Physician well-being and burnout

- Physicians must balance demanding clinical workloads with career development goals and life outside of work. Difficulty doing so may lead to burnout.
- Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and decreased efficiency at work.
- Burnout symptoms are common among physicians and have serious ramifications for doctors and their patients.

The costs of burnout

- Extensive evidence indicates that physician burnout has both personal and professional consequences.¹,²
- A lack of awareness regarding the economic costs of physician burnout and the uncertainty regarding what institutions can do to address the problem are barriers to many organizations implementing actions.
- The business case to address physician burnout is multifaceted and includes costs associated with physician turnover, decreased revenue associated with decreased productivity, lower quality of care, and decreased patient safety.²

Coaching as an intervention

- Leadership, conflict management, and other skills can improve medical outcomes, reduce stress at work, and increase career satisfaction.
- Coaching is a one-on-one intervention between a coach and individual that is systemic, collaborative, future-focused, goal-focused, and is meant to help one attain valued professional or personal development outcomes.
- Coaching can focus on leadership development, career development, and achieving health goals.

Effect of professional coaching intervention on the well-being of physicians

- A randomized pilot study at the Mayo Clinic by Liselotte et al.³ explored the effect of individualized coaching on the well-being of 88 physicians. A total of 6 coaching sessions were conducted and burnout, quality of life, resilience, job satisfaction, engagement, and meaning of work were measured using established metrics.
- Among these 88 physicians, emotional exhaustion decreased in the intervention group compared to an increase in the control group; absolute rates of high emotional exhaustion at 5 months decreased in intervention group compared to an increase in control group; quality of life improved in the intervention group compared to the control group, and resilience scores improved in the intervention group compared to the control group.

How to find and engage a coach

- Consult your hospital’s office of physician or faculty development. There are often pre-identified coaches.
- Ask a colleague! Your coworkers may already be using coaches who can be recommended.
- Remember CME! Many coaches offer CME credits and can be paid with educational funds.
- Many options are available through internet search and coaches often offer free introductory calls to ensure a good fit.

References