

## **Medscape Physician Burnout and Depression Report: Burnout Worsening, Depression Increasing**

### **Physicians Blame Bureaucratic Demands and Long Hours; Covid-19 Not a Primary Factor**

NEW YORK, Jan. 27, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Despite greater awareness of the harmful effects of physician burnout and depression, a new report from Medscape shows that both continue to worsen and have increased substantially in the past five years.

*Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report 2023: "I Cry and No One Cares"* showed that rates of burnout increased to 53% this past year, from 47% in 2021, and jumped 26% since 2018. More than one in five physicians reported experiencing depression, a slight year over year increase but up considerably since 2018 (23% versus 15%). Of the physicians reporting depression, 67% said they had colloquial depression (feeling down, blue, sad) while 24% reported clinical depression, i.e. severe, lasting some time, and not caused by a normal grief event.

In this report, burnout was defined as long-term, unresolved, job-related stress leading to exhaustion, cynicism, detachment from job responsibilities, and lacking a sense of personal accomplishment.

More than 9,100 U.S. physicians across 29 specialties responded to the survey, conducted between June and October 2022.

**Click here for full report: <https://www.medscape.com/2023-lifestyle-burnout>**

### **Emergency physicians hit hardest**

As in 2021, physicians in emergency medicine reported the highest rates of burnout (65%), followed by internists (60%) and pediatricians (59%), which was largely unchanged from the previous year. However, these percentages show a marked contrast from 2018, when only 45% of emergency medicine physicians reported burnout. As in previous years, female physicians were far more likely to report burnout than male physicians (63% versus 46%).

Nearly 80% of physicians described their level of burnout as moderate to severe, and the majority (65%) said it has harmed their relationships. Of those physicians reporting

depression, 64% said job burnout was the primary reason for it. While most physicians cope in healthy ways, i.e. exercise, talking with family and friends, one in five turn to alcohol and binge eating, and 40% prefer to spend time alone.

### **Too much bureaucracy remains primary reason**

As in previous years, most physicians (61%) cited the volume of bureaucratic demands as the chief reason for burnout. More than one third (38%) pointed to a lack of respect from coworkers, followed closely by too many hours at work.

Only 8% of doctors said the stress of treating Covid-19 patients was the primary cause of their burnout, although more than one third said the pandemic significantly affected their work-life happiness.

About one in three physicians said their personalities, i.e. perfectionism, envisioning worst-case scenarios, being overly empathetic, also contributed to burnout.

### **Unions, increased compensation, and fewer hours would help**

Increased compensation and a more manageable work schedule were cited most often by physicians (45% and 44%, respectively), as solutions to alleviate burnout, and about one in three said more support staff, more respect from supervisors and colleagues, and lighter patient loads would make a difference.

Additionally, half of all respondents said a physicians' union would help.

"Burnout and depression were an issue before the pandemic and continue to have a negative impact on physician well-being; this year's Medscape report shows that the problem is only getting worse," said Leslie Kane, M.A., Senior Director, Medscape Business of Medicine. "Physicians are looking for substantive change in their working environments, including fewer hours or increased compensation.

"Medical institutions need to go beyond awareness to address the root causes of burnout and introduce solutions that will substantially reduce this long-standing, troubling trend."

### **Medscape Survey Methods**

The 2023 Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report was completed by 9,175 U.S. physicians representing more than 29 specialty areas. Respondents were invited to respond to the online survey. The margin of error for the survey was +/- 1.02% at a 95% confidence level.

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