

Improving professional satisfaction and practice sustainability



Returning joy, meaning and purpose to physicians' careers by removing obstacles that interfere with patient care

The American Medical Association is committed to making the patient-physician relationship more valued than paperwork, technology an asset and not a burden, and physician burnout a thing of the past. We are focused on improving—and setting a positive future path for—the operational, financial and technological aspects of a physician's practice.

Research: Evidence-based insights that drive action

The AMA collaborates with leading researchers across the nation to pursue rigorous, high-quality research to build a broad and diverse body of evidence to support our ongoing work.

Identifying and addressing drivers of burnout

The AMA leads and collaborates on research to identify system-level drivers associated with physician and care team burnout. Our research also looks at the consequences associated with burnout that go unaddressed, as well as strategies that organizations can implement for effective and sustainable changes in the well-being of their physicians and care teams.

AMA collaborated with researchers at Stanford WellMD, Mayo Clinic and other institutions to **evaluate changes in burnout and satisfaction with work-life integration** during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic and compared these rates with those found in **prior studies**.

Other **AMA-supported research** demonstrates that physicians' intent to leave practice has increased and that chaotic workplaces and lack of workload control contribute to burnout. Efficient teamwork and feeling valued are related to lower burnout among physicians, suggesting important ways organizations can help mitigate factors that drive physician burnout.

AMA-supported analyses found that factors such as **compromised integrity, mistreatment and discrimination** and **childcare stress** are associated with an increased risk of burnout. An AMA-led analysis estimated the **significant costs** associated with burnout and non-burnout related turnover among primary care physicians in the U.S., emphasizing the importance of accounting for the indirect but serious costs of burnout.

Improving practice sustainability

The AMA partnered with Mathematica in 2021 to define, analyze and assess the factors that create and sustain high-performing, physician-owned private practices. This research **evaluated various elements**, including business and governance structures as well as staffing and payment models. Findings demonstrated that physician-owned private practices deliver high-quality health care and have an integral role in

their communities, but many face sustainability challenges due to ever-increasing administrative burdens and declining payment rates. The AMA is examining the challenges and successes for physicians transitioning from one practice setting to another or transitioning completely out of clinical care, and we continue to support and collaborate on research aimed at identifying actionable and productive tactics to help physicians in all clinical settings improve their long-term sustainability.

Exploring telehealth use in physician practice

AMA research highlights the **widespread integration of telehealth** into clinical practice since the onset of COVID-19 and discusses the implications for the future of telehealth. Other AMA-led research describes the **evolution of telemedicine** and virtual visit experiences in practice, both before and during COVID-19. The first-person accounts of actual clinical experiences offer valuable insight into the realities of telemedicine and the importance of team-based care. An AMA survey-based study evaluated the **increases in and characteristics of telehealth use** in recent years, and its findings suggest that while many experience barriers to adoption, physicians largely support the continued use of telehealth as a practical means of providing patient care.

Validating measurement of EHR use data to improve patient care

Through its Electronic Health Record (EHR) Use Research Grant program, the AMA has invested in research to build the evidence base on the validity and value of EHR use metrics. Rigorous research continues to advance the science on the use of EHR audit log data, transactional data, or other EHR user data to identify patterns in physician or other clinician EHR use that may detract from patient care or EHR efficiency; contribute to burnout, stress or attitudinal shifts related to work and career; or may inform decisions about workflows, teamwork and resource allocation at the practice level. This research allows the AMA to partner with other institutions to meaningfully grow the body of knowledge on EHR use metrics. Since the inception of this grant program in 2019, the AMA has funded more than 25 research studies across a variety of institutions and EHR-related topics.

Helping physicians thrive in an evolving health care environment

Restoring Joy in Medicine™

The AMA is committed to expanding the body of practice science research on solutions that increase joy in medicine. The [AMA's Joy in Medicine™ Health System Recognition Program](#) serves as a road map to reduce burnout within health care organizations and unite the medical community on solutions that help physicians thrive.

We also provide physicians and health systems with an array of cutting-edge tools to advance practice innovation and physician well-being.

- [AMA STEPS Forward® and AMA STEPS Forward® Innovation Academy](#)

These interconnected programs offer a vast collection of educational practice innovation resources, including toolkits, playbooks, webinars and [podcasts](#).

- [Organizational Biopsy™](#)

The AMA assesses burnout levels, drivers of burnout in the domains of both organizational culture and practice efficiency, and consequences of burnout in terms of intentions to reduce clinical hours or leave the practice altogether within medical organizations. This data helps leaders tailor interventions to the local needs of their workforce and provides a baseline metric for comparison when implementing interventions aimed to reduce system-level burnout rates and improve physician well-being.

- [Conferences](#)

- The [American Conference on Physician Health](#) (ACPH) is a bi-annual scientific conference co-sponsored by the AMA, Mayo Clinic and Stanford University. The event promotes scientific research and discourse on health system infrastructure and actionable steps organizations can take to improve physician well-being.
- Co-sponsored by the American Medical Association, the British Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Association, the [International Conference on Physician Health™](#) (ICPH) is a bi-annual scientific conference that aims to support doctors and medical students to create better working environments for themselves and their colleagues.

Ensuring sustainable physician practices

The AMA is working diligently so that practicing physicians are integral partners in the drive toward a thriving health care system that improves patient outcomes while using resources wisely. We created [resources and tools](#) for physicians and practice leaders that provide strategic guidance and education, implementation and decision support, and practice financial forecasting.

The AMA and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have overhauled [evaluation and management \(E/M\) office visit documentation and coding](#). The AMA is conducting a multi-year study to measure physician time spent on E/M coding pre- and post-coding changes. We also created resources to help physicians implement and realize the benefits of the changes, including a Private Practice Simple

Solutions [learning session on E/M documentation](#) using the [AMA STEPS Forward® Simplified Outpatient Documentation and Coding Toolkit](#) as a guide.

The AMA has implemented multiple [practice innovation strategies](#) that offer resources and support for physicians looking to start and sustain a successful, high-performing private practice—including the [AMA Private Practice Simple Solutions](#) series, the podcast series [AMA Thriving in Private Practice](#) and [Private Practice: Attending to Business](#), and the [AMA STEPS Forward® Private Practice Playbook](#).

We also support innovative care delivery models. The AMA has partnered with seven other leading physician organizations on the [Behavioral Health Integration \(BHI\) Collaborative](#), a group dedicated to catalyzing effective, sustainable integration of behavioral and mental health care into physician practices. In addition, we are working to align best practices on value-based payment models with national health plans to improve payment models, eliminate the burden on physician practices, and encourage the adoption of successful payment models.

Supporting digital health implementation and optimization

The [AMA Digital Health Implementation Playbook](#) series packages key steps, best practices and resources to accelerate the adoption of digital health innovations and help physicians extend care beyond the exam room. The series includes the [AMA Telehealth Implementation Playbook](#) and the [AMA Remote Patient Monitoring Implementation Playbook](#). The AMA also supports the implementation and scaling of telehealth services with additional resources, including the [AMA Telehealth quick guide](#), the [AMA STEPS Forward® Taming the EHR Playbook](#), the [AMA STEPS Forward® Telehealth Integration and Optimization Toolkit](#) and the [AMA Future of Health Immersion Program](#).

Putting the physician's voice first

To ensure the physician's voice is heard in other areas of health care innovation, we created the [AMA Physician Innovation Network](#) (PIN). PIN was commissioned to ensure that physicians are positioned as frontline innovators—an integral part in the development of digital health solutions. The platform connects physicians, health tech companies and entrepreneurs, ensuring the clinical voice directly affects how new innovations will function in the digital health ecosystem, influence a patient's life and integrate into scalable practice.

Shaping the future of health

As we enter an era of digitally enabled care that is transforming how we think about accessing, providing, managing and paying for health care, the AMA is leading the way by developing a blueprint, in collaboration with industry stakeholders, to address the digital health disconnect, support the optimization and scaling of digitally enabled care, and drive the [future of health](#). We also offer a comprehensive [Return on Health framework](#) to help measure the impact of virtual care in practice across six value streams, including: clinical outcomes, quality and safety; access to care; patient, family and caregiver experience; clinician experience; financial and operational impact; and health equity.



Learn more about the AMA's efforts to improve professional satisfaction and practice sustainability: ama-assn.org/practice-management