

3 health organizations get nearly \$8 million to fight burnout

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As the COVID-19 pandemic enters its third year, physicians and other front-line health professionals need to have burnout in the profession addressed now more than ever.

While the AMA remains steadfastly committed to addressing physician burnout, the federal government recently announced grants that will boost efforts to reduce occupational distress and enhance professional satisfaction.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is awarding 45 health care organizations a combined \$103 million over the next three years to reduce burnout and promote mental health in the workforce.

It's an important part of a multipronged and collaborative strategy needed across the U.S. health system to help organizations foster a culture of well-being among physicians and other health professionals. The HRSA awards—in addition to helping establish a culture of well-being—aim to help support training efforts that build resiliency for those beginning careers in health care.

Three organizations the AMA has worked with closely to improve physician well-being are among the grant recipients. Those organizations are slated to receive nearly \$8 million over the next three years.

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Located in New York City, Icahn School of Medicine will receive \$2.1 million for a health and public safety workforce resiliency training program that supports tailored evidence-informed training development within the health profession. The curriculum aims to help reduce burnout and promote resilience among medical students, residents, and other health professionals according to HRSA.

Jonathan Ripp, MD, chief wellness officer at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, is the co-chair of the Collaborative for Healing and Renewal in Medicine (CHARM), a group of experts on

physician burnout from leading medical centers and organizations, including the AMA. CHARM created the Charter on Physician Well-Being, a way for health systems, organizations and individual physicians to pledge to tackle burnout.

Signing on to the CHARM charter is also a criteria step for the AMA Joy in Medicine™ Health System Recognition Program, which provides a road map for health system leaders to implement programs and policies that support physician well-being.

Additionally, early in the pandemic, Mount Sinai enhanced existing—and created new—resources to provide ongoing support for things such as food and supportive counseling for those on the front lines of COVID-19.

The Johns Hopkins University

Through HRSA, Johns Hopkins in Baltimore will receive nearly \$2.8 million in grants over the three years to help promote resilience and mental health among health professionals there. The grant will help improve or expand evidence-informed programs and practices to promote mental health and well-being among the health workforce, including their employees, according to HRSA.

Pre-pandemic, Johns Hopkins identified a need for more wellness programming and followed the nine organizational strategies to reduce burnout that are outlined in an AMA STEPS Forward™ toolkit, “Creating the Organizational Foundation for Joy in Medicine.”

Johns Hopkins also helped physicians cope with moral distress during COVID-19 as physicians were sometimes forced to ration limited resources or postpone preventative care.

Learn more about Johns Hopkins’ moral resilience rounds by exploring the AMA STEPS Forward success story, “Virtual Gatherings Build Moral Resilience During Crisis.”

Ochsner Clinic Foundation

As part of the HRSA grants, Ochsner Clinic Foundation in New Orleans will be awarded \$2.9 million over the next three years to promote resilience and mental health among health care professionals.

When the pandemic hit, Ochsner—an AMA Health System Program member—quickly shifted focus to meet the changing needs of physicians and other health professionals. But Ochsner’s vision for a chief wellness officer predated the pandemic. In 2017, Nigel Girgrah, MD, PhD, a transplant hepatologist and medical director of the Ochsner Multi-Organ Transplant Institute, led a well-being task force. He

now serves as Ochsner Health's chief wellness officer.

With this grant, Dr. Girgrah and his team are determined to help physicians and other health professionals stay engaged, reclaim joy, and find harmony by implementing training and strategies ahead of what they initially planned.

The AMA has also worked with other organizations receiving grants. Over three years, Kansas City University in Missouri will be awarded nearly \$1.6 million, Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond will receive nearly \$1.5 million and the American Academy of Family Physicians will be awarded \$2.2 million.