Survey finds about 63% of physicians experienced burnout in 2021, up from 38% in 2020

Healthcare Dive (9/15, Muchmore) reports, “About 63% of physicians surveyed experienced at least one manifestation of burnout in 2021, shooting up from 38% in 2020 and representing the highest amount in a decade of recurring survey findings, according to an article published... in Mayo Clinic Proceedings.” The “mean scores for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were higher in 2021 while satisfaction with work-life balance dropped,” while “depression scores were relatively stable, ‘suggesting the increase in physician distress in this interval was primarily due to increased work-related distress,’ the authors wrote.” These “findings suggest that women have been more affected by burnout during COVID-19, the authors said, also noting the results come against a backdrop of other stressors like gun violence, economic concerns and child care hurdles.”

Health Exec (9/15, Baxter) reports the survey study was “conducted by researchers from the American Medical Association (AMA), Mayo Clinic and Stanford Medicine.” AMA President Jack Resneck Jr., M.D., said in a statement, “While the worst days of COVID-19 pandemic are hopefully behind us, there is an urgent need to attend to physicians who put everything into our nation’s response to COVID-19, too often at the expense of their own well-being. ... The sober findings from the new research demand urgent action as outlined in the AMA’s Recovery Plan for America’s Physicians, which focuses on supporting physicians, removing obstacles and burdens that interfere with patient care, and prioritizing physician well-being as essential requirements to achieving national health goals.”

Editor’s note: Since 2013, the AMA has spurred a movement to fight the causes of burnout and provide relief for physicians who too often have been told to rely on reducing stress. Learn more.
Health care organizations ask Senate to solidify expanded telehealth access for next two years

mHealth Intelligence (9/14, Melchionna) reports, “Signed by 375 stakeholders and co-led by the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) and its advocacy arm ATA Action, a letter [PDF] to the U.S. Senate asks that expanded telehealth access be solidified for the next two years while working toward a permanent extension of the flexibilities and waivers currently in place.” These “flexibilities include removing in-person requirements for telemental health and restrictions on location.”

Healthcare Dive (9/14, Pifer) reports, “The letter asks the Senate to extend telehealth flexibilities for both Medicare and commercial market patients, including...allowing [physicians] to continue prescribing controlled substances via virtual care.” The American Medical Association was among the signatories.

Editor’s note: The AMA is leading the charge to aggressively expand telehealth advocacy, research and resources so physicians can adapt their practices and get paid equitably while maintaining patient access to care. Learn more.

USPSTF finds lack of evidence to screen asymptomatic children, adolescents for type 2 diabetes

Reuters (9/13, Steenhuysen) reports the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) “found a lack of evidence for” the screening of “asymptomatic children and adolescents for type 2 diabetes and prediabetes,” even “as the proportion of U.S. youths with type 2 diabetes has doubled since 2001.” Findings from the task force’s systemic review of literature “found that while there is plenty of evidence to support screening adults for type 2 diabetes, there was not enough to make a similar recommendation for asymptomatic youth, the group wrote” in its final recommendation statement. The statement and the evidence report were published in JAMA.

MedPage Today (9/13, Monaco) reports the authors wrote, “(T)here is inadequate evidence that screening and early intervention lead to improvements in health outcomes such as renal impairment, cardiovascular morbidity, mortality, and quality of life.” MedPage Today adds, “This ‘I’ grade recommendation only applies to asymptomatic, nonpregnant individuals under the age of 18.”

Biden gives renewed boost to “cancer moonshot” initiative
The Washington Post (9/12, Wootson Jr., McGinley, Viser) reports, “Leaning into the symbolism of President John F. Kennedy’s aspirational effort to send a man to the moon, President Biden on Monday sought to give a renewed boost to his own ‘cancer moonshot’ initiative, aimed at cutting the U.S. death toll from the disease in half over the next 25 years.” The President “delivered the speech on the 60th anniversary of Kennedy’s moonshot speech, speaking from the late president’s museum and library.” But, “the anti-cancer effort...has faced setbacks and struggles under his administration, and researchers hoped the presidential infusion of energy would set it on a better trajectory.”

Reuters (9/12, Hunnicutt, Bose) reports that Biden also “signed orders on Monday to push more government dollars to the U.S. biotechnology industry.” Biden “said research could spark medical breakthroughs, including a vaccine to prevent cancer, or a blood test that could detect cancer in an annual physical.”

Simple lifestyle changes may reduce risk for CV events, deaths for millions of adults

Healio (9/9, Schaffer) reported, “Widespread adoption of simple lifestyle changes, including switching to” the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension diet, “could reduce risk for CV events and death for millions of adults with stage 1 hypertension,” researchers concluded in findings presented at the annual Hypertension Scientific Sessions hosted by the American Heart Association. The study revealed that “27,000 CVD events and 2,800 deaths could be prevented during the next 10 years if people with elevated BP follow through with recommended lifestyle changes.”