

# CLINICIAN BURNOUT: A Crisis in Health Care

## WHAT IS CLINICIAN BURNOUT?

Clinician burnout is a serious U.S. public health concern. Mounting health care system pressures are contributing to burnout, which threatens the health, safety, and well-being of the individual clinician, patients, and society at large.

Burnout is characterized by:

- High emotional exhaustion
- High depersonalization (i.e., cynicism)
- Low sense of personal accomplishment from work

ALL CLINICAL PROFESSIONALS ARE AT RISK OF BURNOUT.

**35–54%** nurses and physicians

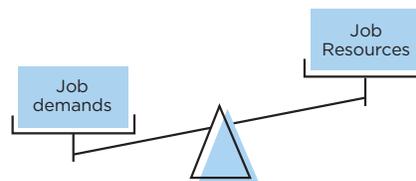
**45–60%** medical students and residents

in the United States have substantial symptoms of burnout.

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS CAN ADDRESS BURNOUT BY PRIORITIZING ACTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THAT SUPPORT CLINICIAN WELL-BEING.

## CAUSES

Clinicians as well as residents and students (learners) may experience burnout when there is an imbalance of their job demands and the available supportive resources in the organization.



PHYSICIANS WITH BURNOUT ARE AT LEAST:

- 2x** more likely to leave their job
- 5x** more likely to leave medicine altogether

## CONSEQUENCES

There are many consequences of burnout:

CLINICIANS AND LEARNERS	HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Occupational injury</li><li>▪ Problematic alcohol use</li><li>▪ Risk of depression and suicide</li><li>▪ Career regret</li><li>▪ Suboptimal professional development</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Fewer available staff (absenteeism and turnover)</li><li>▪ Lower morale and productivity</li><li>▪ Presenteeism (working while sick)</li><li>▪ Threat to organizational reputation</li></ul>

BURNOUT LOWERS PATIENT CARE QUALITY:

- Resulting staffing challenges decrease patients' access to care.
- High workloads, administrative burdens, and poorly designed technologies divert clinicians' time away from patient care.
- Workplace ethical dilemmas can erode clinician professionalism.
- Barriers to patient-clinician communication adversely affect patient satisfaction and health outcomes.
- Safety incidents, medical errors, and malpractice claims are more likely.

**\$4.6 BILLION**

Estimated societal costs attributable to burnout in the United States each year.

## NEEDED ACTION

Addressing burnout requires designing clinical systems that prioritize clinician well-being. Leaders in public and private health care organizations and health professions educational organizations have a responsibility to ensure that policies and processes affecting clinicians and learners do not contribute to the burnout problem.

To learn more and download a free copy of the full report, please visit [nam.edu/ClinicianWellBeingStudy](http://nam.edu/ClinicianWellBeingStudy)

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PATIENTS AND CLINICIANS DEPEND ON IMPROVING HEALTH SYSTEMS BY DECREASING WORKPLACE STRESS AND INCREASING SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL HEALTH CARE WORKERS.



NATIONAL ACADEMY of MEDICINE

The National Academies of

SCIENCES ENGINEERING MEDICINE