

## Health System Member Program Case Study

Learn how Lehigh Valley Health Network—now part of Jefferson Health—launched a listening campaign to hear directly from physicians what they needed to move the needle on well-being.

### SUMMARY

Surveys are useful for identifying broad trends and areas of concern, but they often miss the personal stories and deeper context that drive meaningful change. To truly understand and address physician challenges, there must be a structured yet practical way for physicians to share their stressors and suggest improvements, ensuring they feel genuinely heard. That is why Lehigh Valley Health Network launched a [listening campaign](#)—to create space for authentic dialogue and amplify the physician voice in a meaningful way.

### OVERVIEW

When attesting to the bronze level of the 2024 [AMA Joy in Medicine® Health System Recognition Program](#), Amy Jibilian, MD, became aware of the importance of hearing from Lehigh Valley Health Network's physicians. There was a critical need to solicit honest feedback from physicians about what is going well in their work environment, but more importantly, what systemic factors are negatively impacting their day-to-day work experience.

"It is so important to hear from physicians who are on the front lines, in the trenches, doing the direct patient care. We need to know what their needs are, identify the system-level obstacles they are facing that get in their way of providing excellent patient care, and provide an opportunity for physicians to propose solutions," said Dr. Jibilian. "It is vital for physicians to feel that their voice is heard, and it is essential for leaders to understand what their physicians are experiencing on a daily basis so they can make effective decisions to support high quality patient care and support the well-being of their workforce."

### CHOOSING THE AMA

When it comes to working with the AMA, that was a no-brainer to Dr. Jibilian. The credibility the AMA brings to this vital work is important, she said. But in addition, "the individuals who work for the AMA, the AMA STEPS Forward® toolkits, the AMA Insight Network programs, as well as all the workshops, podcasts and road maps are all tools that are incredibly helpful."

"We don't have to reinvent the wheel," she said. "The other thing is, everyone I have worked with at the AMA has been so encouraging to me on a personal level, and that is priceless to me in my job as chief wellness officer."

### RESULTS

"What we realized was the listening campaign was very structured and planned out. The toolkit mapped out everything we needed to do," Dr. Jibilian said. "It created a different venue and forum that provided more psychological safety, as well."

This was "huge, because prior to this—and historically—what a lot of groups do is have a town hall or other meeting where you can speak to your leader," she said. "What was happening was leaders were doing this over and over again, but physicians and nonphysician providers weren't saying anything."

As a result, department chairs and physicians-in-chief would get frustrated because no one would say anything.

"What we realized was that people were afraid to speak up in these forums," said Dr. Jibilian. "The format for a listening session is different because it is run by someone other than a direct leader and that changes the dynamic and provides more psychological safety."

The format was very successful and led to "people opening up and talking," she said. "It was imperative that we had the senior leadership be engaged and promote the listening sessions, but they were willing to let us lead and facilitate the conversations."

"People were much freer to share their true thoughts and feelings," Dr. Jibilian added.

#### Visit every department

The listening campaign was launched in 2024 and started with pediatrics, where four sessions were held. From those listening sessions, a wish list was created to identify the top pain points pediatricians were experiencing.

"One wish that pediatricians had was in-basket optimization," said Dr. Jibilian. Once that was identified, "a task force was created, and they met three times to discuss this need further. We had several action items that came out of that and many were implemented."

"We also had listening sessions in the emergency medicine department and our neuroscience institute," she said, noting "we have listening sessions for family medicine and pediatric specialties in the planning phase."

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Beyond in-basket optimization, another pain point that has come up in the listening sessions has been scheduling, “feeling that we’ve lost autonomy and control in our schedule,” Dr. Jibilian said. “Other pain points are not enough staff to do the work and that we need more staff and more physicians,” which is an ongoing focus area.

Additionally, the emergency department completed five listening sessions because geographically it is spread out, but a lot of the recurring topics included scheduling and support staff concerns, she said. “A big one in the emergency department was also workplace violence.”

“We have really taken to heart addressing workplace violence. We have a workplace violence prevention team at LVHN, and we actually just hired two canine employees that are weapons detection dogs,” Dr. Jibilian said. “There’s a lot of work being done to mitigate workplace violence.”

### **Keep the feedback loop open**

“When you have a listening session and you get information—just like with everything else—that needs to go to the people who are in a position of power to make things happen,” said Dr. Jibilian. “Somebody needs to take action and then that needs to come back to the constituents.”

“If you do not do that, we’re all at fault and people will question why they are even sharing their feedback during these sessions,” she said. “And then they get more and more disengaged.”

“It is key to communicate this information to leaders in a way that will promote interest and engagement. Perhaps the most challenging part of a listening campaign is to bridge the gap between front line workers and leadership and promote connection and collaboration,” Dr. Jibilian said.

## **RECOGNITION**

“Just having the AMA Joy in Medicine program and that very well-defined road map is super helpful because the AMA is a national organization who’s known for their work, so there’s a lot of credibility,” Dr. Jibilian said, noting that she went to leadership with this information and noted that “this is what the AMA is asking us to do to be recognized.”

Applying for recognition from the program—regardless of what level Lehigh Valley Health Network received—was important to do “because this is going to help us attract talent and retain people,” she said. That in itself is just huge because of the credibility of the AMA that helps move the work forward at my health care organization.”

## **CONCLUSION**

“The listening campaign is an excellent tool. We have seen it be helpful at Lehigh Valley Health Network and it’s really critical for health care organizations to listen to the people who are really enmeshed in the work,” said Dr. Jibilian. “If we don’t have a good pipeline for that, what will continue to happen is leaders will make decisions based on what they know and what’s important to them.”

“If we don’t have this information in front of them, decisions will be made without this information. It is incumbent upon us to continue to do this work,” she said. “We have to do the hard work and keep knocking on the door.”

**Let’s discuss how we can tailor solutions  
to maximize support for your physicians.**

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