Physician burnout a creeping epidemic in health care[1]

[2]

More than half of United States physicians experience substantial symptoms of burnout, with consequences that extend to family, patients and the entire health care system.

An upcoming conference sponsored by the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus will focus on the causes of burnout and examine tools and resources available to mitigate burnout and achieve holistic wellness.

Titled "Physician Burnout: Integrated Strategies for Diverse Stakeholders,"[3] the conference is set for May 10-11 in Beaver Creek.

Oftentimes, physicians are unaware of what is happening to them or they may be immersed in a culture of silence, said conference director Deborah Saint-Phard, a physician board-certified in sports medicine, and director of CU Women's Sports Medicine.

"People go into this profession to express their compassion and care. They go in with open hearts and bright minds and the vision to save the world, and they end up not doing well (personally)," Saint-Phard said.

Today's physicians spend more time preparing reports and justifying patient treatments to insurance companies, and because of that, spend less time with patients. Work hours spill into home life, and professional satisfaction diminishes.

"Part of the problem is the increase in regulatory demands," Saint-Phard said. "Physicians are being asked to do things that are not at the highest level – data entry, typing, electronic medical recording – the metrics that contribute to (their) not feeling they are doing what they have been trained to do. Physicians are happiest when they are providing good care, and there are lots of barriers to doing that."

These extra burdens lead to work/life imbalance, Saint-Phard said, with physicians working from home dictating or reading medical literature, what is known as "pajama time."

The results of burnout can be devastating. Physicians might cut back their practice hours or leave medicine entirely. Quality of care declines, which results in more patient complaints. Medical errors escalate, and physicians have lower patient satisfaction interactions and might witness an increase in lawsuits filed against them.

"All of this stems from a decreased ability to express empathy," Saint-Phard said.

Burnout can cause an increase in substance abuse, auto accidents, stress-related health problems and marital and family discord.

"There is a lack of sense of control over what is happening and a loss of meaning when it comes to work and being present with patients," she said.

In addition, the suicide rate among female physicians is 2.3 times higher than women in the general population; among male physicians, the rate is 1.4 times higher than men in the general population.

There are societal costs as well. Burnout leads to decreased access to medical care because there are fewer physicians available.

"We are having to replace two to three medical classes of physicians each year. And the cost to recruit a new physician can be up to $1 million," Saint-Phard said.

She said burnout begins as early as medical school and can accelerate through residency and practice as doctors hold

themselves to standards of perfection and a model of self-sacrifice. But doctors who take care of themselves are better role models for their patients and their children, and they have higher patient satisfaction and safety scores. They also experience less stress and burnout and live longer, according to research.

One initiative being implemented as a remedy for the paperwork burden, for instance, is to have medical assistants in the exam room who perform data entry. The practice increases the patient/physician interaction and aids workflow.

“The conference aims to increase the awareness what might be going on in our culture,” Saint-Phard said. “We need to look out for each other.”

Conference speakers will address burnout factors, ways to prevent the problems, and what the medical community can do to mitigate the issues. Sessions include:
“The Epidemic of Physician Burnout” - Kathleen Gibney, Ph.D.: As director of the Center for Physician Wellbeing at Florida Hospital, Gibney has expanded the direction of the Physician Support Services Department to focus on prevention of burnout and building resiliency. “Introduction to the Use of Ethics-Based Case Model to Physician Burnout” - Matthew Wynia, M.D.: Wynia’s research has focused on novel uses of survey data to inform and improve the practical management of ethical issues in health care and public policy. “Relationship-Centered Communication for Healthcare Transformation” - Patrick Kneeland, M.D.: As executive medical director for patient and provider experience at UCHealth, Kneeland develops and promotes organization strategies and improvement efforts that enhance patient and provider experience and engagement. “Evidence for Self-Compassion and Strategies for Personal Resilience” - Doris Gundersen, M.D.: The medical director of the Colorado Physician Health Program, Gundersen will discuss the importance of self-care in order to maintain resilience while facing stressors. “Steps Forward” - Christine Sinsky, M.D.: A board-certified internist and vice president of the American Medical Association, Sinsky has worked to “elevate national awareness of health professional well-being as an important driver of health system performance and has led development of initiatives to reduce burnout.” “The Reading Cure for Physician Resiliency” - Abraham Nussbaum, M.D.: The chief education officer at Denver Health and an associate professor of psychiatry at the CU School of Medicine, Nussbaum has received a grant to study alienation among physicians. “Moral Distress, Giving Voice to Values” - Heather Fitzgerald, R.N.: An ethicist at Children’s Hospital Colorado, Fitzgerald will discuss literature that has correlated “moral distress” as a high indicator of burnout in nurses.

President, chancellors decry proposed cuts to federal student aid[4]

As Congress continues its process of renewing the Higher Education Act (HEA), leadership at the University of Colorado is warning of proposed changes that threaten student access and affordability at CU and across the country.

Passed in December by the House Education and Workforce Committee, H.R. 4508[5], the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act, would cut $14.6 billion in student aid over 10 years, as estimated by the Congressional Budget Office.

In a March 9 letter to Colorado’s seven-member House delegation, CU leaders write that the resulting erosion of federal support would make college more expensive for students and families in Colorado and throughout the United States. The letter is signed by CU President Bruce Benson and the four campus chancellors, Philip DiStefano, CU Boulder; Venkat Reddy, CU Colorado Springs; Dorothy Horrell, CU Denver; and Don Elliman, CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

“We are particularly alarmed by the proposed termination of Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants; GRAD PLUS loans; Public Service Loan Forgiveness; the in-school interest subsidy for undergraduate student loans; and access to Federal Work Study for our graduate and professional students,” the letter states.

While the PROSPER Act adopts many recommendations from the Task Force on Federal Regulation of Higher Education, which CU President Benson served on at the request of Sen. Michael Bennet, the bill was passed by committee without significant input from the higher education community and does not reflect CU priorities.

“We are discouraged to see the legislation pare back essential federal support for international education programs, eliminate Teacher Quality Partnership competitive grants, and reduce funding for TRIO programs, which prepare low-income and first-generation students for college,” CU leadership states in the letter.

Many of the proposals in the PROSPER Act would roll back essential student aid for undergraduate students who demonstrate the greatest financial need, as well as for graduate and professional students, who already receive limited federal support.

“As you and your House colleagues consider H.R. 4508, we encourage you to put the needs of students first and would welcome the opportunity to work with you to accomplish this,” the CU leaders write.

The letter comes just two weeks after CU leaders responded to a call for input on the Higher Education Act reauthorization from the Senate’s Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

In the Feb. 23 letter to Sens. Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray, the committee’s chairman and ranking member, respectively, CU’s president and chancellors stressed that the university “is dedicated to ensuring that college is accessible and affordable for all its students, which is why the university invested over $184 million in institutional aid for students across our four campuses last year. Over the last five years, CU institutional aid has far eclipsed federal grant aid, which totaled $66 million in 2017.”

The letter notes the Be Boulder Pact, which includes a four-year tuition guarantee and the elimination of course and program fees at CU Boulder, and how “all four campuses are committed to increasing access to online courses and open education resources to decrease costs.”

CU leaders urge that HEA reauthorization not only preserve but also strengthen federal student aid programs – which PROSPER threatens. CU supports efforts to simplify the student aid process as a way of improving access and predictability for students, but strongly urges that any savings from simplification be reinvested into federal aid programs. Any and all reforms that would create a net loss to student aid programs are concerning.

Call for proposals: Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology Conference[6]

The 2018 Colorado Learning and Teaching with Technology (COLTT[7]) Conference is calling for session proposals.

COLTT 2018 is Aug. 1 and 2 at the University of Colorado Boulder in the Wolf Law Building[8] and adjacent Idea Forge [9]. Find session types, suggested topics and FAQs on the Call for Proposals[10]

Proposals on any topic are welcome, ideally those that may fill conference tracks in four areas:
Open educational resources High-impact practices Accessibility and universal design Maker spaces
Deadline for proposals is 11:59 p.m. April 16.

Click here[11] for the session proposal form.

Questions: coltt@cu.edu[12]

People with social anxiety disorder take criticism especially hard, study finds[13]

Shatner to headline BI's 10th Anniversary Celebration[14]

Chancellors thank staff members for hard work[15]

Firearm safety and training program aimed toward physicians[16]

Maggiore Wins Open Educator Award[17]

Three faculty earn Quality Matters certification[18]

Townsend to join Colorado College as Provost [19]

Napierkowski to lead faculty relations[20]

Lovejoy takes charge of Slavery Images website [21]

Schultz named American Educational Research Association fellow [22]

2018 W-4, tax calculators released[23]

Employee Services encourages employees to review their 2018 W-4 forms and use the IRS withholding calculator to ensure receiving the refund amount expected next tax season.

The IRS released the 2018 W-4 and withholding calculators on Feb. 28 – later than usual, as adjustments were required following the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act 2017's passage in December.

2018 W-4

The W-4 allows employees to determine the amount of federal income tax withheld from their pay.

Employee Services recommends that all University of Colorado employees check their W-4 in the employee portal and make any needed adjustments – especially if an employee got married, had a child or experienced other changes that would affect their tax status.

Note: Any changes made to the federal W-4 in the portal will be mirrored in an employee's Colorado state withholdings, as Colorado instructs employers to base state withholdings on the federal form.

How to access and update your W-4
Log in to your campus portal[24]. Go to the **CU Resources tab**. (If you do not see any tabs, the CU Resources area is your homepage.) Go to the **NavBar**. Select **CU Resources**, then **My Info and Pay**, then **W-4**.
Use the IRS withholding calculator

With recent tax law changes, a paycheck checkup – using the IRS online withholding calculator, IRS.gov/W4App[25] – is recommended for all faculty, staff and student employees.

"I highly encourage everyone to take advantage of the IRS calculator tool to see how changes to the tax laws will affect them," said Sharon Bishop, Employee Services director of payroll. "It will help to make sure you will not owe taxes when you complete your 2018 tax return."

The calculator will estimate values of 2018 income, the number of children claimed for the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit, and other items that will affect 2018 taxes.

Before using the calculator, the IRS recommends gathering recent pay stubs, the 2017 income tax return and W-2s. Keep in mind that the calculator's results will only be as accurate as the information provided. If personal circumstances change during the year, revisit this calculator to ensure withholdings still are correct.

Visit the IRS withholding calculator at IRS.gov/W4App[25].

Links
[1] https://connections.cu.edu/spotlights/physician-burnout-creeping-epidemic-health-care[2] https://connections.cu.edu/sites/default/files/phys-burnout_feat_0.jpg[3] https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=2065823[4] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/president-chancellors-decry-proposed-cuts-federal-student-aid[5] https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4508[6] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/call-proposals-colorado-learning-and-teaching-technology-conference[7] https://www.cu.edu/coltt[8] https://www.colorado.edu/law/about/wolf-law-building[9] https://www.colorado.edu/ideaforge/[10] https://www.cu.edu/coltt/call-proposals-2018[11] https://www.cvent.com/events/call-for-proposals-2018/registration-87510fdfa0a34a60a7de67841ad3fd90.aspx?fqp=true[12] mailto:coltt@cu.edu[13] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/people-social-anxiety-disorder-take-criticism-especially-hard-study-finds[14] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/shatner-headline-bi-s-10th-anniversary-celebration[15] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/chancellors-thank-staff-members-hard-work[16] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/firearm-safety-and-training-program-aimed-toward-physicians[17] https://connections.cu.edu/people/maggiore-wins-open-educator-award[18] https://connections.cu.edu/people/three-faculty-earn-quality-matters-certification[19] https://connections.cu.edu/people/townsend-join-colorado-college-provost[20] https://connections.cu.edu/people/napierkowski-lead-faculty-relations[21] https://connections.cu.edu/people/lovejoy-takes-charge-slavery-images-website[22] https://connections.cu.edu/people/schultz-named-american-educational-research-association-fellow[23] https://connections.cu.edu/stories/2018-w-4-tax-calculators-released[24] https://my.cu.edu[25] https://www.irs.gov/individuals/irs-withholding-calculator