New podcast explores ways to put the joy back in medical practice

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Timothy M. Smith
Senior News Writer

Joy in practice shouldn’t be an abstract notion to today's physicians; it should be present in every patient visit. Yet it’s all too common for doctors to struggle to find it amid the pressures of overbearing EHRs, excessive workloads and long-term financial pressures.

With the new AMA STEPS Forward™ podcast, doctors can hear health care leaders share how they overcame practice challenges by implementing real-world solutions that helped put the joy back into the practice of medicine. Episodes focus on areas such as relationship building, team-based care and crisis response.

Going back to the beginning

"I suggest that most teams start by looking at practice fundamentals,” said the AMA’s vice president of practice transformation, Christine Sinsky, MD, in the inaugural episode, which shares the origins of the AMA STEPS Forward initiative and how it supports organizations, physicians and care teams.

It’s all about practical tips, Dr. Sinsky noted.

“We estimate that most physicians in most practices can save three to five hours a day by re-engineering the way the work is done—that is, working smarter, not harder, and then by more strategically delegating the work to the team,” she said.

In one example, yet to be published, a care team member at Crusader Health, in Rockford, Illinois, shares how they got turned on to doing prescription management in a more efficient way. Within six months, the care team had saved between 30 and 60 minutes per physician per day simply by redesigning the way they managed prescription renewals.
Future episodes will also explore organizational culture, pre-visit labs and even the rooming process.

“When medical assistants or nurses have expanded rooming and discharge responsibilities, which they do according to establish protocols, it can do more for the patients,” Dr. Sinsky said. “They can close care gaps.”

The show is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify or whichever podcast-listening service you prefer. It is just one of the AMA podcasts offering compelling research, discussions, opinions and more on the latest in medicine and patient care.

Feedback is built in

One of the tools available from AMA STEPS Forward is a practice-assessment tool.

“It helps you reflect on what you're doing now and how that compares with what you could do,” Dr. Sinsky said.

AMA STEPS Forward is open to everyone for free. You don't have to be an AMA member or even be a physician to use it. Moreover, you don't need a username or a password. It is completely open access.

A variety of insights

The initial episodes explore a variety of pressing topics:

“Caring for the Health Care Workforce During Crisis.”

An interview with Tait D. Shanafelt, MD, chief wellness officer at Stanford Medicine, details what to do before, during and after a crisis to help workforces cope and even thrive. View the corresponding toolkit.
“Team-Based Care Model.”
Get insights from Kevin D. Hopkins, MD, medical director at Cleveland Clinic, about how the advanced team-based care model has yielded positive patient and practice outcomes. View the corresponding toolkit.

“What to Look for in Your First or Next Practice.”
Explore ways to maximize professional satisfaction and joy in medicine and reduce risk of burnout with Alexandra Ristow, MD, primary care physician at the James A. Haley Veteran Hospital, in Tampa, Florida. View the corresponding toolkit.

“Building Bridges Between Practicing Physicians and Administrators.”
Author Paul DeChant, MD, a coach to health care executives, discusses how to improve physician-administrator relationships and enhance engagement. View the corresponding toolkit.

“Scholars of Wellness.”
Interview with Gaurava Agarwal, MD, on training physicians to advance well-being with effective pilot interventions at a system level. View the corresponding toolkit.

AMA 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.

Podcasts are just the beginning. The AMA STEPS Forward open-access toolkits offer innovative strategies that 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 and improve practice efficiency.

Learn more about practice-innovation strategies and AMA CME accreditation.