Bronze: All unit leaders should receive annual assessments using the Mayo Leadership Index or similar instrument. Feedback should be shared with the leader.

Silver: A leader development program is available and includes training in transformational leadership, ability to foster productive work environment and guide physicians' careers. Professional coaching is also available to leaders who are in the bottom quartile for two consecutive years.

Gold: These organizations have department chiefs, or clinic chiefs, who are responsible for improving the well-being score in their area.

Efficiency of practice environment

Bronze: “Work outside of work” (WOW) is measured through electronic health record audit log data for select specialties.

Silver: WOW results are reported to the organization’s board and physicians. Local units are involved in root case analysis and development of intervention.

Gold: These organizations have reported their WOW results confidentially to the AMA.

Teamwork

Bronze: Teamwork is measured annually using AHRQ Teamwork, Safety Attitudes Questionnaire or a similar instrument for select specialties, such as general internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics and cardiology.

Silver: This is also measured in select specialties through an EHR audit. Results are reported to the organization’s board and physicians.

Gold: The teamwork results are reported confidentially to the AMA.

Support

Bronze: There is a peer support program that helps physicians dealing with adverse clinical events, such as second victim syndrome.

Silver: A peer support program provides help for distressed physicians.

Gold: These organizations or practices support opportunities for community building among physicians.

The organizations that received recognition in 2019 are:

- Ascension Medical Group, St. Louis
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston
- Boston Medical Center
- Cleveland Clinic
- Geisinger Health System
- Gould Medical Group, Modesto, California
- Heartland Health Centers, Chicago

- Icahn School of Medicine Mount Sinai, New York City
- Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota
- National Capital Region, Bethesda, Maryland
- Northwestern Medicine, Chicago
- Oak Street Health, Chicago
- Ochsner Health System, New Orleans
- Southern California Permanente Group, Pasadena
- St. Vincent Medical Group in Indiana
- Stanford Health Care, Palo Alto, California
- University of Colorado School of Medicine, Aurora
- University of North Carolina Health Care, Chapel Hill
- University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- University of Rochester Medical Center, Rochester, New York
- Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle
- Wake Forest Baptist Health/Wake Forest School of Medicine, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

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.

To apply for 2020 recognition, organizations will complete a self-assessment and attestation. An AMA-convened committee will review all applications and will award recognition status accordingly. The next round of attestations opens Dec. 1, for 2020. For more information on the Joy in Medicine Recognition Program, email practice.transformation@ama-assn.org.