Transforming VA Healthcare: Fighting Physician Burnout To Drive Excellence In Care For Our Veterans

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The sacred bond between a soldier and a medic
While we are succeeding in access, **physician burnout** threatens our long-term ability to provide high-value care.
Burnout is a medical condition

- Depersonalization
- Emotional Exhaustion
- Personal Accomplishment
The Hard Facts about burnout

- Clinical provider burnout is linked to the following:
  - Higher medical error rates
  - High provider turnover → access issues
  - Poor patient satisfaction
Better than the private sector, but we can do more

1/2

Private Sector Docs

Burnout Rate
Better than the private sector, but we can do more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician Specialty</th>
<th>% Burnout VHA</th>
<th>% Burnout Private Sector*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Care</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatry</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All physicians</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Shanafelt, et. al. 2015
Why VA Physicians Need Your Help

Rates of Burnout for PACT Care Team Members

- Primary care provider
- Registered nurse
- Clinical Associate
- Administrative Clerk

Year and Data Source

Percent Reporting Burnout

- 2012 HAIG
- 2013 AES
- 2014 HAIG
- 2015 AES
- 2016 HAIG
4 Drivers of Physician Burnout

• Inability to provide **Quality** care to Vets
• **Inefficient** process to care for Vets
• Lack of **Input**
• **Low Appreciation**
We Don’t Appreciate Nearly Enough!

- Facilities that do not have VSO/Veteran programs to recognize any clinical care provider

- 35%
- 65%
VA needs American Legion’s Support to Address Physician Burnout

- Recognize Great VA Doctors
  - Establish a national VA Physician of the Year Award
  - Local/Regional recognition
- Give thanks on Doctors Day – March 30, 2017
- Elevate the discussion on provider burnout with facility leadership through the “System Worth Saving” program
The Legion has a Legacy of Recognizing Great Work

- National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award
- National Firefighter of the Year Award
- Employer of Veterans Awards
- Disabled and Local Veterans’ Employment Representative of the Year
- Homeless Veterans Outreach
- Volunteer of the Year
National VA Physician of the Year Award

- **Purpose**: recognize a VA physician whose dedication to caring and improving the health of Veterans is above and beyond expectation
- **Award**: trip to the national convention (stipend for travel and hotel) with recognition presentation
- **Nominations**: by The American Legion Departments (States), Districts, Posts and American Legion Members that receive their care in VA
- **Selection of Finalist**: The American Legion National Headquarters
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- Elevate the discussion on provider burnout with facility leadership through “System Worth Saving”
System Worth Saving Visits

- Ask about facility data on burnout and action plans
  - Source: All Employee Survey, other local surveys
    - % burnout by care site
    - % burnout by facility
    - Drivers of burnout
    - Drivers of engagement
4 Drivers of Physician Burnout

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4 Solutions to Drive Even Better Health at VA

- Removing obstructions to providing Quality care to Vets
- Increasing Efficiency in VA health system
- Using provider Input to solve our health system challenges
- Showing Appreciation of Outstanding Work
Input – leadership visibility is key

- How often and how effectively are you communicating with your employees?
  - Soliciting and giving feedback so staff can see progress on solving patient care issues?
  - Frequent “Walk-rounds on staff”?
  - Effective town halls – two-way communication, not a “data dump” to employees?
  - Leadership “Office Hours”?

### Stop-light approach to feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>In Process</th>
<th>Not Workable at This Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area In Nuclear Stress Lab small. Design team member + admin evaluated,</td>
<td>Need a list of notification when services are closed (example: just learned</td>
<td>Staff dissatisfied with Salary. Other area hospitals are paying better, does not feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low cost fixes. Cabinets installed and cords put together and organized.</td>
<td>Philadelphia Endocrine consult was no longer active), will work with Chief</td>
<td>that there has been a recent review on salary/responsibilities recently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space more usable now</td>
<td>of Staff office to help resolve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Efficiency and Quality

- Training and time for care team communication
- Addressing IT inefficiencies
  - National initiative to reduce “View Alert Notifications” in CPRS
  - What other local initiatives are in place?
- Accountability → addressing underperforming coworkers
Efficiency and Quality

- **Staffing/Turnover**
  - Do you know your data?
  - Where are you with PACT team implementation? Fully staffed and trained teams = better quality scores, 17% lower ED use, better patient satisfaction
    - Full Staffing alone is linked with lower burnout = better care of veterans
Promoting Provider Wellness

- Whole Health Model of care requires that providers are well enough to care for their Veterans
- Culture of Resiliency and Wellness
  - TMS trainings, retreats
  - Addressing provider isolation – promoting community
- Flexibility over schedule
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

TO CARE FOR HIM WHO SHALL HAVE BORNE THE BATTLE AND FOR HIS WIDOW, AND HIS ORPHAN

A. LINCOLN
Thank you!

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