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The Physicians Foundation Annual Report 2021

Letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer

Because of the continued challenges wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was another year where physicians were tested to the breaking point. Once again, physicians served as the foundation of our health system, providing high-quality, cost-efficient care for patients despite a myriad of obstacles.

With this in mind, the Physicians Foundation sought to provide timely and relevant support to physicians and advocate for them in the current landscape. To measure the impact of the pandemic on physicians since March 2020, the Foundation released the [2021 Survey of America's Physicians, COVID-19 Impact Edition: A Year Later](#), which found that 8 in 10 physicians were impacted as a result of the pandemic.

The survey also found that sixty-one percent of physicians report often experiencing feelings of burnout, showing a significant increase since 2018, and that more than half have felt inappropriate feelings of anger, tearfulness or anxiety because of COVID-19. Despite the prevalence of these feelings, only 14% of physicians sought medical attention for their mental health. When left untreated, burnout can cause more cases of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance use, and lead to suicidal thoughts for physicians, directly impacting physician suicide rates. While physician suicide rates were increasing long before COVID-19, the demands of the pandemic created a sense of urgency to better support physicians' mental health.

This is exactly why we expanded "Vital Signs: The Campaign to Prevent Physician Suicide." Through collaboration with the Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation and #FirstRespondersFirst, we launched NPSADay.org in conjunction with National Physician Suicide Awareness Day to be a reminder and call to action to prevent physician suicide.

The NPSA Day 2021 website tools and resources sought to help physicians build their resilience and promote positive mental health while also supporting health organizations in evidence-based practices to prioritize their physician workforce's wellbeing. The website was centered around six actions organizations and individuals (physicians, their loved ones and their colleagues) can take: learn the vital signs, share suicide prevention resources, prepare before a moment of crisis, check in with a physician, understand structural barriers to mental health and create a culture of wellbeing.

The Foundation has also continued to serve as a leader in addressing social drivers of health (SDOH) to improve overall health outcomes. In 2021, the Foundation released the [Improving America's Health Care System: Recognize the Realities of Patients' Lives and Invest in Addressing Social Drivers of Health](#), which outlines principles and recommendations surrounding SDOH. Thanks to over a decade of Foundation efforts involving research, education and pilot programs centered on the impact of SDOH, the Physicians Foundation also developed and submitted SDOH-focused measures for consideration by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for the very first time. These measures, focused on screening patients for food insecurity, housing instability, transportation, utility needs and interpersonal safety, would be the first federal SDOH measures in the history of the U.S. health system.

In 2021, we supported the publication and promotion of credible research through [The Physicians Foundation Center for the Study of Physician Practice and Leadership at Weill Cornell Medicine](#), including providing groundbreaking data on the [impact of social drivers of health](#) on physician's practices as well as the impact of the changing environment of practice ownership on independent practices and their patients. The Foundation also continued grantmaking efforts on physician wellbeing, with the announcement of the second cohort of the [Women's Wellness through Equity and Leadership program](#) and the continuation of the Practice Transformation Initiative, and physician leadership, including through the release of [The Telehealth Initiative's](#) cohort one outcomes and expansion of the corresponding resource library. Additionally, The Foundation held educational briefings for its board members with leaders of organizations such as the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform, Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation, Gephardt Government Affairs, Leavitt Partners and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

In 2022, the Foundation will build on these efforts, including surveying physicians across the country to have their perspectives inform our future initiatives on social drivers of health, physician wellbeing and physician leadership. These timely insights will be foundational in how we educate on policies and programs that can improve our health care system—ultimately improving care for all Americans.

Though the pandemic continues, we are hopeful for the future of the medical profession. The Physicians Foundation will continue to support physicians and empower them to take a leadership role in shaping the future of our health care system. The U.S. health care system continues to evolve, and we must not shy away from the opportunity to change it for the better, for physicians and for patients, by improving physician wellbeing, addressing the social drivers of health and lifting the perspectives of physicians.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment.



Gary Price, MD, FACS, President



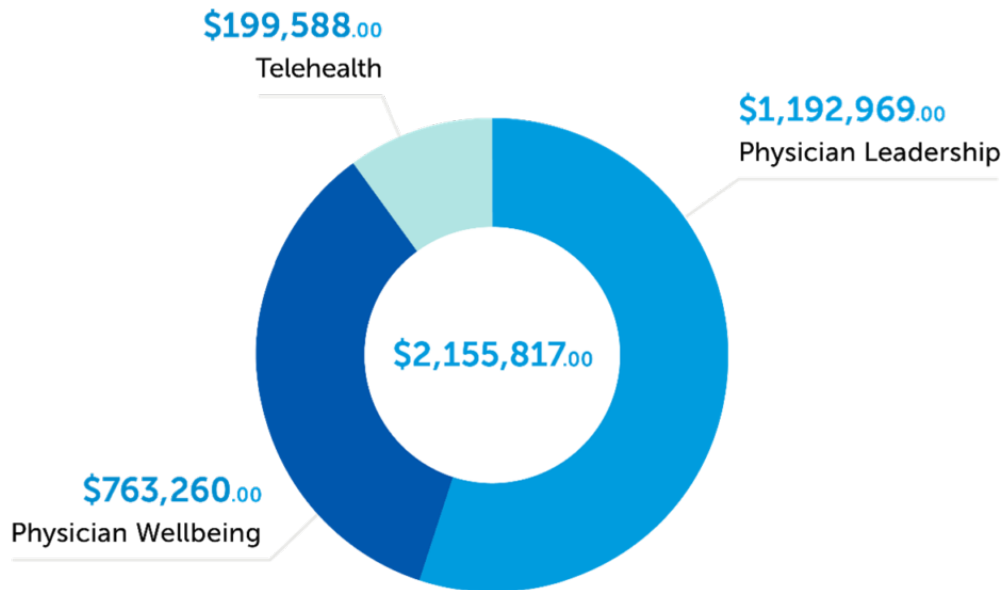
Robert Seligson, Chief Executive Officer

Organizational Expenditures

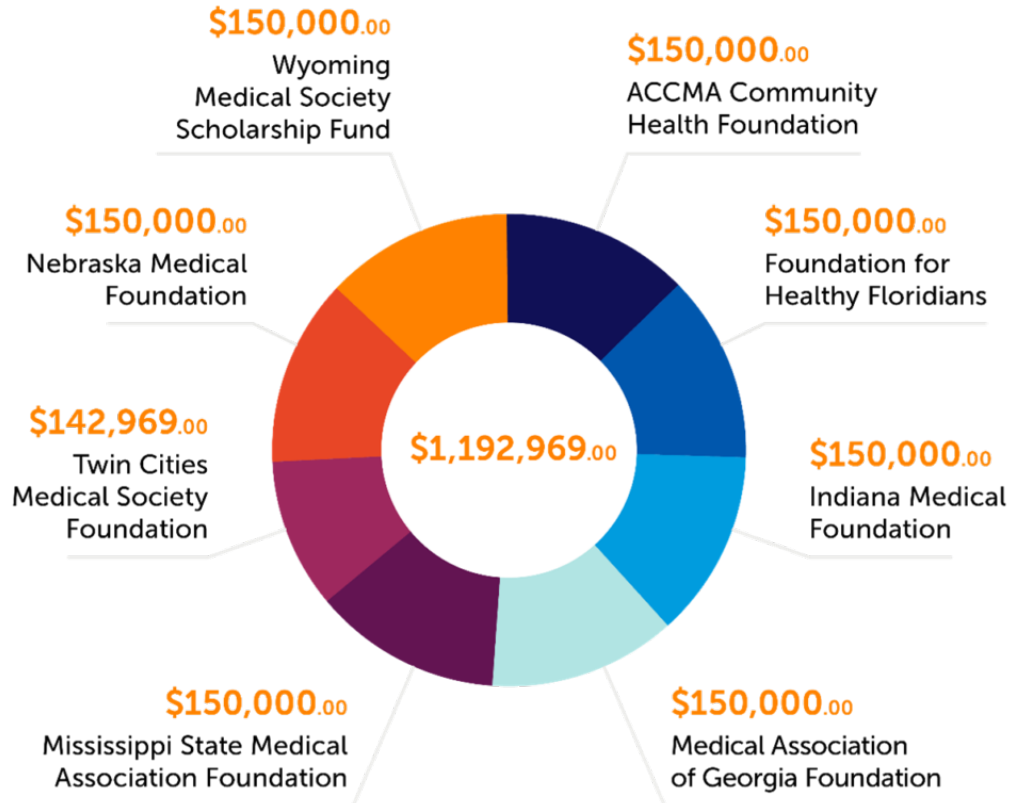
In 2021, the Foundation's grant and programmatic expenses amounted to 83% of total expenses compared to 17% for administrative expenses. The Foundation invested approximately \$2.1 million to advance physician leadership and protect physicians' wellbeing, assert physicians as thought leaders on health care reform, the social drivers of health, practice models/reform and other topics affecting physicians' wellbeing and the physician-patient relationship.

Our grants program continued to foster leadership skills and improve wellbeing among America's physicians. We invested nearly \$1.2 million to support physician leadership and around \$760,000 to support physician wellbeing.

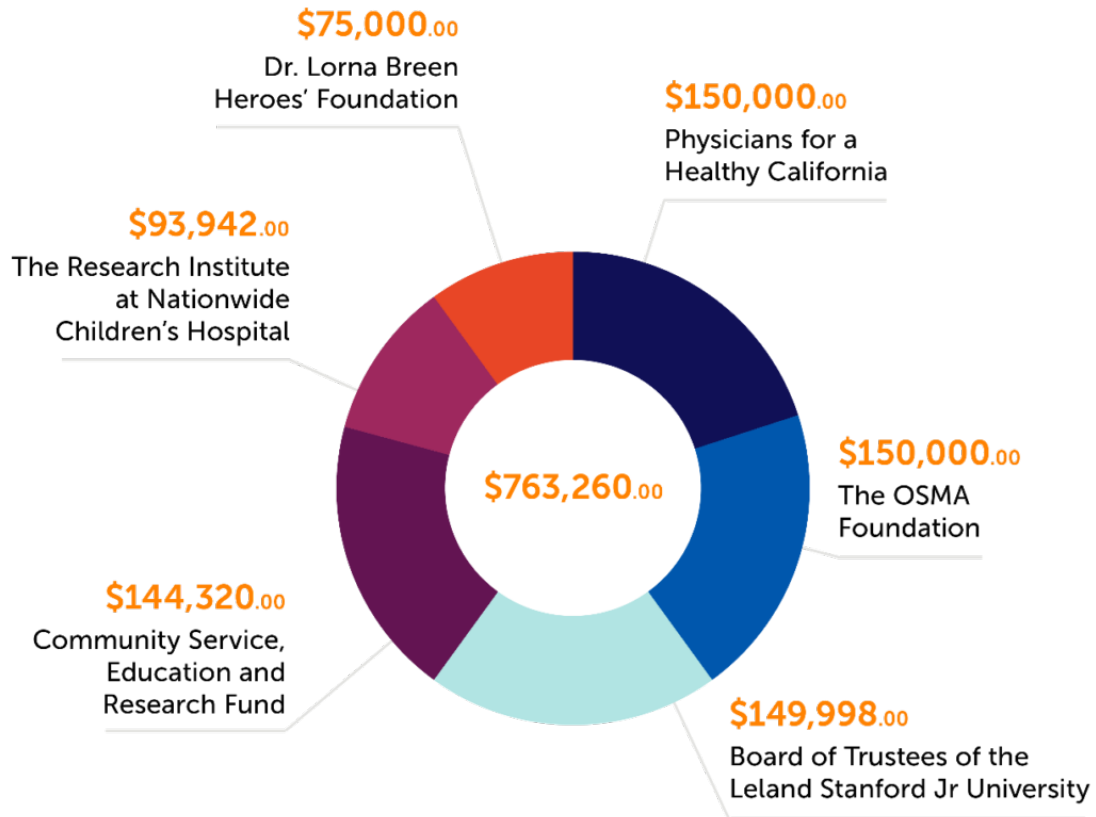
GRANTS OVERVIEW



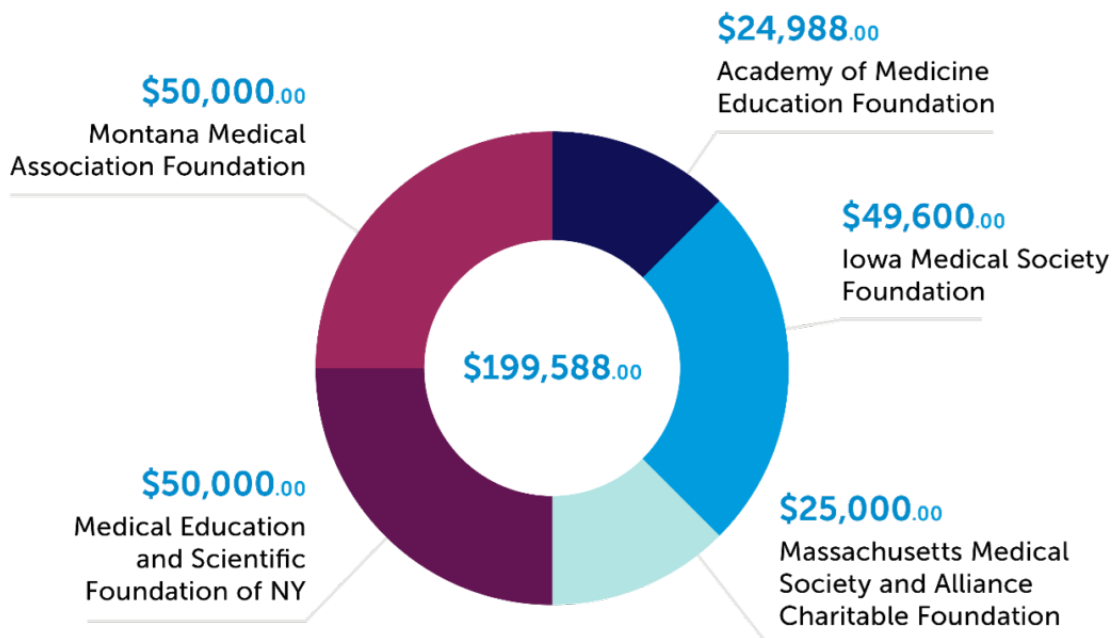
PHYSICIAN LEADERSHIP GRANTS



PHYSICIAN WELLBEING GRANTS



TELEHEALTH GRANTS



Foundation Financials

To accomplish our strategic goals, the Foundation practices financial stewardship with the utmost care. The Finance Committee of the Foundation meets on a bi-monthly basis by phone and/or in person to ensure the financial solvency and future strength of the organization. For more than fifteen years, the base endowment has remained steady, while annually supporting innovative grantmaking and research programs.

FOUNDATION NET ASSETS

