



E-Newsletter - July 2016

President's Corner



Any practicing physician in the trenches of our increasingly regulated U.S. healthcare system is not surprised to hear physicians are suffering burnout and job dissatisfaction in greater numbers than ever before.

According to healthcare writer Bruce Japsen, the number of U.S. physicians who say they are suffering from burnout has jumped to more than half of all doctors as the practice of medicine becomes more complicated. He was referring to a study from researchers at the Mayo Clinic and the American Medical Association of 7,000 physicians over the span of three years.

The report went on to say that "American medicine appears to be at a tipping point with more than half of U.S. physicians experiencing professional burnout." While the study didn't specifically address the Affordable Care Act or other regulations which continue to burden physicians, it did acknowledge that they are facing a rapidly "changing landscape of medicine." With more Americans having health insurance, there is an increasing demand for physician services that has crowded physicians' schedules, one factor that leads to burnout.

The experience of many practicing physicians has become that of an administrator or data technician. This is demoralizing for those who first and foremost went into medicine to help patients, especially as today's increased demands directly cut into physician / patient face-time.

Following this trend, and others like it, is a key part of the Foundation's mission to empower physicians and support physician practice. We continue to sponsor independent research to assess the environments in which physicians operate, and we participate in relevant forums to generate awareness about the issue.

In the next quarter, the physicians' perspectives captured in our upcoming biennial physician survey will offer a powerful and timely opportunity to evaluate the state of the current medical landscape. Through this research we hope to amplify the voices of physicians relative to the most pressing issues facing our nation in the delivery of healthcare.

Read an [extended version of this article](#) posted to [the Physicians Foundation Forbes channel](#).

Grant Spotlight

The Foundation continues to provide grants that assist physicians in sustaining and advancing their medical practices, support the delivery of quality patient care and improve the healthcare system in America. The Foundation has awarded more than \$40 million in grants since the launch of its grantmaking program in 2005, supporting programs related to physician leadership, physician practice trends, physician shortage and health information technology (HIT).

Through a recent grant from the Physicians Foundation, the Indiana Medical Foundation developed a business leadership program specifically for physicians. Sandra Miller, Director of Practice Management for the Indiana State Medical Association (ISMA), discussed the partnership with Butler University and how it is helping physicians acquire business acumen on our [Grantee Perspective page](#).

Leadership and business are not a typical part of medical school curriculum nor medical residencies. Physicians, whether in private practice or employed, must better understand Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, IT systems, budgeting and contract negotiations in terms of cost reductions and efficiencies. Recognizing the need for physicians to hone their management skills, the Indiana Medical Foundation partnered with Butler University's Executive Education Department to provide executive-level leadership and business acumen programming to Indiana physicians. The goal is to offer live courses in 2016 and 2017.

Healthcare is a business which demands leaders who can find innovative ways to deliver quality care more affordably and efficiently while reducing costs. Through the Physicians Foundation support, the Indiana Medical Foundation will build a program to empower physicians to make more informed decisions, allowing their practices or organizations to compete and evolve in an environment of constant regulatory and payment changes.

Click [here](#) to view the full Q&A with Sandra Miller, Director of Practice Management for the Indiana State Medical Association.

For more information on applying for grants or the portfolio of grants the Foundation has previously awarded, visit Physiciansfoundation.org/healthcare-grants.

Focus On: Patient Survey

As physicians, our duty is to provide patients with the best possible medical care. However, our impact is limited if patients cannot afford a doctor's visit, or follow a prescribed treatment plan.

Our [2016 survey of patients](#) revealed that a significant majority of individuals are happy with their physicians. However, out-of-pocket costs and insurance issues are creating an ever-growing financial burden, which threatens consumer access to adequate healthcare. The impact of increased costs is tangible:

- 48 percent of patients are not confident they could afford healthcare in the event of a serious illness
- One-third of patients have medical-related debt
- One-quarter of patients indicated that they skipped a physician-recommended medical test, treatment or follow-up or failed to see a doctor, despite experiencing a medical concern
- 27 percent said they were unable to fill a prescription due to financial strain

Despite the pressures patients face, the doctor / patient relationship continues to thrive, with nine out of ten survey participants reporting that they are satisfied with their primary care physician. Patients overwhelmingly expressed that their doctors were respectful, successful communicators, excellent listeners and knowledgeable of patient history.

The Physicians Foundation is committed to helping physicians continue to deliver patient-centered medical care. The Foundation funds research and grants to better understand the medical landscape and protect patient care in a time of growing medical costs.

The insights garnered from this patient survey will provide a useful counterpart to the Foundation's upcoming biennial physician survey, which will be released later this fall.

Click [here](#) to view the findings from the full patient survey.

In The News

The Physicians Foundation continues to be a leading voice for physicians. Below are recent articles featuring commentary from Foundation Board members or highlights of Foundation research.



[New York Times: The Doctor-Patient Relationship Is Alive and Well \(June 14, 2016\)](#)

It's been a rocky decade for medicine, but this article highlights that more than 90 percent of patients were satisfied with the relationship with their primary care doctor according to the Foundation's 2016 patient survey.



[Healthline: People Skipping Medications, Treatment Due to Cost \(June 9, 2016\)](#)

Board member Dr. Hollister shares the key facts from the 2016 patient survey, along with personal anecdotes related to his experience serving directly as a primary care physician.



[Medical Economics: What Single-Payer Healthcare Would Mean to Doctors \(May16, 2016\)](#)

Medical Economics cites the 2014 biennial physician survey when discussing the impact of a single-payer healthcare system on physicians.

Upcoming Events: Direct Primary Care Conference

The [Direct Primary Care Conference](#) will share everything you need to know about setting up and running a Direct Primary Care practice. Start-up basics and challenges as well as advanced practice strategies for established practices will be discussed. An attendee should be able to hit the ground running after attending this two-day, 12-hour, free continuing medical educational event in Dallas October 14 and 15, 2016. The conference is offered by [Docs 4 Patient Care Foundation](#), supported by the [Texas Medical Association](#) and made possible by a generous grant from [The Physicians Foundation](#).