

# Physician Burnout

## The Path to Well-Being

John N. Evans, DPM

APMA National Conference 2019

# **Disclosures:**

I have the following relevant information to disclose:

None

# Triple Aim of Healthcare

- Improving the Healthcare of the Population
- Improving the Patient Experience
- Reduce Healthcare Costs

- **Quadruple Aim**

- Improving the Work-Life of Physicians and Staff

# Physician Burnout definition

- A loss of **Emotional, Mental, or Physical** energy due to continued **Job-related *Stress***

# Burnout Syndrome

- **loss of enthusiasm for work**
  - emotional exhaustion
- **feelings of cynicism**
  - depersonalization
- **low sense of personal accomplishment**

Sara GA. What Is Burnout,  
and Why Is It So Prevalent? -  
*Medscape* - Jan 01, 2017

# Symptoms of Physician Burnout

- Exhaustion
- Lack of enthusiasm/motivation
- Frustration
- Cynicism
- Stress
- Passivity
- Detachment
- Reduced efficacy
- Behavioral extremes
- Mistakes
- Empathy fatigue
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Health issues

# Physician Burnout

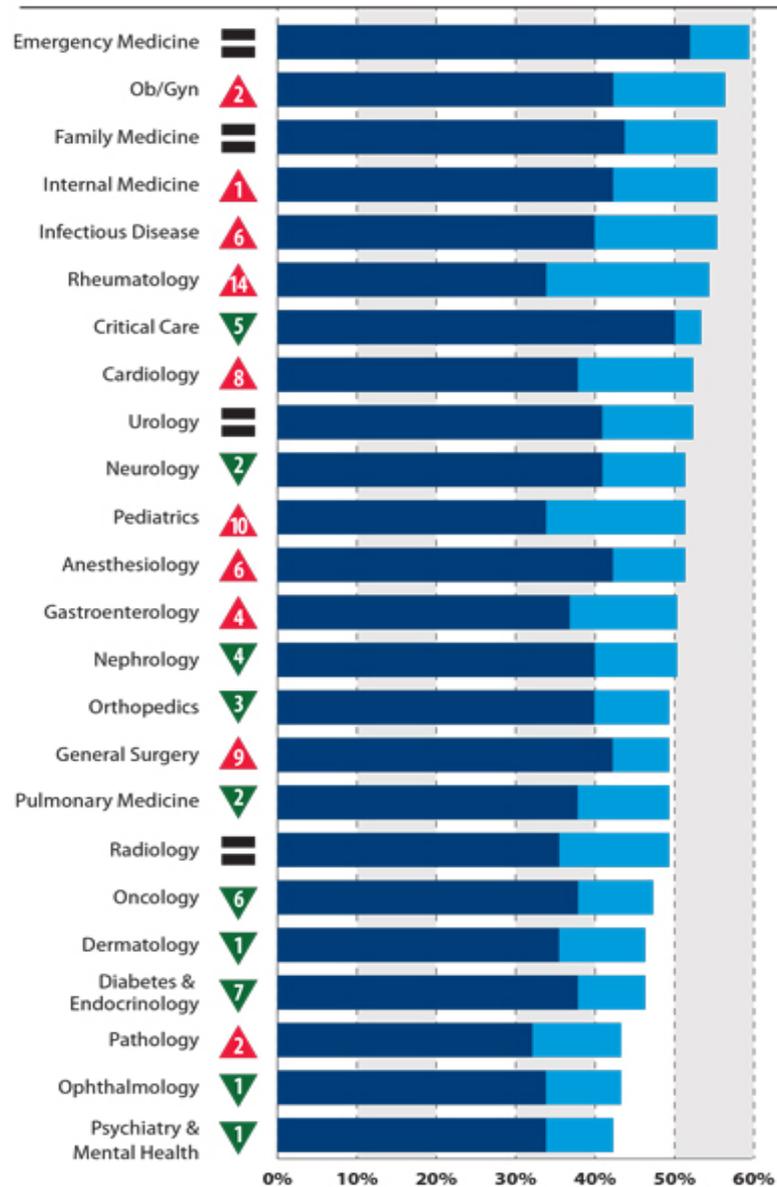
**25 - 60 %** of physicians suffer burnout

Physicians suffer burnout **2x more** than other US professions

**Every** medical specialty shows increased rates from 2011 to 2018

# Physician Burnout by Specialty

**Changes in burnout by specialty  
2013–2017**



▲ Increase in ranking    
 ▼ Decrease in ranking    
 ■ No change in ranking  
■ % in 2013    
 ■ % in 2017

# Burnout is a Chronic Condition

- Christina Maslach, PhD
- Maslach Burnout Inventory author
  - “It’s not necessarily a particular crisis or emergency, it’s the stuff that is happening all around you.”
  - “Burnout is often mistakenly labeled as a problem of individuals, leaving the [underlying systemic and cultural problems](#) unaddressed”
- Both the Unhealthy **Environment** of Modern Healthcare and the **Physical, Emotional, and Social Health of the Individual** are vital

# Mayo Foundation studies: US Physicians with at least one of the PBO symptoms

- **2011**      **45%**
- **2014**      **54.4%**
- **2017**      **43.9%**
- still about **42% greater** than the general population

- Shanafelt T, Tait D, West C, et al. Changes in burnout and satisfaction with work-life integration in physicians and the general US working population between 2011 and 2017. Mayo Clinic Proceedings

2018 survey of  
**“Americans’ Physicians Practice  
Patterns and Perspectives”**

(by Merritt Hawkins on behalf of the Physicians Foundation)

- **78%** had feelings of professional burnout “at least sometimes”
- **4%** increase from 2016 survey

- Hawkins M. 2018 Survey of America’s Physicians: Practice Patterns & Perspectives. 2018

# Administrative Overload

2017 study of physicians in federally qualified Health Centers:

“Professional Satisfaction” declined 10%

“Feeling burned out” increased 8%

Friedberg m, Reid R, Timbie J, et al. Federally qualified health center clinicians and staff increasingly dissatisfied with workplace conditions. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2017.0205HEALTHAFFAIRS 36, NO. 8 (2017): 1469–1475

# Administrative Overload Reporting Quality Measures

- 2016 study in Health Affairs: in four common specialties:
  - physicians spent an average of **785 hours**
  - **> \$15.4 billion**
- Casalino L, Gans D, Weber R, et al. US physician practices spend more than \$15.4 billion annually to report quality measures. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2015.1258HEALTHAFFAIRS 35, NO. 3 (2016): 401–406

# **“A Crisis in Healthcare: A Call to Action on Physician Burnout”** 2019 Harvard study

- 1. Engage proactive mental health treatment and support for physicians experiencing burnout and related challenges
- 2. Improve EHR standards with a strong focus on usability and open Application Programming Interface (API) programs
- 3. Appoint executive-level Chief Wellness Officers at every major healthcare organization

• **Jha AK, Iliff A, Chaoui A, Defossez S, et al. A Crisis in Health Care: A Call to Action on Physician Burnout. Waltham, MA: Massachusetts Medical Society, Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and Harvard Global Health Institute; 2019.**

# Medical School: Well-Being effects

- Medical students vs Age-related Peers
  - Depression
    - 27% v 7%
  - Burnout
    - 54% v 36%
  - Alcohol abuse
    - 34% v 9%
  - **Suicide**
    - 11% v 4%

# Consequences of Burnout

Poorer **Quality of Life**

- Increased stress-related disorders

Lower **Quality of Care**

- Errors, neglect, careless, inefficient, staff turnover, patient satisfaction

Lower Sense of  
**Personal Accomplishments**

- Lack of Control & Meaning, desire for a different life

# Why do Physicians burnout?

Dike Drummond, MD

1. **Actions** of being a Doctor

2. **Stress** of being a Doctor

3. You are **Human**

4. **Surviving** being a Doctor

# 4. Surviving being a Doctor

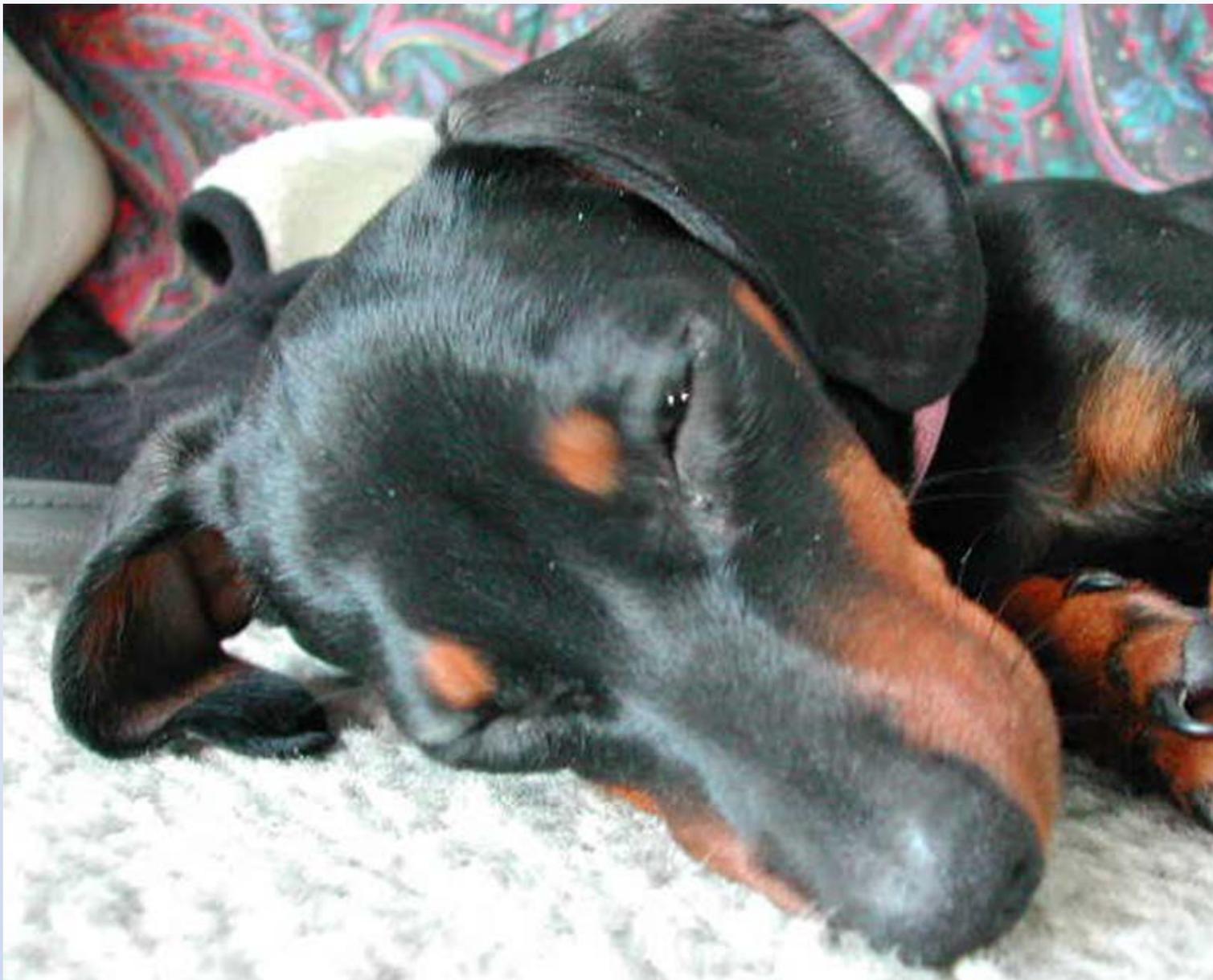
**Coping skills**  
we learned in  
Medical  
school

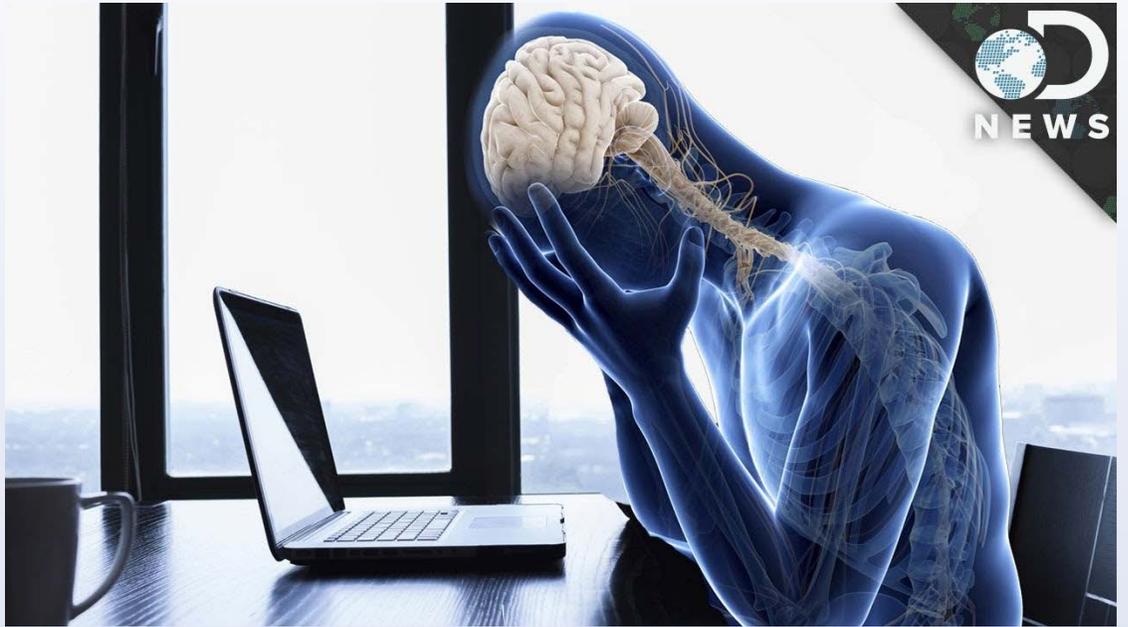
- Workaholic
- Superhero
- Emotion-free
- Lone Ranger
- Perfectionist

- *“If you can sit quietly after difficult times,*
- *If in financial downturns you can remain perfectly calm,*
- *If you can see your neighbors travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy,*
- *If you can happily eat whatever is on your plate and fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill,*
- *If you can always find contentment just where you are...*

***You are  
probably  
a dog”***

Jack Kornfield





# *Decision:* Lion or Bush?





# Lion-Bush Dilemma

- Is it a lion or a beige rock?
  - Cost of one mistake: needless anxiety
  - Cost of the other mistake: *death*
- Our minds evolved to make the first mistake **10,000** times to avoid making the second mistake *once*

“Burnout, at its core, is the  
impaired ability to experience  
Positive Emotion.”

J. Bryan Sexton, PhD

# Positive Psychology



**Traditional Psychology**  
Repair/Healing/Weaknesses/Illness

**Positive Psychology**  
Thriving/Flourishing/Strengths/Well-being



## What Determines Happiness



Source: Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D.  
University of California, Riverside

# The Hedonic Treadmill



# The Pursuit of Happiness: Modern Solutions

## • **Acquisition**

- Indulgence
  - Food
  - Shopping\*
- Pleasure
  - Sex
  - Drugs or Alcohol
- Status-Seeking
  - Power
  - Achievement

## • **Avoidance**

- Withdraw...Isolation
- Passivity
- Drugs or Alcohol
- Television
- Smartphone addiction



**Savoring**

# Engagement: “Flow”

- Mihaly Csikzentmihaly
  - “*In the Zone*”
- Experience **Gratification** rather than **Pleasure**
- Strengths engage Challenges in an even balance
- Fully immersed in an energized focus in *what is being done*
- Experience a *loss of space and time*

# Connection



# Rediscover *Awe*



# Gratitude



# Forgiveness



- “Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die”
  - Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha)
- “The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong”
  - Mahatma Gandhi

# Meaning and Purpose

"The meaning of life  
is to find your gift.

The purpose of life  
is to give it away"

Pablo Picasso

[thesoulpurposeproject.com](http://thesoulpurposeproject.com)



# “Three Good Things”

Martin Seligman, PhD

- Before bed, think of three good things that happened that day
- **Write** them down
- **Reflect** on them

# A Conscious Breath



- Stop Thinking

## In Conclusion

- Savor
- Engagement
- Connection
- Awe
- Gratitude
- Forgiveness
- Meaning and Connection
- **Stop Thinking**



# Thank You

John Evans, DPM

[jnedpm@gmail.com](mailto:jnedpm@gmail.com)