Sponsored jointly by Stanford Medicine, the American Medical Association and Mayo Clinic, the fourth American Conference on Physician Health took place Oct. 11–13, 2023, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert, Calif.

The conference, which attracted more than 600 attendees from across the country, brought physicians, researchers, and other health care leaders and influencers together for three days of dynamic learning, shared knowledge and actionable insights. Attendees participated in interactive workshops, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and oral and poster presentations focused on creating and sustaining collaborative and satisfying work environments.
The event
Focusing on the timely theme of "Building the workplace of the future," the 2023 American Conference on Physician Health was a great success. Its record attendance further underscores the continued need for a conference focused on how to improve physician well-being. The conference showcased abstracts on the latest research on effective burnout reduction tactics and offered concrete strategies to help individuals and organizations build the type of infrastructure that optimizes physician performance and satisfaction.

Program overview and key findings
For its 622 attendees from around the nation, the 2023 American Conference on Physician Health provided a multitude of opportunities for physicians and researchers to learn, discuss, network and broaden their horizons. Through oral presentations, keynotes, poster and plenary sessions, an abundance of actionable insights, relevant information and inspiring perspectives were shared with a highly engaged audience. Judging from the physician attendee feedback (see page 5, "Testimonials and comments"), the conference scored a direct hit—both in meeting expectations and in advancing the discussion.

The event provided a forum for clinicians and researchers to present recent research findings, innovative methods and educational programs around physicians’ professional well-being in the following areas of physician health:

1. EHR
2. Interventions for the individual
3. Local work unit
4. Organizational level
5. External factors
Host organizations
The 2023 American Conference on Physician Health was sponsored jointly by Stanford Medicine, the American Medical Association and Mayo Clinic.

Sponsor and exhibitors
Thank you to our premier supporter:

Thank you to our silver supporter:

We’d also like to thank the many exhibitors who helped support the conference and further the message and practice of physician health:

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<th>Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation</th>
<th>Healing Breaths</th>
<th>Pause and Presence LLC</th>
<th>Prospology</th>
<th>The Well-Being Index</th>
<th>UC San Diego Health</th>
<th>UC San Diego – Sanford Institute for Empathy and Compassion</th>
<th>VITAL WorkLife</th>
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### Statistics and survey results

| 622 attendees | 5 plenary and keynote sessions | 94 abstracts (14 workshops and 80 oral presentations) | 126 posters |

### How well did the meeting satisfy your expectations with regards to the following objectives?

**Overall, how would you rate this year’s ACPH?**

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**Overall, how would you rate the breakout sessions offered at this meeting?**

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**The meeting was a valuable use of my time.**

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**The meeting helped me feel engaged.**

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**I would recommend future ACPH meetings to my peers.**

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### Testimonials and comments

“Overall nice mix of presentations and a great group of friendly attendees all motivated by well-being. Easy access to exhibitors allowed lots of opportunity to learn more. My team looks forward to attending again.”

“Great mix of presentations—wonderful, idea-generating poster session. The plenary about physician health programs was outstanding.”

“I very much liked having multiple options each session to explore interventions at the organizational, local/department and individual levels.”

“The speakers were excellent. Especially appreciated learning more about physician health programs. Great opportunity to network and this is the most collaborative group I’ve ever been a part of. It was easy to talk to presenters and attendees.”

“Opportunity to network. I liked the breakout format—hearing from three speakers—really got a lot of info in a short amount of time.”

“Many opportunities for meaningful interaction during and outside of sessions, well-paced meetings with regular breaks. Generally excellent collegiality. Truly excellent food and beautiful venue.”
Building the workforce of the future

There is a persistent issue of burnout among medical students and residents, with rates increasing among physicians. This burnout has significant consequences, affecting the behavior, beliefs, decision-making, and performance of residents and students. In Dr. Dyrbye’s opening keynote, she emphasized the importance of cultivating a trustworthy, respectful, and supportive environment for learners and residents, while advocating for the well-being and development of faculty and educators.

The impact of the work environment on burnout and well-being, particularly for residents, is substantial. Faculty, education leaders, and decanal teams are pivotal in providing a support system and exemplifying wellness behaviors through mentoring, refining leadership skills, and promoting self-care. The burnout in learners affects them personally and professionally, and all are empowered to go forward and improve the work in the learning environment for the physicians of the future.

Closing keynote (day three)

Christine Sinsky, MD
Vice president, professional satisfaction
American Medical Association

Reorienting health care around relationships to achieve Quadruple Aim outcomes

According to Dr. Sinsky, AMA vice president of professional satisfaction, the key to a strong health care system is relational. Within health care teams and with patients, these connections serve as the “secret sauce,” providing both individual and systemic resilience. Strengthening these connections enhances the system’s ability to support and serve its people. Relationships should be viewed as a superpower, which increases quality and decreases burnout. Dr. Sinsky highlighted several ways health systems can prioritize relationships through face-to-face communication, reconstruction of physical spaces, wave scheduling, reengineering workflows, transferring work and removing the “sludge” in the EHR inbox, and supporting collegiality. Strengthening relationships not only leads to increased patient and physician satisfaction, but also contributes to lower health care costs. Potential is unlimited when the power of connection is unleashed.
Measuring and redesigning EHR use: A systems-level approach to physician well-being

In this plenary session, Drs. Fogg and Rule shared how organizations can combine systems-level thinking with recurring measurement to redesign clinical workflows and promote physician well-being. Dr. Fogg shared her experience employing four different strategies—eliminate, automate, delegate, collaborate—to cut primary care physicians’ in-basket volume by 25% at Atrius Health. Dr. Rule shared how automated measurement of EHR use can enable organizations to quantify diverse aspects of both EHR use (e.g., inbox volume, EHR time) and clinic workflow (e.g., team contributions to orders, message response time) unobtrusively and at scale. By combining systems-level thinking and ongoing measurement of EHR use, organizations can drive change and enhance physician well-being.

Catalyzing post-traumatic recovery: Identifying and mitigating distress associated with medical practice

During the plenary session, Drs. Trockel, Godfrey and West explored how trauma, social isolation and lack of strong relationships have contributed to physician burnout. During the pandemic, a significant amount of division and distrust emerged, posing harm as physicians heavily depended on one another. Some common risk factors for occupational well-being among physicians encompass low self-valuation, imposter phenomenon, isolation, and the impact of work on personal relationships. It was stated that understanding trauma is essential, as traumatic effects influence feelings and thoughts. Physicians reported higher feelings of isolation than the general population, and efforts to mitigate loneliness and isolation in physicians need more attention. The trauma of the pandemic shattered beliefs, requiring a healing process that includes fostering hope, safety, calming, social connection and self and community efficacy.

Summation

While the conference was successful within its three-day scope, prioritizing physician health and well-being in daily practice takes commitment that is strong, informed and operates on two levels.

- **Personal commitment:** Everyone in the health care profession takes the necessary time required to focus on their own health.

- **Professional commitment:** Medicine must keep this issue—and the quest for meaningful, actionable solutions—on its agenda front and center.

We hope the 2023 American Conference on Physician Health findings will not only serve as a reminder of the important work and research that has been done, but also continue to push the vital goal of promoting physician well-being in the years to come.
Committees

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Larissa Thomas, MD, MPH
Susan Thompson-Hingle, MD

Mark your calendars!

Please plan to join us at the next American Conference on Physician Health
Sept. 11–13, 2025
at the Boston Marriott Copley Place in Boston, Mass.

Email physicianhealth@ama-assn.org to be placed on the conference mailing list and receive timely event updates, including when the call for abstracts opens.